

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Upper School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 143 Charlotte Place
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Englewood Cliffs State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07632-2602

County Bergen

Telephone (201) 567-6151 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.Englewoodcliffs.org E-mail cwinch@Englewoodcliffs.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. Jennifer Brower E-mail jbrower@Englewoodcliffs.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Englewood Cliffs School District Tel. (201) 567-6151

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 Mrs. Shanna Jafri
(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 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 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 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	18	10	28
4	30	21	51
5	22	23	45
6	21	23	44
7	21	21	42
8	25	21	46
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	137	119	256

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 49 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 35 % 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 2020 - 2021 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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	13
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	289
(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):

Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, Korean.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
4 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 14 %
37 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>11</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>8</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to 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	3
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.	19
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 15:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	97%	97%	97%
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 2021.

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.

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

It is the mission of Upper School to strive for excellence in the academic, personal/social, and creative development of each individual student. This will be accomplished through the positive collaboration of our entire school learning community. The educational community will create a safe, nurturing environment that honors the cultural diversity of our students and our society. Our students will develop character and moral values that help them become productive members of our society. The educational family will develop responsible citizens that will respect and take pride in our national heritage.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

<https://4.files.edl.io/132b/01/26/20/165947-3f57e4d2-11df-4f33-ad6c-43491d2eff2c.pdf>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Englewood Cliffs is a small, tightly knit community in Bergen County, New Jersey. We are unique in that Upper School consists of grades 3-8, with approximately 50 students per grade level. This combination of a wider range of grade levels within the school and smaller class sizes creates an environment where students, staff, and the community can truly grow together and develop meaningful, long term relationships. Our students and teachers form tight bonds while receiving outstanding and personalized academic and social/emotional instruction. In addition because we are a small town, in many ways our school is the focal point of our community. We have a strong, cherished relationship with our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Education Foundation. They focus their fundraising efforts around connecting students and staff in meaningful ways, which has had a tremendously positive impact on our schools. Our PTA hosts the Fall Festival which is a large outdoor fair open to the staff and community. The Festival is always strongly attended by all our stakeholders. The Education Foundation hosts an auction with items being centered around creating experiences students can have with staff outside of the classroom. These are only two examples, but they show a larger pattern of developing a deep and purposeful support structure for the students of Englewood Cliffs.

A fundamental strategy our school has employed is to promote open communication and transparency with our staff and parents. We have so many dedicated, thoughtful, and intelligent members of our school community; and, it is our job to harness that at every opportunity for the good of our students. We are in constant communication with other districts and professional developers to analyze our current practices while consistently refining them to best meet our students' needs. We provide consistent professional development to our entire staff to help them shape their methods and incorporate new ones in order to meet the ever changing climate. We have emphasized diversity and inclusion as well as design thinking training to help staff find new and different avenues to connect with their students. Our leadership and teachers have also highly prioritized differentiation for all of our students. As important as it is to focus on the students who may need extra help or resources, we do not want to lose sight of our students who need to be pushed even further academically. Our teachers do an excellent job of challenging students and providing individualized supplemental work to ensure that every student is receiving the instruction they personally need most.

Our grades 6-8 students also participate in an “Educate toInnovate” circuit of classes once a week for the entirety of the school year. In this program, students have the choice to participate in several different higher difficulty activities where they can learn a new skill, or further hone their talents. Options include student council, science fair, math competitions, wind ensemble, video game creation, and podcasting. Students have the option to choose different activities over the course of the school year; and, we have seen great success in this program's ability to allow students to express themselves in unique and challenging ways.

In addition, we have placed a very strong emphasis on social and emotional learning. Our school follows the model of the six pillars of character, and also became a Responsive Classroom school five years ago. We follow the Responsive Classroom model by prioritizing the student teacher relationship, and highlighting the importance of building connections with everyone around you. All our students receive morning or advisory meetings daily. They dedicate that time to coming together as a school community, fostering relationships with classmates and teachers they might not otherwise have the opportunity to. This has had a great impact on our school culture and the feeling of accountability we have for each other in Upper School. In recent years, our school has also put a particular emphasis on helping our neighboring communities and creating global citizens who care for the world outside of Englewood Cliffs. Our 8th graders make a yearly trip to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, where they spend an afternoon packaging goods for those in need. In addition, grades 3-7 take on a community service challenge that is unique to them. This could be a recycling drive, collecting blanket and winter clothes donations, or writing letters to local retirement communities. Participating in these charitable acts has become part of what it means to be a student in Upper School, and has helped show students the satisfaction and joy that comes with helping others. It is our goal to prepare our students for their time after Upper School to the greatest extent possible, and taking an active role in helping others ensures we achieve that.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

It is the vision of the Englewood Cliffs School District to become a community of learners. We invite students, parents, staff, and the community to assist in the creation of a safe and nurturing educational environment that promotes academic achievement and lifelong learning. Our instructional approach in all subject areas can be described as student-centered, data-driven, and encouraging of social-emotional learning competency, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Throughout our district you will find many flexible seating arrangements that complement our student-centered classroom design. Research reminds us that physical activity is linked to higher academic performance. Flexible seating allows students to choose where they work, giving them control over the learning environment. At the same time, children also learn to share and collaborate as they strive to self-manage their flexible seating arrangements. The sensory aspects of flexible seating arrangements have also proved beneficial for our students, enabling us to model equity

In regards to curriculum and instruction, the District emphasizes the fundamental importance of the classroom teacher in both the development and delivery of instruction. Professional development occurs on a regular basis to extend the skills of our faculty. Ample time is provided in the schedule for staff to work collaboratively in team and grade level meetings in order to construct and implement our program of instruction.

The curriculum reflects the District's commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, and excellence. The curriculum is the comprehensive plan for providing equal access for all children to high quality instruction based on research and best practices. Our instructional program recognizes and addresses the multiple intelligences and different learning styles of our students, while the teachers maintains the curriculum to reflect changes in standards in order to meet the instructional needs of students.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In 2016, the district adopted Reading and Writing workshop, which is a standards driven approach to English language arts (ELA) instruction that focuses on strategies, allows for differentiation, and is guided by student data. The workshop model of instruction allows teachers to meet individual student needs with the ultimate goal of cultivating life-long readers and writers. In a workshop model, students learn skills as opposed to texts and engage with authentic self-selected literature. Explicit strategies are taught in the form of mini-lessons, and students then have the opportunity to apply these skills in the context of their independent reading and writing lives. Teachers hold individual conferences with students in addition to administering other formative assessments and student-facing rubrics to track and monitor progress. The district has also articulated targeted grammar instruction, phonics instruction (in the form of Orton Gillingham), and word study into our unique version of Reading and Writing workshop. Our systematic approach to all components of language arts instruction helps students master the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. These ELA skills then transfer over to their other academic content areas.

Our ELA curriculum places an extra emphasis on higher level skills like analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Standards-based report cards are utilized in grades K-4 which allow the district to ensure that instructional practices align with state learning standards, and also help foster a growth mindset among students. Standardized assessment data also helps drive instruction as teachers engage in a yearly data walk to identify opportunities for growth which are then echoed throughout professional development throughout the year. Reading specialists work closely with homeroom teachers to provide targeted instruction and planned supports for students on an as needed basis.

In the summer of 2021, the district audited and revised curriculum with a special emphasis on diversity and

inclusion, including the history of LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning) individuals and people with disabilities; an examination of unconscious bias and economic disparities; and promotion of inclusive environments for all. On any given day one may walk into an ELA room where students are learning about economic disparities as they discuss the story of “Cinderella., engaging in a media study followed by a Socratic seminar on inclusivity, or using textual evidence to support a claim regarding gender expectations given a particular setting in a story. Teaching resources and classroom libraries were diversified, and essential questions and enduring understandings were modified to reflect the district’s vision and mission with regards to diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias.

As always, curriculum content, instruction, and assessment remain research-based, responsive to the needs of our students, and supportive of a democratic future.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our mathematics philosophy parallels our ELA philosophy in that the workshop model is applied to allow for highly differentiated experiences. Students are grouped flexibly based on the results of pre-assessment data, ongoing formative and summative assessments, teacher observation, and standardized testing data in alignment with pre-requisite concepts and skills. Mathematics instruction throughout the district allows students to progress through concrete, visual, and symbolic representations of mathematical concepts. Promoting multiple representations of content helps to facilitate transfer, giving students greater depth of knowledge. In an elementary classroom you may see students trading base ten blocks, drawing ten frames, or using algorithms to add multi digit numbers. In a middle school classroom you may see students creating tables, graphs, and equations to compare relationships between two variables. Our mathematics curriculum places an extra emphasis on mathematical practices: make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure, and look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning. A modified pacing guide was created to allow for increased instructional time in major content areas and addressing real or perceived gaps due to COVID. Even with this modified pacing guide, our middle school students are still able to engage in an advanced sequence of study that culminates in the completion of Algebra I in grade 8.

Standards-based report cards are utilized in grades K-4 which allow the district to ensure that instructional practices align with state learning standards, and also help foster a growth mindset among students. Standardized assessment data also helps drive instruction as teachers engage in a yearly data walk to identify opportunities for growth which are then echoed throughout professional development throughout the year. Math specialists work closely with homeroom teachers to provide targeted instruction and planned supports for students on an as-needed basis.

Interdisciplinary connections between literature and mathematics are fostered specifically in our elementary grades, Interdisciplinary connections between mathematics and design thinking are fostered specifically in our middle school grades. During the 2021-2022 school year, teachers engaged in a professional development series to help integrate new 2020 Design Thinking standards into the mathematics curriculum. In one such instance, students were challenged to create a trap for a leprechaun that fit given design constraints and volume requirements. Such activities require students to design products, document the design process, and communicate effectively - all skills

As always, our curriculum content, instruction, and assessment remain grounded in best practices, responsive to societal changes and state standards, and supports democratic living. Notable mathematicians are celebrated in our curriculum and instruction to highlight the achievements of underrepresented groups to help advance our goals regarding diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our approach to science instruction is inquiry-based. This means that students engage with and experience science firsthand. Instead of simply reading about scientific theories, students develop a hypothesis, test it out, and reflect on the results. Our instructional model allows students to engage, explore, explain,

extend/elaborate, and evaluate. On any given day you might find students determining what factors attribute to the absorbency of different sponges by dunking them in water and ringing them out in a graduated cylinder, or creating solar ovens and comparing which designs melted a marshmallow the fastest. Students enjoy related non-fiction books that provide additional exposure to science concepts. Our science program also closely parallels our commitment to fostering the interdisciplinary nature of computer science and design thinking, as included in our curriculum are specific age-appropriate design challenges that help foster engineering habits of mind and divergent thinking. Science teachers also engage in a yearly data walk to identify opportunities for growth, and use various formative and summative assessments to target instruction. The CER framework, or Claim Evidence Reasoning, serves as a scaffolded way to teach the scientific method and is evidenced throughout our middle school science curriculum and assessments specifically. Students are challenged to provide explanations that include a claim that answers the question, evidence from students' data, and reasoning that involves a scientific principle that supports why the evidence supports the claim. Our yearly Science Fair gives students the opportunity to showcase their investigative skills and present their findings to the community as well as their peers. Notable scientists are celebrated in our curriculum and instruction to highlight the achievements of underrepresented groups to help advance our goals regarding diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In Social Studies, students learn about the world around and beyond them. Metacognitive skills are promoted in our Social Studies classrooms, as teachers bring historical content to life, including current events. In elementary school, this begins with a study of individuals, classrooms, and communities with a special emphasis on citizenship. Star students are celebrated in the classroom and unique traditions are honored throughout school programming. For instance, our "Reading Around the World" invites students to learn about birthdays traditions in different parts of the world, providing students with an opportunity to not only share their unique experiences, but also learn about the unique experiences of others through a shared lens. In middle school students engage in a series of "inspiration moments" with the objective of promoting active citizenship. Their experience culminates in a simulated "wax museum" – a favorite tradition among students. Social Studies also provides another opportunity to engage students with content related to diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias. Program resources allow students to collaborate with children all over the world, through a resource called "Pen Pal." Through "Pen Pal" students engage with authentic global audiences to learn not only Social Studies content itself, but also digital citizenship as well. Throughout our Social Studies Program, personalized learning experiences come to life as students self-select topics that are areas of personal interest to them to conduct personal research projects. Assessments are standards-based, reinforce literacy skills, and are often authentic.

1f. For secondary schools:

Our former library/media program is now known as "Educate to Innovate" and is evolving to align with the new New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts 2020 standards. Through all "Visual and Performing Arts Courses," and in conjunction with our newly redesigned "Computer Science and Design Thinking" course, students are offered opportunities for self-discovery to help guide their career aspirations with a keen eye on anticipated future societal needs. In "Educate to Innovate," students begin by self-assessing their skills and interests. This information is then used to create personalized learning experiences centered on career awareness, which are complemented by philanthropic activities and school-wide programming efforts. Students ask themselves how they can contribute to their school, their community, and the world at large; and, then advance to a unit of study based on innovation. Middle school students specifically engage in "Educate to Innovate" in the form of a rotating circuit of courses focused on innovation, integrity, and leadership. Students self-select their course of choice based on rotational offerings. Some examples of offerings include Student Council, Wind Ensemble, L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Empathy, Action, Dedication) Club, Video Game Creation, and Podcasting. Our newly redesigned Computer Science and Design Thinking curriculum complements our "Educate to Innovate" program, as concepts are centered on the three branches of science and their career applications. At the same time, "Computer Science and Design Thinking" curriculum affirms the need for artists, inventors, and story-tellers in the future workforce. All "Visual and Performing Arts" and Computer Science/Design Thinking curriculum was designed to align

with Daniel Pink’s “A Whole New Mind”, which outlines the essential skills and knowledge for professional success and personal fulfillment, thus providing opportunities for exposure to emerging careers.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Other curriculum areas support students’ acquisition of essential skills and knowledge, including: Health/Physical Education, Morning Meeting/Advisory Meeting, Visual and Performing Arts, Music, Gifted and Talented Enrichment (GATE), World Languages, Computer Science and Design Thinking, Educate to Innovate, and Team Building. All grades participate in all courses, with the exception of Team Building which is specific to grade five. In our Health/Physical Education Program and Morning Meeting/Advisory Meeting program, CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) competencies and mental, physical, social, and emotional wellness are promoted. The district monitors how students’ habits related to exercise, nutrition, and wellness are impacted by wellness campaigns, which include scheduled wellness breaks and the creation of personalized fitness guides which are shared with students. Our visual and performing arts program includes a very popular musical component, and two distinct musicals are put on each year, along with year long cadet band, upper band, and glee club. Our foreign language program emphasizes three modes of communication: interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal. Students engage with both content and culture, helping them to exhibit positive values and skills necessary for cross-cultural communication.

Our former library/media program is now known as “Educate to Innovate.” In this program, students begin with a traditional introduction to the principles of research, inquiry, and digital citizenship, but with a modern twist: usage of multi-media content. Next, students self-assess their skills and interests. This leads to personalized learning experiences centered on career awareness, which are complemented by philanthropic activities. Students ask themselves how they can contribute to their school, their community and even the world, and then advance to a unit of study based on innovation. Middle school students engage in “Educate to Innovate” in the form of a rotating circuit of courses focused on innovation, integrity, and leadership. These courses are designed to help students engage in skill building activities that will help them both now and throughout high school. Computer science and design thinking remains a standalone course with intentional interdisciplinary connections made in all other content areas.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Students who are performing below grade level may require further supports, potentially through Intervention and Referral Services. For these students, three tiers of supports are available. In Tier 1, students may receive whole class assistance for academics and behavior. In Tier 2, students may engage in our Basic Skills Instruction (BSI) program both in and out of class, complete behavior plans, engage in counseling, and/or social skills support. In Tier 3, students may receive pull-out BSI support, counseling, behavior plans, and direct intervention by the reading and/or math specialists. When considering the impact of COVID-19, there are many instances in which teachers must “accelerate learning to fill gaps,” whereby students receive grade-level assignments. Scaffolds are put into place to make the work accessible. The goal is to fill the most critical gaps instead of sending students backward to fill in all the potential gaps. This approach results in “just in time teaching,” and compliments already existing practices regarding our workshop model of instruction and development of Student Growth Objectives (SGOs). SGOs are specific and measurable academic goals that are aligned to standards and based on student growth and/or achievement using available student learning data. In addition, homework clubs are available for additional support and offered on a trimester rotational basis. Learning acceleration, differentiation within the classroom, supports provided through Intervention and Referral Services, and after school homework clubs are all available to assist students who may be performing below grade level.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students who are performing above grade level may require further opportunities, potentially through our Gifted and Talented Program. Appropriate educational challenges begin at the kindergarten level and are ongoing. In kindergarten students participate in differentiated learning opportunities that correspond with individual reading levels and interests, as well as math and thinking skills enrichment activities; Project Primary begins in first grade where students are pulled-out and engage in challenging thinking skills curriculum such as deductive, analytical, and visual/spatial problem-solving. Students in grades 2-8 continue to participate in rigorous differentiated and interdisciplinary curricular units of study. Grade 2: Convergent Connections, Vexing Visual/Spatial Challenges, Creative Thinking, and Writing; Grade 3: Treasure Island Map project, Deductive Reasoning Mystery Case, Money Matters; and, Grade 4: Invention Convention, Modular Electronics: Art Bots, and Fascinating Flight. Grades 5 & 6: Inengineering Expo, World Games, and Sacajawea (5), Return to the Moon (6). Grade 7: Stock Market Game, Voyage to Mars, and Pringles Challenge. Grade 8: Math Madness, Stock Market Game, and Entrepreneurship. Field trips, competitions, and gifted outreach programs further enhance the gifted child's educational experiences in grades 3-8. Additionally, regular classroom experiences are enhanced through differentiated instruction. All gifted services and programming goals are aligned to National Association for Gifted Children Gifted Program Standards and NJ Student Learning Standards. Standards-based report cards are utilized in grades K-4 which have resulted in an arsenal of above grade level learning opportunities for all students, as a score of "4" indicates that a student is performing above grade level. Many students are exposed to such enrichment activities within their general education classroom.

3c. Special education:

Our district special education program addresses the individualized needs of each of our special education students in order to help these students meet their academic, behavioral, and social emotional goals. The district provides resource room services for ELA and Math for all grade levels; in-class support for ELA, Math, Social Studies, & Science; and, study skills in place of a foreign language for grades three through eight. We also provide speech and language services, behavioral support services, social skills, group counseling, individual counseling, and teacher consultation in order to assist teachers with providing accommodations and modifications for their students as determined by the Child Study Team and implemented based on the students' Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). All the special education students in our district participate in all state testing with accommodations and modifications just like the general education students. The Child Study Team creates a quarterly newsletter that is sent out to all staff and also sent home to all the parents in the district regarding relevant special education topics that are going on during that time. Every year, in April, our schools host a "Celebration of Differences Day" in honor of National Disability Awareness Month with special events and several hands-on activities for our students to simulate what it feels like to live with a disability. By doing so, it is our hope that the students will gain a sense of awareness, acceptance, and understanding for all of those with differences in our school community.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

Our English Language Learners (ELL) program is designed to provide the English Language Learner students in the Englewood Cliffs School District with fair and appropriate language support in the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Our curriculum is adapted from the New Jersey Department of Education Model Curriculum for ELLs and is directly aligned with WIDA Consortium English Language Development standards and WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency levels. This course is designed to target the development of high-frequency, grade-level vocabulary, including vocabulary used for Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) as well as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The program aims to mirror the pacing and topics of the basic content areas that each student will participate in, notably English language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics. Grade clusters are grouped in accordance to the WIDA Consortium: Kindergarten, 1-2, 3-5, and 6-8. There are student learning objectives for each grade (Kindergarten through 8th grade), which increase in difficulty and complexity as each unit progresses. The course includes considerations of all levels of English proficiency, as well as different types of learners. The curriculum is designed for flexibility and adaptability

to the ever-changing English Language Learner population in Englewood Cliffs. Differentiation for English language learners is based primarily on the English proficiency levels (1-5) and varies from student to student. General differentiation strategy is focused on modifying classroom materials to align with WIDA Consortium Can-Do Descriptors, which note what students in varying grade clusters at varying English proficiency levels should be able to do in different contexts. Additional differentiation strategies can be found below, under Suggested Learning Supports

All teachers receive yearly ELL training and grant monies are strategically used to procure high interest resources and research based professional development regarding English language acquisition, social emotional competencies, and acceleration of learning.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Every year, our school asks our students to participate in a unifying theme of expressing their “hopes and dreams.” We do this to encourage them to view their time in our school as a means to accomplish their personal goals and fully understand the wonderful things they are capable of. Our schools seek to be a consistent, positive source of guidance for students, where we work collaboratively with them to help them be their best selves. One highly relevant factor in engaging students in their ongoing learning progress is promoting a positive mindset through instruction that explicitly models healthy social-emotional skills, and positively impacts the school culture at large. Promoting and modeling a healthy mindset to learners includes helping students recognize that they play a key role in overcoming their own challenges through hard work and perseverance.

Teachers in different grades and subject areas allow students to track their own class participation as a means of utilizing their students’ behaviors as meaningful learning opportunities. For example, in seventh grade, students maintain reflective participation logs to monitor their progress with the classroom expectations. Students launch the school year by identifying one expectation that they feel is an area with the potential for great personal growth. As the year progresses, students are challenged to log instances where they are not meeting an established expectation by journaling a reflection on their current practices.

Finally, staff and students continually recognize and celebrate the many positives that are occurring daily within our school community. When walking through classrooms in our district, you will find sentence starters that guide positive peer-to-peer feedback. All grade levels are also engaged in community service based activities to help reinforce the value of helping those in need and the satisfaction that comes with working collectively towards a common goal. Moreover, staff and students are recognized for modeling core values through the use of “Golden Tickets.” These tickets serve as a tool for staff and students to acknowledge random acts of kindness within the school community. Despite the challenges the school faced, we maintained all of these practices throughout remote learning to provide as much consistency and security to our students as possible. We worked very hard as a school to remain open and provide in person instruction throughout the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years because we firmly believe in the positive impact we have on our students. We may have had to maintain our distance and adjust some procedures, but because we engrained these practices throughout our school we were able to continue to provide the same level of care and engagement we always have.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We firmly believe that the key to success as a school district is a collaborative, communicative, and inclusive relationship between our staff, students, and community. The practices within our district reflect a deep understanding that when educators, administrators, parents, and community members work together, the children can only benefit from such support, and the results will be evident in the success of the students.

Much of the work we have done as a district has been with an eye towards promoting a true sense of community between our parents, students, and staff. To accomplish this, we put great effort into creating opportunities for positive interactions above and beyond the normal school day. Our staff regularly volunteers their time to run events for our students, such as the school musical, science fair, spelling bee, school dances, and math competitions. We also have a very involved Education Foundation and PTA that host events in the community. Our PTA hosts the annual Fall Festival which is an outdoor fair with food, events, and games. Our staff is not required to attend, but every year, large numbers enjoy the festivities with their family to create further connections within our school community. In addition to that, our Education Foundation hosts a fundraiser where they auction off events or prizes offered by staff members, and with those funds create wonderful opportunities for our students. There is no requirement to offer anything, but every year, the vast majority of our staff takes time out of their schedules to offer something nice they know students would enjoy like an ice cream party, a game of basketball, or a movie screening.

Our staff also invites parents to classroom and school activities, such as Back to School Night, Curriculum Night, American Education Week, Literacy Night, and several cultural celebration events as a means to bring the community into our schools. Not only does this help parents see the amazing work their children are doing every day, but it helps them become an active part of our normal school events, and shrinks the gap between our roles in students' lives. We also have developed strong relationships with our local Police Department, as well as local social, emotional, and mental health services so we can help any families in need should any situation arise. It is very important to our school that every decision exhibits the belief that our community is strongest when each part is intertwined with the other.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

In Upper School, we have made a genuine effort to give teachers a true voice in the decisions we make and ensure that they feel like a real part of the process. Our teachers are the most direct line to our students; and, if we can confidently know that we have their support, we can also trust that we will have alignment between the administrative offices and the classroom itself. This is accomplished by being extremely consistent in involving our staff in planning, and incorporating their feedback and specific expertise into our procedures.

This was especially true when planning our hybrid model of education for the 20-21 school year. It was very important to us that we remain able to provide in person instruction, but still work realistically within the confines of the safety procedures we had in place. There were many meetings throughout the spring and summer of 2020 with teachers from different positions and experience levels with the purpose of creating the best possible plan for our students. By having an open and honest dialogue, we were able to find the right combination of meaningful instruction, supplemental virtual learning, and modified labs and projects that replicated a normal school year as closely as possible. This level of coordination and cooperation allowed us to offer in person instruction for the entire year to every student on a half day in person, half day virtual model.

This mentality has also extended to our professional development approach. We took great care to find the right balance of providing meaningful opportunities without overwhelming staff in an unprecedented situation. We have put an emphasis on promoting student and staff wellness, and incorporating wellness opportunities into our normal schedules. Doing this modified our faculty meeting approach, and incorporated school spirit days into every week to show staff we are committed to not only discussing these things, but putting them into practice. We have also been very intentional in our scheduling of more traditional professional development to make sure staff were able to make the most of these opportunities. This includes continuing the ongoing ELA and Math work, while simultaneously incorporating diversity and inclusion training and design thinking training. We have been very purposeful in highlighting how this training can be incorporated into many of the existing wonderful things staff are already doing. By taking this approach we are ensuring staff can remain focused on enhancing our current work as opposed to something completely new or unfamiliar in a time where so much is uncertain.

4. School Leadership:

The leaders of our school take a purposeful and dedicated approach to frame every decision through the same lens: what is best for our students and our staff. People in leadership positions have a great responsibility to be consistent, compassionate, and solution oriented. As leaders in our district, we put a great deal of effort into bringing our stakeholders together and incorporating their thoughts and expertise into helping our students grow academically and emotionally. There is no ego or separations based on title, we have established a strong connection with our staff and students that allows us to work collectively regardless of role. Our curricular decisions have continued to raise the bar of achievement both while students are in our schools and after they graduate. Our social/emotional work involving Responsive Classroom, Morning/Advisory Meetings, the Six Pillars of Character, and student and staff wellness, have found a way to promote important emotional growth without sacrificing time or focus on academics. This can be a difficult balance to navigate, but we have always believed in the importance of having the greatest impact on students possible, and we can't achieve that if we're only focused on certain areas of development.

The leadership structure consists of our Superintendent, Business Administrator, Principal, Supervisor of Curriculum, and Supervisor of Special Education. Although this is a small team of people, we benefit greatly from our collaboration and shared vision. All school leaders work very closely on all building and district decisions and initiatives and are solely dedicated to the success of our students. Despite our differing roles and responsibilities, every member of our leadership team is constantly communicating, problem solving, and working together to find the best possible ways to support students, staff, and the community.

The clearest example of putting this mentality into practice is our efforts to involve others in our decision making process. Administrators have an open and collaborative relationship with our teachers' union, and regularly meet with union leadership to discuss the needs of the district. Staff members are involved in committees, such as School Culture, School Climate, School Improvement Panel (SCIP), Building Liaison, and Diversity. The Principal holds regular meetings with the district nurses and technology department to give voice to their distinct needs, and meets with our Student Council to ensure students themselves feel like active participants in the direction of our school. If we're considering a more wide-reaching change as we did several years ago regarding implementing Standards-Based Report Cards for our younger students, the committee consisted of more teachers than administrators. Ultimately, these decisions rest with our leaders, but we have adopted the approach that giving a voice and a sense of ownership to staff and students improves implementation because they understand the need and can help shape the path to success.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Upper School has a long history of celebrating and highlighting our diverse community and their backgrounds. It is crucial that our students not only feel their unique qualities are appreciated, but that we also take the opportunity to learn from each other and gain unique insight into a background that might be different than our own. Upper School has a long tradition of celebrating and recognizing important cultural events, such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Diwali, Lunar New Year, and Eid al-Fitr. We also host Korean Children's Day and Cultural Diversity Day as unique opportunities to highlight the many special aspects of our local culture that make our school what it is. These events have the incredible effect of bringing our school community together while helping students experience and learn things they might have otherwise not had exposure to.

In addition to these important events, we have also taken steps to infuse these practices into our day-to-day interactions with students. Our Morning/Advisory Meeting structure allows time for teachers to create open dialogue with their students, build connections, and discuss larger issues outside of just Englewood Cliffs. Sometimes these conversations cover things going on in our schools, and provide a safe and structured environment for students to form deep bonds with their classmates. Other times, it allows for developmentally appropriate discussions on current events and social movements. We believe strongly in building the capacity for staff to engage in these conversations comfortably while providing a safe and supportive avenue for students to express themselves. These meetings have yielded very positive results and have created more opportunities for students to have important conversations with caring members of our staff. To aid in these conversations staff have also been provided guiding literature including "The Power of Our Words," "Culturally and Logistically Responsive Teaching and Learning," and "Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain." Beyond these measures, we have also dedicated time and resources to diversifying our classroom libraries because we believe in the power of students experiencing literature through personal connections. In addition to all of this, we have always provided a very involved support structure in our schools. Our School Counselor and School Psychologist are constantly meeting with students to help them navigate potentially difficult topics and feelings, while encouraging a long term relationship for anything that may be needed in the future.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While it is difficult to credit our school's success to just a single practice, we firmly believe that the systemic implementation of social emotional learning has been instrumental in reaching our goals. Systemic SEL includes policies, resources, and actions that support implementation. Englewood Cliffs is very fortunate to be able to not only promote social emotional learning, but to implement social emotional learning on a systemic level. For instance, financial resources to support professional development are abundant. In the district's first year of training, the PTA generously funded training in a particular social emotional approach, called Responsive Classroom. In subsequent years, grant monies were utilized to continue this training, which proved widely beneficial in managing the pandemic. Teacher and student schedules were adjusted to allow for intentional time for morning meetings and advisory meetings without sacrificing academics. In fact, summer programs have also expanded to include social skills programming as a carryover from programming provided during the school year. Disciplinary procedures have evolved to become more restorative in nature, with therapeutic sessions replacing traditional detentions. This allows students to speak with a caring adult and reflect on their decisions in order to address the root of the concern and keep from repeating the same mistakes. Administrators and teachers engage in book clubs to better understand constructs like social awareness and positive classroom communities. Examples of shared readings include "Between the World and Me" and "The Power of Our Words." Opportunities for collaboration are abundant, and SEL needs of adults and children alike are taken into consideration when making decisions. The district has a recent history of implementing Wellness Days, and has strived to create a culture of acceptance and inclusivity. Curriculum and teaching materials were revised to address diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias. We believe that by being mindful of the social and emotional needs of students, staff, and the community, we have been able to create an environment that allows all stakeholders to take risks and serve as agents of change. In essence, the district prescribes the notion of "Maslow before Bloom" and echoes this sentiment in our policies, resources, and actions.