



## **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

1. 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)

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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	27	28	55
7	20	21	41
8	18	25	43
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	65	74	139

\*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
  - 98 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 1 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: <1%

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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	1
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	167
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3%  
4 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: 94%  
Total number students who qualify: 130

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %  
10 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>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>1</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: 3
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	10
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

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	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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.

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

Our mission is to deliver a first-class academic program with a seamless curriculum that enables students to become productive citizens who are prepared to address twenty-first century challenges.

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 the 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 and to students who qualify based on our articulation agreement with the school board.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Mater Academy East Charter Middle School, a SACS/CASI accredited school, was established in 2006. The school originally opened its doors in the Mater Academy East Elementary building. The majority of the students started in kindergarten at Mater East Elementary and continued on to Mater East Middle. Mater Academy East Middle currently has 139 students enrolled. Ninety-eight percent of our students are Hispanic, 1% are African American, and 1% are White. Most of the students we serve come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and 94% qualify for free or reduced lunch. Due to our high percentage of students on free and reduced lunch, Mater East Middle has been designated a Title I School.

The middle school has consistently outpaced the scores of our neighboring schools. These accolades are attributed, in large part, to our personalized approach to education and low teacher to student ratio. We have continued to evolve our curriculum to remain competitive with the ever-growing choices of schools that our stakeholders have been afforded. We offer a rigorous and challenging curriculum in preparing our students for a successful post-secondary education.

Our school is a place where children enjoy learning, teachers enjoy teaching, and parents are expected to be a fundamental part of the education process. It's our school's vision, mission, and beliefs that children are all unique and learn in different ways. It is this belief that makes differentiated instruction the foundation of the teaching approach at our school. This requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to instructing and adjusting the curriculum and presentation of information to learners. Classroom teaching is a blend of whole class, small group, and individual instruction.

Mater East Middle sets high academic and behavioral expectations for all of its students. We build on behavior management techniques in every day instruction to ensure continuous positive behavior is met throughout the school day. We believe students learn best when they are encouraged to succeed and when parents are actively involved in the school community. Together with a strong instructional program, parental involvement and communication are the catalyst that make education effective at our school.

Mater East has a master class schedule in place for all of its students that allows for post-secondary educational success. The core philosophy and underlying purpose of Mater East Middle is reflected in the following concepts: High expectations for students and teachers; creative endeavors as an integral part of the growth and development of all students; character development; Increase of self-esteem through mechanisms that ensure the improvement of students' self-image as learners; parental involvement; student ownership of their learning through self-awareness of their learning styles and self-monitoring of their learning; student and teacher accountability; commitment to the idea that success breeds success. These concepts are embodied in the school program and serve as a vehicle to increase learning opportunities for all students.

Furthermore, Mater Academy East Charter Middle School offers students tutoring service as part of an extended school day for additional assistance in academic core subject areas. We offer a variety of additional programs during and after school. Students have the option of participating in activities and clubs such as National Junior Honor Society, chess, Student Government Association, dance, Academy of Entrepreneurship, and STEM.

Mater East Middle is one of eight schools in Florida to have teamed up with Verizon Innovative Learning, an education initiative of the Verizon Foundation. For the past two years, the Verizon program has provided all of our students and teachers with iPads and a data plan for them to use on and off campus. In partnership with Digital Promise, Verizon has assigned a technology coach to train and support teachers in effectively implementing technology into their lessons. This has allowed for teachers to engage in powerful teaching and learning that enhances the use of technology in and out of the classroom. This partnership has allowed for us to meet the needs of each student. This initiative has been beneficial for both our students and their families as parents are also using the iPads to help with homework and communicate with teachers. Since this program's inception, students have made great strides in the use of technology to enrich their learning experience.



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

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

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

At Mater Academy East, we place a special emphasis on our Reading and English Language Arts curriculum through the use of the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS). Additionally, the skills that students gain in their Reading and Language Arts classes help students develop the literacy they need to be active and coherent citizens in our democratic society. Our reading and language arts teachers, in collaboration with the curriculum leaders of the school, address their learning standards by using relevant content that engages students in tasks, activities, and projects that are culturally conscious, age-appropriate, and intellectually stimulating.

In our Reading and Language Arts classes, students are not just taught to become literate, but are asked to analyze, solve problems, think critically, and develop well-rounded arguments. A heavy emphasis is placed on writing, which require students to analyze multiple sources and to cite evidence when developing an essay, thereby encouraging students to seek out information, explore subjects in depth and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Instruction is driven and differentiated by the data obtained from school-wide monthly writing assessments. This allows our teachers to tailor the instruction in a manner which is most effective for every student. Furthermore, students are offered an after-school academic enrichment tutoring program to ensure they receive the additional support needed in reading/English language arts. As a result, our students have been able to show mastery in their writing and reading comprehension skills, which has been able to translate to their success in other curriculum areas.

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

The mathematics curriculum and Mater Academy East Middle revolves around the Mathematics Florida Standards (MAFS). Teachers and students address these standards by engaging in real-world activities which foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students are encouraged to find and use different strategies and solutions to solve logistical and mathematical problems that they are continuously presented with. In order to ensure that students are solving problems that are rooted in real-world scenarios, our teacher collaborate to develop assessments, projects, and activities to ensure the skills the students learn in the classroom carry over to their day-to-day lives.

Using data obtained from formal and informal classroom assessments, teachers are able to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. The use of our student iPads makes it possible for our math teachers to engage our students in technology-based activities. Furthermore, it allows teachers to monitor and continuously provide feedback efficiently. This also facilitates the use of differentiated instruction during math instruction. Students are afforded the opportunity to attend the after-school academic enrichment tutoring program to ensure they receive the additional support they need in mathematics. Technology-based instruction, differentiated instruction, and implementation of our mathematics tutoring program has proven significant growth in areas addressed by the standards set forth by the state of Florida.

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

At Mater Academy East Middle, we rely on the dedication and expertise of some of the most effective educators in the state of Florida. Our teachers focus on delivering high quality instruction which address the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards by utilizing our technology-rich educational environment. We offer a number of science classes: chemistry, biology, physical science, and comprehensive science. Teachers and students have access to science labs, which allow teachers to create opportunities for students to engage in project-based learning using the scientific method. Students collaborate, experiment, think critically, and solve real-world scientific problems. As a result, students consistently show an interest in

pursuing careers in areas which require the use of the skills learned in their science classes.

Furthermore, our students' access to iPads have allowed them to present the findings from their science experiments in an innovative and creative manner. The use of student iPads also allows for teachers to gain valuable insight into student performance data. Using assessments through their iPads, makes it possible for our teachers to make decisions regarding differentiated instruction.

The science department at Mater Academy East Middle places a large emphasis in sharing their projects and activities with the community. For example, our science department hosts a yearly science exposition for local elementary schools. During this event, our middle school students engage elementary school students in fun scientific games and activities such as the Rocket Race, creation of the Penny Bridge, and an array of chemistry lessons through the use of every day materials. Through their engagement in teaching elementary students the art of science, our students are empowered by their commitment to spreading their knowledge outside the walls of our school to impact the surrounding community.

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

At Mater Academy East, we encourage our students to be active participants in society. In order to do so, we feel that our social studies curriculum is vital for students to understand the history and science that creates our democratic society. Our curriculum revolves around the Florida Standards pertaining to the areas of World History, Civics, and American History. Beginning in 6th grade, students begin to learn about the history of the United States, and how the country's history shaped our society today. Using the knowledge they gain in 6th grade, our 7th graders spend the year learning civics, in which they engage in analyzing the origins, purposes, and ideals of the U.S. Constitution. They also learn to apply their responsibilities, duties, and significant Supreme Court cases in real-world scenarios. Finally, in 8th grade, students begin to look at ancient world history, in which they explore the success and demise of some of the greatest civilizations in the world.

Our Social Studies teachers focus on inquiry-based learning, in which the students are continuously analyzing the past to understand the present. With student iPads, our students are able to conduct research-based projects in which they use a plethora of resources to develop arguments and gain a deeper understanding of their history. Using data from formal and informal assessments, our teachers are able to determine where our students need additional assistance. Performance data is also used to direct instructional decisions with regard to differentiated instruction in the classroom.

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

At Mater Academy East Middle, we foster a culture of college and career readiness by giving our students opportunities to enroll in courses that help them become successful in their future college and career experiences. Advanced Placement (AP) courses along with dual enrollment provide an opportunity for students to experience the level of rigor and quality of instruction that they would receive in a college setting. Success in these courses allow our students to gain college credits before they graduate high school.

Our students may also enroll in our Academy of Entrepreneur classes, which offers students the opportunity to learn important business skills to compete in the 21st century business landscape. These courses have become very popular among our students and have proven to assist students in becoming better equipped to take on the challenges of their future careers in business. Furthermore, students have the opportunity to earn industry certification in the area of business management. Students who successfully pass this course are ready to start a promising career in their respective businesses.

In addition to college and career readiness courses, our academic school counselor effectively communicates college expectations to our students. Our courses and counseling initiatives prove how much we value college and career readiness at Mater Academy East Middle.

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

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

At Mater Academy East Middle, we offer a wide range of other curriculum areas which allow students to experience other aspects of culture and life. We offer a wide range of electives that allow our students to be creative, healthy, bilingual, and computer-literate. Many of our students end up applying the skills learned in these courses to their core subject areas, as well as their day to day lives.

For our students who are artistically motivated, we offer an art class that teaches students the important cultural aspects of art, as well as teaching students the proper artistic techniques to succeed in the areas of studio art and 2-dimensional art. The work that comes from our students is something truly special, and is indicative of the talent of the teacher and quality of instruction they provide. Furthermore, our students can also choose to enroll in our photography class. This course teaches students the proper techniques in photography and allow students the opportunity to master the art of Photoshop. Students also get to experience using professional camera equipment to capture their best shots.

Our physical education courses take on a wide range of subjects which help the physical, social, and emotional well-being of our students. Students get the opportunity to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle while learning and playing different sports and physical activities. Not only does this course allow our students to spend time being active, but it also teaches students the value of teamwork and collaboration, which are skills that are easily transferable from sports to different areas of life.

Our Spanish classes offer our students the opportunity to either learn a new language, or master a language they already know. Many of our students come from Spanish speaking households, which allows for our teacher to challenge our students' abilities to communicate in their home language. Furthermore, our Spanish teacher celebrates the cultures that makeup our student body, connecting the surrounding cultural environment with the activities and curriculum in her classroom. In addition, with technology, students in Spanish classes have experienced collaboration on projects with students from abroad, which has allowed them to sharpen their language and communication skills.

Students enrolled in our computer classes have the opportunity to learn 21st century skills that they will need when joining the workforce. This course helps students to master skills in the Microsoft Office Suite (MOS), such as Word, PowerPoint, and Outlook. Students are expected to master these skills and participate in rigorous activities which require the use of many of their newly acquired computer skills. Upon the completion of these courses, students take a test to determine their expertise in MOS and can earn a certificate which can be listed on their resumes.

Lastly, our courses in the Academy of Entrepreneurship allows for students to experience the requirements and demands of running a business in the United States. This course also teaches students important entrepreneurial skills that help create successful businesses. Many of our students use the skills learned in this program to compete in regional and state-wide competitions. In recent years, we have also had many students take their business ideas to national competitions to compete against some of the nation's most promising entrepreneurial talent.

At Mater Academy East, we are focused on developing well rounded students who excel in many areas of life. We place just as much emphasis on our elective courses as we do our core courses such as reading, language arts, and math. By ensuring that we offer a wide array of options, we increase the chance of students being able to transfer important skills learned in their elective courses to help them succeed in their future core classes, as well as other aspects of life.

## **3. Special Populations:**

Mater East Middle continuously addresses the individual needs of each student through Response to Intervention. Response to Intervention provides high quality instruction and interventions aligned with student needs that are data driven in order to identify, define, and track student progress in academics and

behavior. Students are scheduled in intensive reading courses accordingly and work with a certified Reading Teacher to focus on the areas of need. Differentiated and small group instruction allows for assistance with students in need. Students move through the Response to Intervention process as they continue to exhibit academic difficulties. Students in Tier 2 are placed in small group interventions. If students are still in need of additional assistance, they receive small group interventions and are placed in Tier 3 where they also receive one-to-one instruction/interventions. Students who do not respond to several intensive level interventions are considered for evaluation for Exceptional Student Education. These strategies are vital in closing the achievement gap and ensuring students are working at their appropriate achievement level.

Mater Academy East strives to empower every student to flourish in a motivating and nurturing environment. Our school supports and challenges all students to be active participants in their own education and engage in continuous growth and achievement. Teachers evaluate student progress through data and work to provide individualized support to all students. Students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and Migrant Students are provided with integrated services and collaboration. Mater East Middle uses the appropriate supports and services within a general education setting to provide a rigorous and highly effective instruction. Students' individual goals are met through differentiated instruction, whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, consultation, collaboration, and accommodations.

All services are provided in the school and in the general education classroom. Teachers are active participants in the development of all initial, Interim, and annual Individualized Education Plans to ensure appropriate goals and accommodations are developed for each student. When creating a plan for a student, areas of need and strength, academic goals, emotional and social well-being, communication skills, independent functioning, and health care of the student are reviewed in detail by the school's Multidisciplinary Team. All teachers maintain updated copies of the Individual Education Plan for students who participate in the Exceptional Student Education and English Language Learner Program. Teachers use a list of accommodations to document their lesson plans with appropriate accommodations when necessary.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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

The low student to teacher ratio at Mater Academy East Middle allows for a closer bond between the faculty and the students. It provides teachers and administrators with ample time to focus on building relationships with the students, allowing for a more personalized approach in student support and learning. This also allows for a deeper understanding of our students, while providing opportunities to better motivate and engage the overall student body.

One of the strategies that we find effective in engaging and motivating students is to hold events and field trips that reward student success and positive behavior. Our school's Activities Director plans activities throughout the school year such as school-wide pep rallies and assemblies that motivate and celebrate the hard work students put forth throughout the school year.

Teachers at Mater Academy East Middle share a sense of support and are actively engaged in all aspects of the learning environment. Teacher's perspectives and voices are highly regarded when deciding curriculum development and implementation, or rules and procedures put in place to ultimately create a safe and nurturing learning environment. Mater East Middle believes that teachers are the foundation for fostering a positive learning environment. Our teachers are celebrated for their hard work and achievements during faculty meetings and a Teacher of the Year is chosen annually.

Additionally, Mater East Middle prides itself in the security and well-being of its students, teachers, faculty, and staff. In doing so, it has led us to develop a detailed School-Wide Safety Plan, which has been created to meet the specific needs of our school. We strive to provide our students and all stakeholders with a safe and dependable school environment.

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

Parental engagement plays a major role in the success at our school. At Mater Academy East Middle, we believe in the importance of creating and implementing a shared vision with all of our stakeholders. Mater East implements a number of different strategies that help with parental and community engagement. We schedule a number of parent events and meetings throughout the year intended to keep families informed with the most up-to-date information pertaining to their child's education. During these events, the school administration and staff are able to communicate important dates, overall student progress, and school-wide activities. Parents are encouraged to volunteer at the school through our Parental Volunteer Program. Parents volunteer their time in the classroom, school activities, field trips, and school fundraisers.

With our Title I Designation, we are afforded a Community Involvement Specialist (CIS) to assist with maintaining an open line of communication between the families, school, and community. Our CIS conducts informational meetings and training for parents, surveys the community to identify and assist in areas of critical need, and performs home visits together with the Principal to conduct wellness visits for children and families in need.

Additionally, Parent Orientations are held prior to the start of the school year, thereby allowing for teachers and parents to meet and communicate important information regarding expectations, requirements, and coursework. Once the school year has commenced, the school hosts quarterly Parent Nights that have proven successful in establishing a line of communication which develops throughout the duration of the school year.

Our school also includes parents in the decision-making process at the school. The Educational Excellence School Advisory Council meetings serve as an excellent opportunity for parents to communicate their voices and perspectives in regard to implementing school-wide decisions. This allows parents to be involved with the success of the school and offers transparency to decisions made throughout the school year. We find that parents enjoy being part of the process and share credit with teachers and students in the

achievements of the school.

In addition, the school holds partnerships with community organizations such as the City of Miami Parks and Recreation, Publix Supermarkets, McDonald's, Verizon Innovative Learning, and Digital Promise. These partnerships are essential to the success of the school. The use of their resources supports and strengthens the vision and mission of the school. The community organizations help engage, students, teachers, and families alike with additional learning experiences and educational opportunities.

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

At Mater Academy East Middle, we are continuously striving to provide an innovative approach to teaching and learning. In order to accomplish this, our teachers and administrators actively participate in professional development opportunities that deliver the skills and knowledge our educators need to address each students' learning needs. The Principal, as the instructional leader, also participates in professional development designed for teachers in order to support implementation and outcome. Mater East's approach on professional development helps create educators who are knowledgeable and motivated, which in turn, allow for effective implementation of teaching strategies that are carried out with fidelity. This approach ultimately affects learning in the classroom. Our school has been fully committed to enhancing the use of technology in and out of the classroom. In partnership with Verizon, we have been able to provide our teachers with a wealth of professional learning opportunities on how to implement technology in the classrooms.

The school has assigned a Professional Development Liaison to work with the school, district, and state to provide assistance with the professional development requirements and identification of courses for continuing education and teacher certification. The Professional Development Liaison helps plan for courses that are hands-on and aligned with the academic standards and overall goals of the school. Professional development activities are carefully selected by assessing the needs of the school. As a result, teachers are better able to efficiently and effectively implement engaging and innovative lessons in their classrooms. The school also offers a variety of ways for teachers and staff to participate in continuing education. Professional development is offered on teacher planning days, after school, and through online courses at which teachers can complete at their own pace.

The most effective professional development activities are those that engage educators to focus on the needs of each of their students. In order to determine the effectiveness of the professional development activities, educators are asked to reflect on the information provided and interpret student data related to the specific activity. The success of each professional development course is also measured through teacher observations and teacher surveys. This allows for improvement of teaching through the implementation of best practices.

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

The Leadership Team at Mater East Middle is made up of the Principal, Curriculum Coach, and Department Chairpersons. The Principal serves as an instructional leader who cultivates leadership in others to foster stakeholder buy-in in the school's vision and mission. In order to successfully create stakeholder buy-in, the Principal articulates the goals of the school to all stakeholders. The school has assigned Department Chairpersons for Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Elective Courses. Department Chairpersons work with teachers in their department as well as collaboratively with the leadership team to help improve student achievement. Together, the Principal, Curriculum Coach, and Department Chairpersons identify and implement effective resources and provide teachers with the support they need to continuously deliver effective and rigorous instruction to all students in order to improve student achievement. The Leadership team meets regularly to discuss implementation of the curriculum and interventions, and to analyze and disseminate data.

In addition to the Leadership Team, the school has also implemented a Staffing Specialist, Guidance Counselor, and Dean of Students. The Staffing Specialist works closely with the general education teachers in order to gather student data and provide students with the interventions and additional services needed.

Mater East's Guidance Counselor works together with the Dean of Students to provide behavioral support and character education to our students.

Creating a vision for academic success, shaping a school climate conducive to learning, managing data, providing support for teachers to effectively deliver lessons, and maintaining a safe environment for all stakeholders, are all key factors the Leadership Team at Mater Academy East Middle School has implemented in order to ensure the overall success of the school. These factors are paramount to helping to close student achievement gaps.

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

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At Mater Academy East Charter Middle, school climate is the heart of the school. We strongly believe that school experiences shape the learning and growth of all stakeholders. It is for this reason that Mater East takes pride in the emphasis placed on the socio-emotional well-being of all stakeholders and its influence on the school climate. Socio-emotional well-being encompasses a focus on values, goals, teaching, and learning.

A positive school climate begins with the staff. An emphasis on positive school climate has proven effective with the morale of the teachers and staff at our school. It promotes teacher motivation and retention rates, and has also decreased staff absenteeism throughout the years. The vision and mission of the school is clearly communicated with the staff throughout the school year thereby creating an environment that fosters support and respect for one another. The Leadership Team ensures that teachers and families are continuously provided with the support they need to carry out a positive learning experience for all students. Our low teacher to student ratio allows for the teachers and staff to make powerful and long-lasting connections with each student. The Leadership Team works closely and diligently with teachers to address student behavioral issues. Positive behavioral supports are put in place to minimize negative behaviors.

Happy teachers at Mater East create happy students. The focus on the socio-emotional well-being of students not only represents an increase in student satisfaction and improved self-esteem, but also promotes student learning and achievement. The school culture has provided students with an uplifting environment that allows students to feel safe and cared for. Students are motivated and have an increased sense of responsibility to act as responsible and contributing members of the school community. Student behavior issues, absenteeism, and suspensions have significantly declined in the past years. This in turn has had a powerful positive effect on student learning. Students are more engaged and active learners who are willing and ready to become life-long learners and make the most out of their academic careers.