

**University of Rochester Educational Partner Organization Proposal for
Rochester East High School**

#2. DETAILED SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 Describe the proposed mission and vision of the restart school. Address key design elements of the educational program and other unique characteristics of the approach. Indicate why you've selected this approach.

Mission and vision

The mission of East High School will be to prepare all its students for a successful transition into adulthood.

We will accomplish this mission by incorporating “best practice” in school and district leadership, curriculum design and implementation, teaching, social-emotional support and school and community partnerships. We will be using the NYSED Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) as our working definition of “best practice” (also see Appendix 1A for a further articulation of key principles informing our vision). It is also our goal to develop internal capacity so the school structure and best practices established with the support of the EPO can be sustained in the long run.

We also seek to create a school culture where all members of the East High School community, students and their families in particular, are valued as assets to learning and development, and in which high expectations are the norm.

It is our vision to create a comprehensive urban high school that can be a model for urban school reform.

The University of Rochester, as EPO, is committed to engaging all stakeholders in refining this mission and vision for East High School, as well as in planning how to translate them into practice, soon after we are formally approved by NYSED. Our work as a planning team so far, and thus this document, has been informed by the mission and vision articulated above.

Key design elements of educational program and approach (and their rationale):

We preface all aspects of this application with a reference to our request to the Commissioner to provide additional planning time so that we may fully collaborate with key stakeholders and create the best possible plan to be implemented in the 2015-16 school year. The Commissioner granted this additional time, but with the stipulation that we would still provide a full application by the original July 1

deadline. Since the application needed to be reviewed and approved by the Board of Education of the Rochester City School District before that date, we only had a few short weeks to pull this proposal together. We consider this proposal to be Phase I of the planning process; a much more substantial and comprehensive Phase II planning process will follow approval of our preliminary application. Because this will be a fully collaborative process with all potential stakeholders, some aspects of the preliminary plan may be altered. As such, we submit these proposed innovations with the understanding that we will continue to develop a Comprehensive School Plan, which we will submit to all parties by December 15, 2014.

In researching and developing this application, however, we already reached out to several people, including numerous stakeholders at East High School (as detailed in Appendix 1B), for input and feedback. We also presented the fundamental principles informing our approach in our Letter of Intent (see Appendix 1C) to East faculty and staff, along with some initial ideas developed up to that point, in an open meeting on June 9, 2014. The University's Letter of Intent is foundational to our work.

We propose that East High School be a **best practice, comprehensive community high school**. By this we mean that students from East realize a full and rich high school experience, similar to what is offered in nearby suburban districts. We have used the NYSED Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) as our working definition of "best practice." The DTSDE is research based and serves as the NYSED Joint Intervention Team (JIT) evaluation tool for all Priority and Focus Schools. East will be evaluated on the DTSDE rubric and we will design our Comprehensive School Plan using that standard of practice. Since the community is critical to the success of East High School, we also see the school as centered in and serving primarily the larger community surrounding the school.

In our proposal, East High School will be organized in three grade level groups. The first is the Lower School, currently grades 7-8. We will give serious consideration to adding grade 6, with a final decision by early Fall 2014. We believe that adding grade 6 would give us the potential to provide students a jump start to develop the needed foundational skills and attitudes prior to 9th grade, also allowing them to earn more high school credits before entering 9th grade. The more credits students can earn early on, the less likely they will be to drop out.

The second grade level group is the Freshman Academy. Research tells us that the first year in high school is pivotal. No student entering grade 9 is behind in units of credit, yet most urban high schools experience their greatest failure rate with those students. Freshmen need their own place, their own social and emotional supports, and their own approach to academics.

The third group is the Upper School, grades 10-12. At this point, students who are not behind are very much in transition to their adult roles, focusing on finding a clear path to graduation and beyond, involving college and/or career preparation.

For those who are behind, additional supports need to be established to get them back on track to make graduation and long-term planning a viable goal.

Our proposed structure is intended to help manage the needs of different age levels, and also provide additional support for the most challenging transition occurring at grade 9. Each grade level cohort is planned to be approximately 180 pupils. The downsizing of East will be accomplished by smaller entering cohorts and voluntary transfers of students who do not agree with the educational philosophy of the school. No current East student will be required or encouraged to transfer.

A more detailed description of the unique features of the organization of the school follows:

- **The Lower School** (grades 6-8 or 7-8) program will be designed to develop academic and social foundations. This will include:
 - Entrance to the Lower School will be by student choice (consistent with current practices in RCSD) but giving priority to students who live in proximity to the East High School community.
 - The Lower School will be led by an individual principal with two support leaders.
 - Each grade will be organized into small family units. The Lower School will be supported by appropriate support faculty including counselors, social workers, and special education teachers.
 - Lower School students will experience extended learning time every day through a longer school day.
 - The Lower School will have increased instructional time devoted to math and literacy, supported by high quality curriculum (supplemented to ensure cultural relevancy and respond to East students' interests), professional development and coaching.
 - A goal for *ALL* Lower School students will be to gain some high school units in grade 8; some specific units available may include LOTE, Mathematics, Science, Business, Art, or other areas.
 - The Lower School will utilize a school wide approach to ensuring decorum and focus such as PBIS, Leader in Me, or an approach designed by the EPO. This approach will be determined by summer 2015.
 - All entering students will participate in a summer preparation program as a prerequisite of entry.

- **The Freshman Academy** (9th grade) will be a separate entity with its own identity, core mission and focus.
 - Our goal is to have all students successful on at least two Regents examinations by the end of the Freshman Academy. It will be possible for students to enter the Freshman Academy with as many as four high school credits.

- Freshmen will be given extended time for success resulting in a longer school day with extended periods in core academic subjects.
- All Freshman Academy students will participate in a summer preparation program as a prerequisite of entry.
- **The Upper House** (grades 10-12) will focus on transition into adulthood, with strong college readiness programs, CTE programs and social emotional support.
 - The Upper School will be organized to provide maximum choice and flexibility to students, to support student success with at least some semester-long courses and a menu of rigorous and relevant electives in all areas.
 - The Upper House will feature an extended day component devoted to the unique needs of some of our students including course recovery and very small group remediation.
 - Upper House students may access the evening school (“East Evening”) which will include opportunities for both students and community members to experience high quality school electives, obtain course credit recovery and receive support in ordinary school work.
 - Upper House students may choose from a traditional or late start time. Both start times will lead to a full high school experience.
 - We will offer a diverse and relevant set of CTE programs. Some of these programs will build on and expand successful programs at East (including programs in optics, culinary arts, teaching, and information technology). We will also work with partners to develop strong CTE programs in medical support services, and with our BOCES partners to offer the full range of CTE offerings currently available in the Monroe County area. In addition, we will work with the community to identify and develop unique CTE opportunities for our students including work experiences and supervised internships.
 - All East students will be able to participate in a high quality multi-faceted summer school program for both credit recovery and acceleration.
- **Common academic elements across the school:**
 - We will employ only high quality curricula augmented by relevant and meaningful interdisciplinary projects that can help generate student interest and motivation, and facilitate application and transfer of knowledge.
 - Teachers will meet daily at a common time period to engage in curriculum design and modification, assessment design and data analysis to inform instruction.
 - Instruction will be planned and implemented with the benefit of a data protocol. This protocol will be selected or designed prior to summer 2015.

- Teachers will benefit from high-quality, sustained and content-specific instructional coaching (with special emphasis on literacy, math, and special education in the Lower School) – to ensure effective improvement of instructional practices.
 - The Lower School, 9th Grade Academy and Upper School will have a separate start and end time and be located in different parts of the building.
 - We will utilize a flexible scheduling model so as to provide teachers with longer periods of time required to implement inquiry-based and project-based approaches.
- **Social Emotional Support for all East students:** East High School students often experience a high stress urban environment. This creates a need for a well-developed approach to providing social emotional support in the school and community. We will therefore articulate and systematically promote a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers and students. This will involve the following components:
 - Each faculty and support staff, including each administrator, will be responsible for leading a small student family (ideally 5-9 students per family). There will be time available to conduct daily family meetings. Families will focus on issues including growing into adulthood, attendance, school performance, job readiness skills, and specific social emotional supports within the school. Family leaders may also be approved volunteers.
 - Each grade will be served by a full time counselor and a full time social worker.
 - The social worker for each grade will coordinate the school wide behavioral intervention program for that grade.
 - East will continue to make available the comprehensive health services provided by the School Based Health Center run by the University of Rochester School of Nursing, to serve both students and their families.
 - East will employ a comprehensive, formal, closed loop referral process for student support. Students may self-refer and/or refer a peer. All referral providers will meet as a team regularly and receive professional development from a student support coach identified by the University of Rochester.
 - Services will be available for extended hours and beyond the 10 month academic schedule to students and their families.
 - The Student Support Center will be expanded in size and scope. Support services will be provided all day, every day during the school year and through the summer months and will be made available when it is most convenient to the students and their families.

- All support programs and services will be documented and defined. Data will be collected and analyzed to coordinate and improve support services.
- All faculty and staff will receive professional development to enable them to facilitate the student support system for maximum success.

On-going and intensive professional learning for all school staff is at the core of the model we are proposing, and a needed ingredient for developing the internal capacity needed to not only implement our proposed plan, but also ensure sustainability over time. To that end, a component of the plan will involve the development of site-based subject-specific coaches that can support and coordinate teachers' work on improving their instructional practices, designing curriculum and assessments, and productively engaging in the analysis of students' data.

The table below illustrates our targets for increased graduation rates for all students by incoming cohort in 2015-16. These targets assume that the percentage of students with disabilities and ELLs will not further increase from the baseline provided in the 2013 school report card rates (the most recent available) and that all the conditions articulated in our Letter of Intent as necessary to support positive changes at East are realized.

	Current 4yr Graduation- Rate	<i>Projected Graduation Rates under EPO for students entering at each of the following grades during the first year of the EPO</i>						
Student Group		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
All Students	42%	84%	80%	74%	63%	55%	50%	46%
African American	42%	84%	80%	74%	63%	55%	50%	46%
Latino	41%	82%	78%	72%	62%	53%	49%	45%
White	50%	95%	95%	88%	75%	65%	60%	55%
SWD	24%	54%	48%	42%	36%	32%	29%	26%
LEP	NA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Economically Disadvantaged	43%	86%	82%	75%	65%	56%	52%	47%

Note that the target graduation rates are focused on cohorts. Ultimately, it is our goal to meet NYS graduation standards for students who spend their entire middle school and high school experience at East. In other words, students who enter East as 7th graders in the first year of the EPO are targeted to reach the NYS Standard of 80% graduation rate. Students who are in the “senior cohort” during the first year of the EPO, regardless of credit accumulation, will be targeted to see a 10% increase above the current graduation rate. While we are not sure yet that a 6th grade can be added to the new East High School, we have included targets for entering 6th graders as well to show how this could make a difference in terms of graduation rates and student success.