

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [ ] Charter [X] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. April Williams  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Young Women's College Preparatory Academy  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1906 Cleburne Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Houston State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 77004-4131

County Harris

Telephone (713) 942-1441 Fax (713) 942-1448

Web site/URL http://www.houstonisd.org/YWCPA E-mail awilliam@houstonisd.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Grenita Lathan E-mail superintendent@houstonisd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Houston Independent School District Tel. (713) 556-6000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Sue Deigaard  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 200 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 43 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 37 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools

281 TOTAL

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

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

- Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the 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	0	130	130
7	0	102	102
8	0	92	92
9	0	60	60
10	0	71	71
11	0	33	33
12 or higher	0	43	43
<b>Total Students</b>	0	531	531

\*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):
- 0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1.5 % Asian
  - 50 % Black or African American
  - 44 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 2 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 4%

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	483
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Farsi, Ilonggo, Mandarin, Pilipino, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Urdu, Vietnamese, Yoruba

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %  
19 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 41 %

Total number students who qualify: 220

8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %  
5 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>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</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: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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 2019.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	36
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	89%
Enrolled in a community college	11%
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.

Young Women's College Preparatory Academy aims to provide a nurturing environment for young women that encourages integrity, fosters social responsibility, and develops the self-confidence necessary to attend and graduate college and become powerful women leaders in the global community.

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

Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy is a Single Gender S.T.E.M. Magnet School. Our campus is 100% magnet and does not have a dedicated attendance zone. Every student must apply and qualify to be considered. We use a district matrix to qualify students. The matrix consists of two pieces of data - the final report card from the previous school year and STAAR Reading and Math results or IOWA/Stanford results from private school applicants. There are three Phases to apply. A district lottery is run for qualified Phase I applicants only. Qualified Phase II & III applicants are accepted as space becomes available.

Potential applicants are recruited all year through district school choice fairs, visiting elementary and middle school events, attending community events, and opening our campus for interested family tours every week during the fall semester.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Founded in 2011, Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy (YWCPA) is located in the historic Third Ward community of Houston, Texas, an area of academically low-performing schools with few educational options and high poverty. While the area is slowly undergoing a gentrification process, its residents are still some of the most underserved citizens in the Houston area.

Forty-one percent of YWCPA students qualify for free and/or reduced lunch; and for them, the key to breaking the cycle of poverty is through education. However, despite their best intentions for the future, the path “to and through college” is not easy for low-income students. According to the National Students Clearinghouse research center, only 55% of students from low-income, high poverty high schools enroll in college the semester after high school graduation. Poverty, single-parent households, transience, and racial barriers can derail the collegiate aspirations of underserved students.

Focusing on empowering girls and young women through educational opportunities, YWCPA offers a quality academic curriculum concentrating on rigor, STEM engagement, and college readiness. Our program is specifically developed to meet the needs of underserved youth, as we believe that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background, can achieve academically when provided the supports and systems that allow for and encourage growth and development. All of our student populations, including students with disabilities, demonstrate significant academic growth and regularly outperform their peers at other schools.

Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy is committed to a rigorous curriculum for all students within a caring and supportive learning environment. We promote the development of critical thinking, social responsibility, integrity, and leadership. Enrollment at YWCPA sets students on the path to a brighter future through education. The college-prep environment on our campus creates a unique milieu of high academic expectations, persistence, fortitude, self-discipline, and achievement that is seldom found in a public school setting. Our primary objective is to provide our students with an outstanding program of study, that equips them with the skills and develops the assets that they need to demonstrate college and career readiness by meeting or exceeding state educational standards through a strong scholastic program, that build critical thinking skills by focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math.

To address the socio-emotional needs of YWCPA students, we focus more heavily on the assets and strengths of YWCPA students, and less so on their deficiencies. This growth-mindset approach encourages students to grow stronger by developing the skills and capabilities that allow them to personally cultivate a strong sense of self rooted in resilience, aptitude, confidence, and grit. By building a community of support by engaging families, peers, faculty, faith communities, businesses, government, and community organizations—YWCPA encourages collective growth and creates a caring, nurturing environment where students experience a sense of mutual respect, trust, fidelity, credibility, solidarity, validation, and sisterhood.

In addition to ensuring that every YWCPA student, from grades 6 – 11, visits a college campus every year, the campus partners with several community organizations and employee network groups that specifically focus on empowering and investing in girls and young women. YWCPA is able to offer a unique array of asset-building activities designed to foster student growth and drive its young people to success.

During the Homeroom/Advocacy Period, YWCPA’s community partners offer bi-weekly programming for 30 – 45 minutes on topics such as unconscious bias, gender norms, leadership skills, rights and responsibilities, personal responsibility, financial literacy, nutrition, personal wellness, mental health, advocacy, and civic/community engagement.

Through its high school mentoring program, SisterCircles, students are strengthened “from the inside out” by building a supportive network around each student. This program gives girls access to diverse and accomplished female role models to learn from their experiences and discover their own path to empowerment. YWCPA identifies organizations, companies, and employee resource groups that agree to

engage an entire graduating class, starting at freshman year and following them through high school graduation. This approach allows volunteers and students to experience both growth and major accomplishments while working towards a clearly defined goal with a set timeline. It also allows volunteer groups to experientially learn about the YWCPA culture and how they can support student success at the campus. Starting in the freshman year of high school, students are randomly clustered into SisterCircle cohorts of 6 – 8 students. Each cohort is assigned 2 -3 adult group leaders, who meet with the SisterCircle monthly. Adult leaders are given a mentor handbook and receive training from the campus's College Bound Advisor to insure that they are well-equipped and prepared to advise students in their academic endeavors. By having 2 -3 adult leaders and 6 – 8 students per cluster, we are intentionally cultivating a collaborative community of sisterhood where everyone works together to grow and achieve, both as individuals and as a collective.

Our single-gender campus is one that strives on empowering females to believe they can be anything they want to be, including leaders in STEM fields. Persistence and motivation from all stakeholders, self-awareness and social emotional support of girls, and the encouragement of sisterhood all make YWCPA the strong campus it is.

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

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Using assessments and assessment data effectively is key to improving instruction and student learning. Teachers meet weekly in grade-level and content PLCs to align curriculum and analyze both state, campus, and college readiness assessment data. Our teachers look at formative assessments, such as Beginning of Year assessments (BOY), Middle of Year assessments (MOY), End of Year assessments (EOY), teacher-created common assessments, and Renaissance 360. Our teams look for strengths and weaknesses of themselves and students. This analysis allows our teachers to make judgments on their teaching and allows them to customize their teaching plans based on current students' needs. Additional assessments that we find valuable to monitor our students' needs are benchmarks, College Board Assessments, and mock testing.

### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

Reading and English language arts is the foundational core subject which supports the other content areas and drives the foundational success of YWCPA. This comes from various practices and strategies that are implemented throughout the English/language arts courses, but also throughout YWCPA.

Pre-AP and AP course curriculum allows teachers, students, and classrooms to advance their learning and expectations at YWCPA. The Pre-AP/AP model allows for better vertical alignment, which serves to prepare our students for the coursework at the advanced levels, but also to expose students to the wide spectrum of English language and literature, writing and composition skills, as well as communication and technology. Last, but certainly not least, is that this curriculum model promotes the main mission of the AP/Collegeboard program of equity and access, as all our students participate in Pre-AP/AP Classes. At YWCPA, we know our girls can step up to the challenge and can continue to exceed our expectations.

One way we address all learners is through our daily DEAR initiative where students choose a novel to read and the start of our day is through DEAR. This choice is a direct reflection of the new TEKS for both middle school and high school, in terms of self-selected/choice reading to foster independent reading. This allows our students to make some choices about material about what they read, as well as building fluency and understanding, and complexity and connections. This allows our students to challenge themselves textually, but often supports their reading levels and lexiles, as well as building and fostering their love and joy of reading.

Our students go through various assessments throughout the course of the school to keep track of our students and their growth and performance. One of our primary goals in the ELA department is to maintain satisfactory growth from one year to the next, to progressively read and perform at and above district and state averages. We use Renaissance 360 Reading to check on students' reading levels at three strategic points of the year: Beginning of the Year-September (BOY), Middle of the Year (MOY) December-January, and End of the Year-May (EOY) assessments. We use district-level assessments, provided by the district, which are content and TEKS aligned short assessments which help us see if students are meeting objectives and meeting expectations. Furthermore, we use district-provided, full-length mock exams, for all of our pre-AP courses and AP courses, which are usually administered the end of February or beginning of March. This allows us to really receive a snapshot of our students and really begin to focus on our individual students' needs as we begin preparing for the end of the year exams. This strategic focus allows for individual student conferencing, which is an extraordinarily important component to our success for each student. Throughout these assessments, we also take these opportunities to target any interventions and support programs to assist our students who need a little bit more support in their learning. These interventions could take the form of individual conferencing, or strategic pull-out methods with district-level supports and specialists.

The ELA department focuses on an array of instructional practices, based on pre-AP and AP practices, as  
NBRS 2020

well as our teachers being trained in those advanced practices and ESL-certified. With such professional development and training in place, our teachers provide instructional support to support tiered instruction, differentiated instruction, technology-based supports and lessons, and other educational practices.

### **1c. Mathematics**

The goal of the math team is to ensure students not only are able to quickly compute numbers but have a strong foundation in number sense and mathematical relationships. At the middle school level, we focus on the importance of establishing expectations that will foster and develop a strong math student as she approaches high school, making sure to align those expectations to create a very seamless transition.

Through constant communications, the math team establishes what we call our math non-negotiables which are foundational to how we establish and build a long-term math learner. These non-negotiables assist in diminishing inconsistencies among the team and they allow students to grow and develop each year in such a way that further develops their understanding of math concepts and creates a culture in which expectations have been established early and are consistent throughout their middle and high school math classes. The math team anticipates and plan for our young ladies to enter as sixth graders with various levels of skills and deficiencies in math, and have created a strong system to cultivate and nurture each student into a successful and confident young math student. In order to better understand our levels of students mathematical understanding, each student is pre-tested. We test not only for math computational skills in general but the ability of the student to use math logic to answer questions that are related to math in every-day life. We tier by class and use various methods of differentiated instruction to meet the individual student's needs. Some of those methods include incorporating "flipped classrooms."

At YWCPA our campus is one-to-one from middle to high school. The math department uses this asset as a tool to introduce the lessons at home along with notetaking allowing for more time for students to participate in more hands-on learning activities. The goal is however, to ensure that each learning style is equipped with the tools needed to be a successful math student as we understand that students learn differently. Another method that is used to foster learning across grade levels is the use of vertical whiteboards and the concept of vertical learning. Studies have shown that students who can stand up and work vertically on whiteboards or walls or any surface tend to transform their thinking and learning through a more visual and active learning approach.

At YWCPA we have whiteboards aligned across the math hallway and students are allowed and encouraged as a class and individual to compute and collaborate in the whiteboard spaces both outside and inside the classroom. Students are challenged outside of their comfort zones and pushed to create rules and find patterns on their own, with little to no assistance from the teacher. Students build confidence in their cognitive abilities and began to shift from a teacher dependent to a teacher independent mentality. Our goal is to show our young learners that they have what they need cognitively to understand and unravel the many aspects of math, teach them to make connections early in their math careers and challenge them to push further than imagined.

The math team is in constant communication on the development of each student. Tiered teaching and tutoring is always available to assist students who learn at a different pace. Assessments are used to determine which TEKS are mastered and which ones need improvements. As a team, we constantly adjust and look for new ways to teach math. We recognize that even though math has not changed, our learners are constantly changing. We embrace that and continuously look for ways to support our young ladies as they move through from one level to another and eventually into college. We continue to support our young ladies even after they have left our halls and entered the next level of learning and development. Students are encouraged to keep in contact and reach out to the staff for additional support.

### **1d. Science**

Science instruction is provided based on TEKS and Advanced Placement Program (AP) curriculum. Our teachers invest time in vertical planning to ensure students learn the foundational science skills needed to be successful. The science team approach is to have students learn science by doing science.

Our approach includes using scientific manipulatives, demonstrations, and laboratory exercises. Since many students are visual learners, our science team guides our students with paper labs where students build two-dimensional models to learn a concept, create interactive notebooks where students take notes and attach scientific diagrams. Lab exercises give students an opportunity to actually see how something works (on a smaller scale). An example of a lab that our students completed is making alcohol with yeast. This lab demonstrated the fermentation process. As students are working on the lab, they are required to journal and keep notes of any changes that occurred.

Having students participate in labs help students build inquiry-based learning. Inquiry-based learning is a hands-on learning approach with student-centered discussions. These students can learn through discovery and peer interaction. The labs that our students participate in are teacher choice or student-created. All labs will have guiding questions to assist with keeping students on track with the objective. As an intermediary step, students are sometimes assigned inquiry labs where various steps are intentionally omitted. When students are working in their lab, the students have to make judgments on the processes to show what they understand. All of our lessons and labs are geared to give students opportunities to build on their prior knowledge and make connections to new material through hands-on experiences.

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

At YWCPA, the middle school curriculum for history is Pre- Advanced Placement and high school curriculum is Advanced Placement. The learning and engagement for the history department consist of writing across grade levels as the data revealed that this was an area of focus as it relates to AP exams and STAAR test.

All YWCPA students are required to challenge themselves by participating in history fair. The scholars are provided the option to create a website, performance or documentary. Participation in the history fair requires for students to learn how to research, put together a presentation and be able to present. This process alone prepares all YWCPA scholars for college and career readiness as these are essential skills that a college student or workforce employee must possess.

All high school history classes are Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The rigor of the coursework is equivalent to that of college level so the students are not only being taught college level course work but are provided the opportunity to earn college credit by scoring a three or higher on their end of the year AP exam. Learning and engagement in a history class at YWCPA can vary depending on the lesson created by the teacher. One may consist of gallery walks, higher order thinking, short response writing/ reflection, or even peer to peer collaboration combined with teacher led small group instruction. At YWCPA, the social studies department ensures that learning goes beyond lectures. As history is a subject that requires a lot of memorization and even vocabulary it is essential that history teachers always integrate creative strategies to check for understanding.

The History department has office hours during the school-wide hour lunch to provide feedback to their students or even one on one tutorials for specific areas of concern that their students may have.

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

Young Women's College Preparatory Academy curriculum supports college and career readiness through a school-wide College Success Initiative where each young woman receives skills in preparation, access, exposure and persistence.

Students are prepared for rigorous academic coursework in preparation for college level academics and identify careers that match their personal interests and explore the variety of college options available to them. Students are provided rigorous testing options such as the PSAT 8/9, PSAT/NMSQT 10/11 and College Board Advanced Placement assessments in addition, to elective choices, test preparation, career exploration and college search.

Students receive individualized support and guidance through the college application process through the application, college essays, scholarships, ACT/SAT/AP/TSI testing, 1:1 support, summer melt and financial aid guidance.

Students engage in activities that provide exposure to college and career environments and expectations to mold them into confident and self-advocating leaders through volunteer and service-learning projects, college tours, college fly-ins, college signing day, dual enrollment, networking, alumnae association, leadership opportunities (i.e. conferences), summer academic camps, internships and partnerships with community resources and businesses.

Students have the tools to persist to and through college to be successful leaders in their community by alumnae outreach, college support, intrusive intervention and identifying persistent partners on college campuses to guide our students.

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

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

As a college prep campus, YWCPA recognizes that reading and writing is essential to our scholars' academic success. As a campus initiative, every morning for the first 20 minutes of the day, the entire school shuts down for our scholars, core and elective teachers, and administrators to pick up their favorite novel or book to read. This allows the scholars to develop a love for reading as they can select any book of their preference to enjoy. Scholars are also able to see their teacher engaged in leisure reading as well. Continuing our schoolwide initiative through-out the school, each teacher and faculty member on campus participate in our "I am currently reading" campaign. During this campaign, each teacher displays a sign near the entrance of their door highlighting a book they are currently reading. Students are able to see what type of books their teachers are reading while initiating conversation starters amongst scholars and teachers regarding the book the teacher is reading. As a school wide initiative, all teachers are required to implement writing into their lessons. This may be seen in the form of a journal entry, warm up, exit ticket or even an assignment depending on the class.

As a 6th thru 12th grade campus, YWCPA offers a variety of electives and classes to our scholars. Middle school course load consists of eight classes. Along with the pre-AP core classes of English, math, science and social studies, middle school scholars select four additional elective classes. The middle school electives consist of art, choir, dance, physical education or technology applications. YWCPA art classes at the middle school level focus on visual art such as drawing, painting, shading, and creating art at a foundational level. The choir class focus on singing, dancing and performing. The dance curriculum consists of cheer and dance of different genres such as jazz, free style, hip hop, etc. The technology application class is designed to expose and teach our young scholars about different types of programs on their laptop and how to utilize them as they are becoming familiar with the overall use of their personalized laptop.

As a power up campus, all YWCPA scholars are given a personal laptop that is for school use. Throughout all the core classes and other curriculum areas, the student laptop is integrated into teachers' lessons and classes which requires for the student utilize their laptops in class. We have built into the schedule a required advocacy class for our middle and high school scholars. During this time, middle scholars are taught organizational skills and study skills from a purchased curriculum. High school scholars utilize this time to access Khan academy and SAT/ACT prep courses in preparations for their actual college entrance exams.

When our students transition to high school, the same electives are available with the addition of Spanish as a foreign language and electives that focus on STEM. These classes are determined based on the career path that the scholar has decided to pursue while meeting and planning alongside their academic counselor and their college access counselor. As students transition to high school, their courses become more focused on STEM as they become involved in robotics and engineering clubs, participate in competitions, internships with oil and gas companies and begin to take college visits to expose them to our campus expectation of 100 % college acceptance. Our college access coordinator holds classes for our seniors daily where they focus on scholarships, college applications, and college entrance exams preparations. We hold grade level parent

meeting once a month to involve parents in the college bound journey and process.

Once a month our middle and high school scholars participate in what we call STEM day. Students participate in a campus wide project-based learning activity. The activity requires for the students to use cross curricular knowledge and content to brainstorm, plan and design a finished project that is then submitted into a school wide competition for judgement. The winners work is put on school display and they are awarded lunch with the administration.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

To support students' who are performing below grade level, our general education teachers provide tutorials to our girls during Panther Hour, afterschool, and advocacy to ensure that they are able to give students the needed time and support to be successful. The students are selected for these interventions through formative assessment results. Every six-week, students are grouped based on their current data and recommended to attend the best tutorial that fits their needs. Since our school is a magnet only campus, we found that it was hard for many students to stay late for interventions after school. Therefore, we incorporated Panther Hour to allow students to receive intervention/tutorials during their lunch hour.

In addition, our campus is a power-up school, which is a districtwide initiative aimed at transforming teaching and learning. All our students receive a laptop with the latest technology that supports 21st-century teaching and learning. Teachers can personalize learning with different programs and apps to effectively facilitate instruction and manage the curriculum. These online programs have supports for foundational literacy learning and are geared to support students in student-specific skills.

With the combination of instruction and technology, teachers can utilize various tracking systems to measure students' progress toward meeting unit objectives and annual learning goals. This allows them to effectively analyze instruction and plan accordingly to meet the diverse needs of our students.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

Since we know our girls' academic expectations are very rigorous, we try to provide our students a nurturing learning environment that motivates and encourages them to put their best foot forward. One way that we motivate our girls is by implementing a program called Panther Hour. Panther Hour was created to give students a way to personalize their learning and encourage self-management systems. Panther Hour was created to provide our girls time during school to complete homework, create study groups, and attention tutorials for additional support. The students have one hour to have lunch and take care of their campus needs. If the students are caught up with their assignments and are successful in their classes, they can their hour to decompress.

Our student who performs above grade level also use their laptop to gain access to advanced curriculum, such as programs like Khan Academy, and College Board. These programs are self-pace and organized to push students academically with a mini-lesson and supplemental practice exercises to be successful on SAT and AP assessments.

In the classroom, students are immersed in the curriculum through project-based learning. The students are pushed with opportunities where they are given choice in creating their final projects and assignments. This allows for students to demonstrate in more than one way what they learned in that class about particular subjects. The teachers are also offered multiple opportunities to present in front of the class or campus. This method allows for students to encourage and learn from each other throughout the semester.

On our campus it is important to offer our above grade level students more than one way to learn our curriculum and to present what they know. In addition, we provide them the autonomy to take care of personal needs during Panther Hour.

### **3c. Special education**

Our campus interventionists support general education teachers by closing the educational gaps for students who are struggling in the school setting through an inclusion and/or pull-out model. Our SPED teacher monitors students in their classroom and has student conferences once every two weeks to support students within their classrooms. The SPED teacher not only provides support to the special education students but equips the general education teachers with instructional tools and resources to help benefit students. These tools and resources not only provide support for special education students, but will be an aid that teachers can use with struggling students in their class as well. Our special education support personnel trains teachers on the use of Goalbook and how to utilize the sites multiple resources. These involve a plethora of instructional strategies from the core areas of reading, writing, and math to English Language Learners, autism, and transition needs. The instruction is taken as a true team approach. The general education teachers know they are supported and have personnel who can guide them and the student through purposeful learning with success. The SPED teacher provides goals and accommodations to all the identified students' teachers. These are thoroughly explained and reviewed often for clarity. The teachers are also provided tools to assist with data tracking. This is used for progress monitoring. Having teachers abreast of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is also a component of the special education intervention provided on campus. Having teachers present their lessons in varied modalities will provide the students with a rich array of engagement and representation. In addition, it allows the student to approach learning the best way possible for them in terms of action and expression. Our dyslexia teacher supports students with the Neuhaus curriculum. They are pulled twice a week for intervention and are monitored weekly. Students who qualifies for special services are placed in their grade level English class and a reading intervention class.

### **3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered**

Students who struggle with acquiring the English language are placed in their grade level English class and a reading intervention class. Their Reading Intervention class has less than 15 students. In this class the students are dissecting grade-level curriculum in small groups and are required to track their own growth.

At our campus it is a requirement for all our English teachers to be certified ELL teachers. We want to ensure our ELL students received that best opportunities in their classrooms. Because our English teachers are ELL certified, they understand students who are learning the English language needs to have the objectives clearly written and for the students to have autonomy with producing final assignments and projects. ELL students are also given the same opportunity to participate in Panther Hour like our general education students. However, they use this time to receive additional support in all their classes. English Learners can get one-on-one support with their teachers to help them stay on track with their classes. However, if they are caught up, they as well can use this time to decompress.

The students are monitored throughout the year by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) to analyze each student's progress. The LPAC team will meet three times a year to discuss and recommend interventions and accommodations for their current teachers to follow to ensure the success of each student.

### **3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered**

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy staff understand that student success depends on efforts of educating the whole child. Creating and maintaining a positive environment promotes academic achievement in the form of grades, test scores, and student engagement. We do this by removing the negative barriers that students face, such as poverty, learning disabilities, and lack of experiences. We want our students to feel safe and supported in every aspect of their lives. In the area of academics, our students are given 90 minutes in each class to give them an extended amount of time to devote to their lessons. There are various opportunities for continued studies and extra help through after-school tutoring, Panther Hour, Parent Night, and the after-school program.

Panther Hour is a strategically scheduled lunch period where students take 30 minutes to eat their lunch and the next 30 minutes are spent in tutorials with their teachers. Parent Night provides parents with lessons, skills to help their students with difficult content, and social emotional support. Our school offers a very rigorous curriculum with Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement and Dual Credit courses. Our staff is dedicated to their own continued education through research, workshops, and monthly meetings to collaborate with AP instructors to provide proper instruction and support to the students.

The mission at Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy is to provide a nurturing environment for young women that encourages integrity, social responsibility and the self-confidence necessary to attend and graduate college and become powerful women leaders in the global community. We know that success academically begins with social and emotional well-being. Through partnerships with various organizations and corporations, every student is provided a mentor. Our counselor meets with students at the beginning of school to help students with the transition from their previous grade to their present, offering information and assistance with study skills, organizational skills, and time management. We offer personal counseling to assist with family issues, relationships, and anxiety with emphasis on performance anxiety. The guidance team works closely with the Homeless and Foster Care Department to give students an opportunity to have clean clothes, necessary toiletries, and resources to make them feel whole and worthy. The nurse works with the Houston Food Bank to provide food for families on our campus. Our students are successful because of the barriers we help to remove.

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

Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy is located in the heart of the historical neighborhood of Third Ward, Houston. We take pride in the rich culture, residents, and history that surrounds our campus. Most recently during our renovation process we made sure to preserve the historical integrity of our over ninety-year-old building knowing that many community members attended school here in the past.

We encourage local businesses to participate in campus events such as our Annual Community Fall Festival, Family STEM Night, our monthly school wide STEM Challenge and Field Day, to name a few. We extend the use of our facilities for community events as well. This year the State of Black Women’s Health Forum, The Gulf Coast Regional Blood Drive, and sporting events for surrounding schools without gymnasium spaces were held here. We seek their participation not only as sponsors but as community partners, offering support and inspiration to our students and staff.

This year we hosted several “Parent University” nights. The topics included strategies for math and science success, everything you need to know about college and financial aid, preparing your child for the Texas History Fair, and encouraging reading at home. Parent University nights allow parents the opportunity to get practical information to support student success.

Each high school grade level is mentored by a local business partner. Employees of those organizations visit monthly to meet with our young ladies and offer support, guidance, and expertise through lunch time “chat & chews.”

Volunteerism is a big part of the Young Women's College Prep culture. Our group of student ambassadors lead the way by visiting local elementary schools, participating in school choice fairs, and giving campus tours to potential applicants and business partners. Each year students are encouraged to complete local community service hours along with their families. The number of hours expected correlates to their grade level. Our students have gone above and beyond by organizing community blood drives, participating during the Super Bowl of Caring, and organizing relief efforts for natural disaster victims across the country. Our staff also started the year off by sorting and packing food boxes at the Houston Food Bank and even spent the last day before winter break distributing food to our Third Ward neighbors in need.

Our greatest community partnership is undoubtedly our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). These men and women offer tremendous support to the school and neighbors. You can find them greeting at the front door, singing carols in hallways, delivering pick me ups on "Mocha Monday," or cheering students on at athletic events. They are not merely a fundraising group but a group of volunteers working together for a healthier, happier student body.

Being a part of an authentic community involves coexisting and working together for a common good. Empowering girls is the common good at YWCPA, and the efforts of the school, parents, and community are evident in the excellence of each one of the students here at Young Women's College Preparatory Academy.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

YWCPAs approach to professional development is a collaborative one between administration and teachers. Professional development is chosen through examining the needs of students through common assessments, state test results, Advanced Placement (AP) assessment results and observations of staff by appraisers and teacher leaders. Furthermore, teacher feedback is vital to determine the professional development needs of the campus, as they are the ones who will be expected to deliver the knowledge gained from the professional development. The impact of this collaborative approach is that students' needs are met on a differentiated level, developing girls into college ready learners.

As a campus, YWCPAs vision and professional development has always been geared towards ensuring girls are not only accepted to college but prepared to make it through college. This is accomplished by providing professional development that ties higher learning and advanced placement into the curriculum. Paired with our Young Women's Preparatory Network, we invest in our teacher's development throughout the year and intensely during the summer. Teachers are expected to not only keep up with their Gifted and Talented (GT) hours, but also have yearly, continuous learning with universities and College Board. There are always professional development opportunities that are geared towards reading and math support for students.

The district provides an immense amount of Professional Development via direct instruction and online learning. YWCPA accesses both platforms through school wide trainings and individual learning. Additionally, teachers have access to our regional education center that offers professional development on a variety of topics. Both on site and off campus training opportunities are geared toward the TEKS, Pre AP and AP curriculum.

The mission as a campus is continual growth. Collaborative opportunities to plan and attend professional development is a must for teacher to support students learning at the maximum potential level.

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

The Young Women's College Prep Academy's administrative team consists of a principal, two Deans of Instruction, a counselor and a magnet coordinator. Each position plays a crucial role in the success of the school. The team meets every Friday to collaborate about teachers, students, goals, activities and any other timely items. The Deans manage discipline of their grade levels, broken down by middle school and high school. They also oversee special populations and Title I funds. The magnet coordinator works to ensure the single-gender STEM program meets all the needs of the diverse student population as well as the needs of

the GT learner. Our campus counselor oversees testing, scheduling and social emotional needs of students.

During weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC), the administration team joins teachers to provide information and support that helps strengthen the academic achievement of students. This is done through modeling, learning, data-driven conversations and planning. The administration team also works closely with the PTO, SDMC and Parent Engagement team. The PTO offers a variety of events throughout the year that provide financial support for the campus. They Boo Hoo Breakfast on the first day of school for all those parents dreading the idea of their daughter starting middle school, Father Daughter Dance, Mother Daughter Tea and, most successful, the fall popcorn fundraiser. These events are able to bridge collaboration and support between the community and school. The SDMC meets monthly to discuss important topics regarding the school such as safety, enrollment, recruitment and retainment and budget.

The administration team believes that every one of Young Women's College Preparatory Academy stakeholders play a vital role in the success of the campus. YWCPA strives to our teachers and our community. As leaders of the campus, the administration seeks to remain dedicated to the mission and vision of the district, the Young Women's Preparatory Network and the campus.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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"I am a ROSE of the YWCPA, pushing the boundaries of Math Science and Technology. I am responsible, I am organized, and I am part of a sisterhood that is exceptional." This creed is recited ritually at YWCPA. Our girls are galvanized with the words from this creed that acts as a catalyst for achieving unlimited excellence. Understanding the importance of well thought out social emotional development is the mitochondria of everything YWCPA establishes itself on.

While YWCPA has a strong emphasis on academic achievement, we purposely strive to meet the needs of every student through activities that support their social emotional well-being.

Simple solutions, such as breakfast in the classroom, promote healthy eating habits and rituals. Morning rituals allow students to speak with classmates and teachers, often starting the day in a positive learning environment and building positive relationships. We maintain balance during the day by providing the girls an hour-long lunch. Teachers have the opportunity to create office hours, in correlation with creating a collegiate type of tutorial experience. This one-hour lunch allows our girls to socialize and maintain their friendships throughout the day in a longer period. This targeting of their social needs has improved all aspects of learning, attention, focus, discipline and behavior.

We do not believe in barriers and have implemented a contiguous educational platform from middle school to high school. With the support of the My Sister My Tribe program, which is built on the mentor protegee model, girls can blossom in all areas critical to their well-being. Mandating advocacy and clubs during the school week have allowed more staff to student interactions, thus building relationships. This is a main reason why our students are successful. Girls have a teacher who is looked upon as an advocate and mentor, not only providing academic support, but social and emotional support.

Encouraging voluntary participation in athletics, dance, visual arts, gardening, music and choir allows the girls to meet personal aspirations that may enhance their academic goals. YWCPA thrives on educating the whole student. We aim to ensure girls are healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged. Girls are encouraged to recite every day they are extraordinary, not because they believe it, but because everyone around them including teachers, staff, parents, and peers believe it and push them to work hard toward it.