

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name East Hancock Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4221 Kiln Delisle Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Kiln State MS Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 39556-6068

County Hancock County

Telephone (228) 255-6637 Fax (228) 255-8372

Web site/URL https://east.hancockschools.net/ E-mail slee@hancockschools.net

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* Mr. Alan Dedeaux E-mail adedeaux@hancockschools.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Hancock County School District Tel. (228) 255-0376

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 Dr. Jennifer Seal
(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, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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

Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. 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

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	8	2	10
K	53	49	102
1	71	35	106
2	53	45	98
3	40	48	88
4	60	37	97
5	51	45	96
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	336	261	597

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 88 % White
 - 4 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 15%

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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	45
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	56
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	101
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	670
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

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

Spanish, Telugy, Gujarati

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
6 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 57 %

Total number students who qualify: 340

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %

104 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

16 Autism

0 Multiple Disabilities

0 Deafness

0 Orthopedic Impairment

0 Deaf-Blindness

15 Other Health Impaired

21 Developmental Delay

22 Specific Learning Disability

5 Emotional Disturbance

21 Speech or Language Impairment

0 Hearing Impairment

0 Traumatic Brain Injury

3 Intellectual Disability

1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7

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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	94%	94%	94%	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 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
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. 2013

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

East Hancock Elementary is dedicated to academic excellence and provides a curriculum which fosters critical thinking, problem solving, and communication while encouraging a lifetime love of learning.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Our school has has been operating as usual. We did not delay the start of our school year and are following our regular calendar.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

East Hancock Elementary (EHE) is located within a rural area of Hancock County and adjacent to the nearby suburban city of Diamondhead. The school serves approximately 605 kindergarten through fifth grade students, with a special education Pre-Kindergarten program. Many EHE families have been here for generations, while others have joined the school community from nearby industries along the Gulf Coast. The families and local community are vested in the school and offer generous support and donation of their time. East Hancock is a source of pride for all of the community.

Academic rigor is set high for all students to develop their full potential with the use of ongoing analysis of assessment data to drive performance-based instruction, challenging students at their levels to succeed. Students are partners in their own education and understand their personal academic goals with individual growth plans. Multiple resources, including research based practices and technology have been incorporated to address these needs. Flexible groupings and dedicated intervention times with well trained interventionists allow students to follow appropriate road maps to academic success. School wide incentive programs and celebrations encourage students to monitor their own successes and aim high.

East Hancock understands that academic success means supporting students' basic needs. Programs such as Backpack Buddies to provide food and snacks and Christmas Angels to provide gifts help support students' nutritional and emotional needs. School philanthropic activities such as Penny Wars to benefit Cystic Fibrosis patients, canned food drives supporting our local pantry, and the St. Jude Math-A-Thon to help stamp out childhood Cancer encourages a sense of community and compassion for others. The Golden Gator award bestowed upon a class each month who exhibits exemplary behavior and acts of kindness, Library Helpers who assist our Media Specialist, a peer-elected Student Council, a varied and motivational Career Week, an exciting parade of local high school seniors reminding student of a not-so-far-away goal, and Kindergarten Walkers who escort nervous young Gators to class inspire our students to model the most positive character traits needed in 21st Century citizens.

East Hancock further encourages excellence with the SOAR program, recognizing students with exemplary academic, behavior, and best effort. Rewards and celebrations held throughout the year reinforce pride of working hard. Another unique incentive program used school wide is earning Gator Tags and Gator Certificates for positive behavior. These in turn are traded in for a book signed and given by the principal. In 2019, East Hancock adopted the "House" system based on the Ron Clark model to further build a school-wide climate of community and behavioral accountability. Students are sorted among 5 houses, and will remain in that house throughout their academic career at EHE. Quarterly house rallies build spirit and community, as Houses earn points through friendly competitions. House chants were created and students dress in house colors to show spirit. In addition, the Essential 55 rules program is also implemented to encourage positive behavior. East Hancock provides other opportunities to include families and the local community with events such as an after school robotics program, art and science family nights, STEM Saturday, festivals, and many other school community events.

The challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic have been met by students, faculty, and community members with innovation and resilience. All of the faculty returning to school in August 2020 have been determined to provide students with high quality education in the safest environment possible. Safety measures were instituted school wide and adaptations such as the implementation of new technology provided students with high quality instruction. The faculty and staff developed strategies during the Spring of 2020 that were modified and improved during the fall. New ways to celebrate successes were adopted while ways to provide consistency were preserved. As always, communication with families has been at the forefront of student success. Teachers worked to provide instruction, feedback, and information through newly used technology, such as Google classroom.

Being awarded the National Blue Ribbon award in 2013 affirmed what the community and staff already understood about East Hancock: this school is a place where the community, staff, and students strive daily for excellence. Being a National Blue Ribbon school challenges East Hancock to perform beyond expectations and serve as a leader for schools in the district. The faculty has continued to grow through

professional development opportunities and serves as a model for others by sharing, collaborating, and modeling strategies of quality curriculum and instruction with others. The school wide focus to become proficient in technology, like Google and Kami certifications, has also further supported developing learners' competency in navigating new resources. School leadership is proactive and pursues opportunities to raise the bar of excellence. The award is a source of pride for the community and our EHE Gators.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

East Hancock has made extraordinary adaptations in terms of instruction, curriculum, and assessments in response to the current operating schedule. Teachers have learned to navigate Google Classroom, which provides teachers and students the opportunity to seamlessly connect and interact with classroom resources. All students are issued a district Chrombook for use at home and school, allowing access to more individualized instruction. With the incorporation of Google Classroom, instruction has been adapted for online learning, with teachers providing daily instructional videos and lessons for in-person and distance learners. Assessments have been formatted to be given digitally, allowing students to interact with more complex standards and more accurate data analysis. In addition, students receive interventions via virtual meetings, such as Zoom and Google Meet.

Instructional techniques vary throughout grade levels. In Kindergarten and first grade, Jolly Phonics, a multi-sensory approach to teaching letter/sound relationships addresses the needs of emerging readers. Literacy development continues in second and third grades with the use of Interactive Writing, iReady, standards-based literature units, and various other resources. Teachers develop fluency with choral reading, reader's theater, and shared reading opportunities. Comprehension and listening skills are developed through daily read-alouds in all grade levels, allowing teachers to model effective reading strategies. In upper grades, the curriculum focus shifts to more complex, text-based application of reading strategies within novel studies, thematic units, non-fiction texts, and implementation of the Wit & Wisdom program. There is an effective balance of print and project-based learning throughout to enhance inquiry-based learning. School wide, teachers use Total Participation Techniques to ensure engagement of learners as well as question stems that support the multiple depths of knowledge needed for success. Research-based approaches (modeling and scaffolding) are used in both small and whole group instruction.

Over several years, assessments have evolved from primary recall questions about a text or passage read in class, to rigorous standards-based assessments. With new technology resources, assessments have evolved. Students having access to a Chrombook created the opportunity to use a balance of digital and print tests. Dynamic assessment question stems and formatting mirror those of district benchmark and state exams.

Since the move to distance learning in March 2020, Google Classroom became the cornerstone of online, off-campus instruction. Despite the many challenges remote learning posed, our resilient teachers became innovators in the face of this mass disruption to the traditional learning process. Google Classroom became the life-line which enabled students to continue their education, have flexibility, and even receive personalized support from teachers via video conferencing. Teachers were also creating and providing instructional videos for each lesson posted in Google Classroom. Utilizing Kami, Jam Boards, Google Slides and/or Docs, students were able to have a connection with not only their teachers, but with their classmates as well. The one-to-one devices have allowed students to have technology at their fingertips in school and at-home. For students who may not have Wifi access, it is available at school anytime students need to use it. Chromebook accessibility features have also expanded accommodations for eligible learners.

Learning standards are addressed using various curriculums. In Mathematics, teachers utilize programs such as Eureka Great Minds and iReady, both of which teach higher level number sense and application. In English Language Arts, core materials are derived from the iReady Reading series, Core Knowledge Language Arts, Houghton Mifflin, and Great Minds Wit & Wisdom program. In addition to these programs, teachers have the autonomy to make supplemental curriculum choices aligned with state standards based on student needs. Core Knowledge Science is used due to its close alignment with state standards. This resource provides videos, lessons, and activities that can be presented in Google Classroom or in person. Social Studies standards are compacted with ELA standards and based on the expanding theme, from the study of people and communities to the United States and the world. Students interact with all standards through a balance of project-based learning, thematic units, and non-fiction texts.

A 40-minute intervention block built into the regular school day emphasizes targeted, tiered instruction, addressing remediation and enrichment needs of students. MobyMax, i-Ready, Jolly Phonics, and Hear NBR 2021

Builder are a few of the technology-based support programs utilized by our teachers and interventionists when intervening with students.

Formative assessment data collected from the two initial TE21 district benchmark assessments, Renaissance STAR tests, and classroom assessments are considered along with individual student histories, state standards and blueprints to inform instruction, including remediation and enrichment. Teachers use this data to formulate detailed individual growth plans for students performing below grade level. These are modified throughout the year as new data points become available. Summative assessments, such as previous state test data, and comprehensive assessments, inform instructional starting points, curriculum modification, and pacing for the current year and future years.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At East Hancock Elementary, our Gators have opportunities to develop the whole self. Students participate in art, computer, library/media, music, and physical education classes weekly. Kindergarten through fifth grade students participate in a rotation of these activities during their daily activity time. Our activity classes nurture the whole child by fostering knowledge and appreciation for visual and performing arts, a life-long love of reading, technology, and physical activity.

Art teaches our students visual literacy, fine motor skills, problem solving, collaboration, as well as developing the students' individual creativity. Our students learn the elements of art and the principles of design through lessons that teach them about various art techniques and artists. Our students are given instruction on sketching, drawing, painting, and printmaking while using a variety of mediums. Our art instructor continually brightens our hallways with seasonal, thematic, school wide displays of students' work, fostering a sense of personal pride.

Computer class provides students the opportunity for cross-curricular learning. The instructor collaborates with our teachers to provide learning extensions, enrichment, and remediation through programs that are technology-based. This prescriptive instruction addresses students' individual learning paths and focuses on skills that are essential to their success.

The school Library Media Specialist helps to promote literacy throughout the school, working to create a life-long love of reading for both purpose and recreation. Students are exposed to a wide range of genres: fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, biography, and poetry. Students not only receive instruction on how to locate books in the library by author, topic, and reading levels, but are also given lessons that include science, history, current events, research skills, digital citizenship, and character building. Library resources are available to classroom teachers to complement and enrich the grade-level curriculum.

Music provides students with another creative, multi-faceted means of expression. Students learn rhythm and tonal patterns, listen to, perform, improvise and compose rhythms, melodies, and explore a variety of percussion instruments. Each grade level performs a show where students dance, sing, and showcase their talents. These performances have become tradition and a major part of the school culture at East Hancock Elementary. Third, Fourth and Fifth grade students receive instruction in playing the recorder and have the option to audition for the school chorus. These students evaluate peer performances, as well as perform concerts for the school and surrounding community.

Students attend physical education classes each week to develop physical skills and build healthy habits. P.E. helps students understand the importance of collaborating with others to foster team building and

working together to accomplish a common goal. Physical education classes promote the importance of self-discipline, accomplishing complex tasks, and to perseverance. These traits are beneficial when students face rigorous academic challenges, as well.

3. Academic Supports:

East Hancock Elementary (EHE) recognizes that diverse student populations benefit from custom-designed intervention, assessment, and instructional plans.

Multiple systems are in place to identify and support at-risk students performing below grade level or those who meet other at-risk criteria. Students in kindergarten and first grade are screened using a state-approved Dyslexia screener and the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Oral Reading Fluency tool multiple times per year. First through fifth grade students are monitored with TE21-created district benchmark exams. Data from these screeners is analyzed to prescribe interventions for individual students while also identifying whole-class, grade-level, or subject-area deficits. Students performing below-grade level enter the Multi-tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS).

Students in MTSS are progress monitored weekly. The MTSS team meets monthly to review progress, modify interventions, and assign interventionists who provide 1:1 support, focusing on students' most critical, foundational deficits. Interventions such as reinforcing techniques of the Orton-Gillingham method, Moby Max, iReady, and Hearbuilder are research-based and meet a variety of student needs. Classroom assistant positions evolve throughout the year based on need, allowing our focus to remain on providing quality person-to-person interventions. The goal is to close learning gaps or strengthen core academic foundations, then move on to subject-specific needs. EHE provides a school wide daily intervention and/or enrichment time. Students are sorted into standards-based, fluid groupings.

Students performing above grade level are similarly identified. Their needs are met through daily enrichment groups, differentiated instruction that includes prescriptive learning activities and through our Gifted and Talented (G&T) program. The G&T program has been revised to provide students the chance to interact with their G&T teacher and peers daily: reinforcing understanding of their unique learning styles and fostering social/emotional growth.

Students who progress through the MTSS process with insufficient growth and minimal academic success are referred for a comprehensive evaluation. Once a student is identified as being eligible for an individualized educational plan (IEP), prescriptive accommodations and an inclusion or self-contained Special Education teacher are added to the list of supports noted above. EHE supports a full-inclusion model, where appropriate. Frequent quality checks are in place to ensure students are consistently receiving appropriate accommodations. Modifications to the IEP are made as needed. To meet the social and emotional needs of the few students who are not able to remain full-inclusion, EHE emphasizes general-education peer activity classes, recess, and shared lunch.

English-language learners are identified upon enrollment and assessed using the LAS/LINKS assessment to determine language proficiency. ELL students are monitored and supported via MTSS. However, intervention for ELL students primarily focuses on language instruction until students meet proficiency.

EHE works within the framework of McKinney-Vento to support homeless/migrant students. School supplies, uniforms, specialized transportation, and food are provided, as needed. EHE also works with community partners and parents when urgent needs such as housing, electricity, or safety arise. Ensuring basic life needs are met allows us to then support students academically.

East Hancock Elementary employs all tools and personnel to meet the ever-changing needs of our diverse population so that students have a solid educational foundation on which to grow.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

East Hancock Elementary creates an environment in which students feel safe, motivated to learn, and successful to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. At EHE, we celebrate academic successes, personal growth, sincere efforts, and a variety of milestones and achievements. SOAR is a club that welcomes members who have no discipline referrals and put forth their best efforts academically. With no set academic grade for membership, students can feel safe knowing they are only assessed on their personal goals. SOAR members earn rewards throughout the year. Students are encouraged to meet individualized goals through the Accelerated Reader program. Classes who demonstrate exemplary behavior are awarded the traveling “Golden Gator” trophy.

EHE utilizes the Ron Clark “House” system to encourage a sense of belonging across the school. Students participate in rallies and team building activities to nurture their emotional growth and sense of community. Also, a full-time school counselor is made available to students who benefit from additional one-on-one encouragement and attention.

East Hancock believes that celebrating educational milestones encourages social growth and camaraderie. Fifth graders have a formal end-of-elementary ceremony, high school seniors parade through our halls before graduation in caps and gowns, and local athletes and band members visit the school frequently for pep rallies, to assist in the car-rider line, and to perform community service. East Hancock also hosts students who are enrolled in a multi-district Teacher Academy program. These career and vocational students work with EHE students while gaining valuable experience from the classroom teacher.

East Hancock has looked for innovative ways to engage students during the pandemic. EHE led the way in creating interactive, thematic Google Classrooms in which students could connect to their teachers, peers, access academic resources, and assessments. Teachers provided daily video lessons and contact through Google Meets and Zoom. Social and emotional needs were addressed as virtual, needs-based classrooms were created by the counselor. Teachers and therapists of special populations created their own digital classrooms with confidentiality procedures in place. Music, art, and library activities were shared virtually, as well. Virtual house rallies and spirit days continued as students submitted pictures and participated in games to earn house points. Teachers paraded through neighborhoods in decorated vehicles, making certain students felt the support of their school community. Eventually, EHE became a one-to-one facility. Students have access to their own device in and out of school. These have been integrated into weekly lessons on-campus to build proficiency in using online learning platforms. Students are now confident in their abilities to navigate the ever-changing educational landscape.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The goal at East Hancock is to promote connectedness that brings communities, families, and children to support the overall learning process. East Hancock partners with the local food bank to collect nonperishable items for the community. We also partner with a local church to help provide food for families with limited resources to provide quality meals. Protective face masks were provided for the entire student body and faculty/staff by a community group to ensure safety for all while facing new health concerns. EHE hosts an annual career fair that typically involves approximately sixty volunteers who represent different career sectors, including representatives from NASA and Rolls-Royce, two industries housed in our own backyard. The career fair is a highly-anticipated event that exposes students to resources that will help prepare them when making future educational and career decisions. Local lawyers, civil service workers, musicians, electricians, artists, and many other volunteers visit EHE to share why their career choice is one students should consider. This year, guest speakers participated via Zoom instead of on-campus due to pandemic restrictions.

East Hancock promotes National Red Ribbon Week by providing guest speakers, organizing dress-up theme days to celebrate those who choose to live drug-free. Our local fireman and policeman often visit campus

during this week, including the stars of the show: K-9 Officers. East Hancock wants our Gators to take fire-prevention safety seriously, we incorporate a program every fall to educate students on safe practices and habits. East Hancock is a proud sponsor of The St Jude's Children's Research Hospital by hosting a Math-a-thon and Penny Wars to benefit the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Thousands of dollars are raised for these groups each year.

Donors Choose is a community resource that is often used by teachers to help fund special classroom projects. Prior to the pandemic, and hopefully again in the near future, EHE frequently welcomed parents on-campus to assist with seasonal festivals, schoolwide and grade-level incentives, to offer feedback and participate in key community components of Title planning. School events that, due to the pandemic parents are still unable to attend, are shared in a higher level of detail (videos, photos, etc.) via the EHE website and other online platforms.

East Hancock believes the community is a vital part of our success and frequently takes advantage of the resources they provide in creating an engaging and successful learning environment.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Quality professional development opportunities are provided by East Hancock Elementary's administrative team which allow teachers to expand upon their content expertise and learn additional strategies to better meet the needs of our students. Professional development is ongoing and adaptive, based upon results of a yearly needs assessment. Professional development opportunities are built into the school day with a structured schedule for Professional Learning Communities during common planning times and regularly scheduled professional development meetings at the close of the school day. Teachers have the opportunity to earn Continuing Education Units for their participation in professional development, and the content is selected to be relevant and immediately applicable to have a direct impact on instruction. Professional development efforts at East Hancock Elementary have been focused on higher-order thinking skills, multi-dimensional engagement, and effective questioning. We have also studied differentiation, authentic classroom tasks, and project-based learning. We have engaged in several book studies such as Teach Like a Pirate and Total Participation Techniques to provide additional strategies to actively engage students in the learning process.

An indispensable component of East Hancock's professional development plan is the implementation of peer observations. Peer observations are conducted regularly throughout the year and allow teachers to share their teaching practices, provide and receive constructive feedback in a positive manner, and provide additional instructional support where needed. Many teachers have reported incorporating ideas from the peer observations into their own classroom instruction. Teachers learn best from each other, and teacher-led professional development has proven quite effective for our teachers. During Professional Development Days, break-out sessions are led by teachers and have included content related to the topics of centers, thematic units, NWEA Learning Continuum, Thinking Maps, and gifted education. Written feedback included several comments expressing the desire to have additional teacher-led professional development in the future and excitement regarding the implementation of the strategies and information learned from each other.

At East Hancock Elementary, there is an understanding that we all have collective responsibility for our students, and it is extremely valuable to engage in conversations and collaboration regarding instructional practices. We believe that our practices in the classroom and results regarding student achievement must be transparent in order to have honest conversations about the direction of our school improvement efforts. Highly effective teachers increase student achievement. East Hancock is committed to cultivating a staff that produces results.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of East Hancock Elementary is defined as a collaborative, problem-solving approach aimed at maximizing student achievement. Leadership is cultivated at all levels to encourage motivation, self-confidence, and ownership. The principal, assistant principal, lead teacher and counselor

serve as the core administrative team. Our school leadership team is comprised of the administrative team, grade-level representatives, and special subject area representatives. The leadership team collaborates to make informed decisions related to instruction, resources, programs and activities which ensures every voice is heard to support all aspects of our education program. Analyzing data together as a grade level greatly impacts teachers by allowing the focus to remain on student need. Led by the grade-level representative, teachers meet weekly during their common planning time to discuss student performance and progress, interventions necessary to close gaps, and instructional strategies needed for successful outcomes. In addition to our administrative team and school leadership team, committees are also created to address school-wide improvement in the areas of academic achievement and school culture.

Our administrative team possesses the ability to lead through prosperous or challenging times, develop a plan and implement with fidelity, exhibit problem solving and conflict management skills, and display a strong commitment to mentoring and developing faculty. The primary goals of the administrative team are ensuring school safety, being effective instructional leaders, protecting the instructional day, providing quality professional development, and promoting a positive school culture. East Hancock's administration team promotes a positive school culture by supporting the teachers, being visible in the classrooms and throughout the campus, and encouraging parental involvement. Understanding the value of time, molding and protecting the instructional day, and growing teachers into content experts who are tasked with meeting the needs of a specific segment of the student population has resulted in tremendous gains for our students at East Hancock Elementary. We continue to develop and introduce programs to enhance the achievement of our students. Our administrative team consistently conducts in-depth data analysis, prescribes solutions, monitors success of programs and modifies as needed to enhance the learning experience for students and affect overall achievement. East Hancock's administrative team strives to motivate teachers, students, and parents through a shared vision, values, ethics, and commitment to the goals of the school. The school leadership firmly believes that a quality education is vital to the future success of our students. In a safe, challenging, and supportive learning environment, students learn not only academic content; students learn responsibility, good citizenship, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

In an effort to understand, celebrate, and support the diverse needs of our East Hancock students, families, and staff we incorporate multi-cultural activities, create safe spaces for those whose religious observations differ from the majority, and work to ensure equitable resources and opportunities.

The Challenge program at EHE explores cultural diversity through an Around the World unit. Students study geography, traditions, history, language, and local cuisine. They share their findings with many other students, faculty, staff, and parents. Our music teacher celebrates diversity by exposing students to a variety of artists and styles of music. He can frequently be found serenading students with multi-cultural song selections during arrival and dismissal. Music students also learn about primitive instruments originating from other territories. Students are exposed to different cultures through one of our primary English Language Arts programs that is built on a core set of diverse, culturally-sensitive books. The Art teacher instructs students in a variety of mediums and techniques used across the world. Many classroom teachers educate students on Christmas traditions from around the world, key Civil Rights leaders during Black History month, and Asian/Chinese traditions when celebrating the Lunar New Year.

Students whose religious affiliation prohibits participation in certain activities are provided a safe space and allowed to choose another preferred activity. Also, as a Title school, we have many students who may not have ideal access to supplies, clothing, or be able to afford additional school luxuries like purchasing book fair items. We maintain a clothes and uniform closet, coordinate with a local church to help provide for food-insecure students, and keep a fund open to help these students to purchase from the book fair.

Students, faculty, and staff are sorted into a Ron Clark-style House system, creating cross-grade and class groupings of students, affording many students the chance to connect with others who may share the same beliefs or background. They are also taught the Essential-55 character traits that heavily lean on principles of self-accountability and mutual respect for others. At EHE, we believe sharing the educational experience with a diverse Gator family benefits us all.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

East Hancock Elementary (EHE) dismissed Friday, March 13, 2020 and did not return to in-person learning until August. Many students remained distance learners. EHE followed an abbreviated schedule for the entire 20-21 school year. In an effort to move forward successfully educating our students, EHE established the key practice that would drive all instructional decisions: online learning would mimic the rigor, daily lesson components, and quality of in-person instruction.

Time was of the essence. The EHE Principal immediately began creating a system of training modules for teachers ranging from how to access a Google Classroom to how to embed links in Bitmojis to how to create editable assignments. Only resources approved for classroom use would be allowed in virtual classrooms. As with traditional learning environments, teachers completed professional development and were encouraged to share and model new tools they found to support students and parents such as FlipGrid and Kami.

Key components of the instructional day were modified to fit the new teaching platform. Students completed bell-ringers, engaged in standards-based instruction, received vital teacher feedback via written comments or digital meetings, were provided peer interaction via Zoom or Google meets, and 1:1 remediation or IEP-based supports as appropriate.. Teachers conducted a live lesson or posted an instructional video covering core lesson concepts daily. The EHE school wide positive-behavior system was modified to include motivational rewards such as “breakfast with my teacher via Zoom” and tangible rewards, such as Snowball tokens, were mailed directly to students. Assessments were administered online, also. Parent communication remained a priority with a renewed emphasis on clarity.

Once the key components and rigor were set, to truly mirror the school day, the issue of quality and accountability were addressed through routine leadership meetings, grade-level meetings, and virtual class evaluations. Teachers continued to post detailed lesson plans, updated the intervention team on student progress, and listed all scheduled Zoom/Google Meets on a shared spreadsheet. The administrative team would login to these meetings and provide specific, prompt feedback to teachers.

As resources became available and as teachers grew in this new way of teaching, distance-learning was modified to provide the absolute best instruction and learning experience to students. This one practice of modeling digital learning as closely as possible to traditional instruction established a new school norm from which EHE grew as a school community.