

# **Alief Independent School District**

## **Elsik High School**

### **2020-2021 Comprehensive Needs Assessment**



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# Comprehensive Needs Assessment

## Demographics

### Demographics Summary

Elsik High School is a comprehensive high school located at 12601 High Star, Houston, TX 77072. The Elsik system is comprised of grades 9th - 12th. First-time ninth graders are housed at ENG (Elsik Ninth Grade Center) and the main campus consists of grades 10th - 12th. The Elsik System serves approximately 4200 students who participate in many special programs such as academics, athletics, performing arts, fine arts and CTE.

### Demographics Strengths

Elsik is a campus that recognizes and celebrates its many cultures ( 53% Hispanic, 34% African American, 10% Asian and 3% White).

### Problem Statements Identifying Demographics Needs

**Problem Statement 1:** In relation to our Campus Comparison Group, Elsik has a mobility rate at 28.1 which is considerably higher than other campuses with similar demographics. **Root Cause:** Many of our students move due to special leases offered by many of the apartments in neighboring districts. Also, parental custody plays a role in students' living situations.

# Student Learning

## Student Learning Summary

### Math

The focus of the Elsik Mathematics Department is to provide exceptional Mathematics Instruction in order to ensure our students are equipped with 21st century skills and a strong Mathematical Foundation for College and Career Readiness. We are devoted to implementing project based learning and technology into our classrooms. We have a culture of collaboration between teachers and students and believe that everyone can grow.

The focus on student achievement includes improving PSAT and SAT scores by continuing to use the 10/40 split approach and test taking strategies in our mathematics classrooms specifically for 10th and 11th grades. Although we do have a large number of re-testers for STAAR Algebra I, we have daily intervention classes and multiple opportunities for tutoring for these students. Five years ago we implemented Project Based Learning (PBL) in our mathematics classrooms and will continue to improve and strengthen the use of PBL's in the mathematics classrooms. We will use CCA and DCA data to continuously monitor student progress. Also, our teams work collaboratively during PLC and common planning periods in order to achieve this. Technology is being used in the Mathematics classrooms including Think Through Math, IXL, ALEKS, promethean boards, Personal Math Builder, and Schoology in conjunction with planning and PBLs. During Virtual learning we are committed to providing quality instruction with highly engaging activities.

### English

The Elsik High School English Department's mission is to produce better readers and writers that will be college and career ready by the time they leave Elsik High School. To that end, we provide English I & II EOC retesters and subpopulations with the needed classroom intervention to adequately support their academic success. Special Education students receive Accelerated Instruction using Study Island practice lessons in the Schoology Accelerated Instruction Course. Retesters receive intervention through small group pull outs and/or the Schoology English EOC Intervention course.

Our main focus will be improving student reading stamina by implementing a Reading/Writing Workshop model in all of the English II-IV classes and also instituting a Book Club component when classes resume face to face synchronous instruction. The District has also implemented a common curriculum across the district for 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades using the McGraw Hill StudySync curriculum that provides common standards, anchor texts, strategies, scaffolds, and authentic projects while incorporating real life application of skills.

Academic progress will be reviewed using a Reading Diagnostic test, Benchmarks, CCAs and DCAs. Teachers, along with the English Specialist, will collaborate on campus during department PLC to determine what adjustments and resources are needed. English teachers will teach standardized test taking strategies in an effort to increase TSI passing rates and PSAT/SAT college ready standards. In addition, the English Department will promote the campus literacy initiative to provide students with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills by implementing Project Based Learning in all classrooms.

### Science

The Elsik Science Department is committed to providing first line instruction that promotes the acquirement and improvement of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills for all of our students. We want to ensure that our students are college and career ready upon graduation. We strive to plan lessons with the intent to create environments that enforces real world applications, develop problem-solving skills and produce technology infused student products by utilizing Project Based Learning.

The Science Department relies on bell to bell instruction which includes First 10/Last 5 scaffolding exercises, virtual and hands on labs, small group learning, Schoology assignment extensions and various activities to create opportunities for student discourse. Providing access to classroom sets of electronic devices such as laptops, Ipads and tablets, the department is allowing students to utilize and enhance 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and increase the awareness of a technology driven world. We also continue to use DCA and CCA data to monitor and strengthen student achievement.

In order to capture and close the gap in learning for our BIOL STAAR EOC re-testers, we have an intervention course, a Schoology resource group for remote learning and afterschool tutorials will be available to students during face to face learning.

### **Social Studies?**

The Elsik High School Social Studies Department mission is committed to helping students become productive and responsible citizens by guiding them to become critical thinkers, who are active in shaping their community and connecting them to the real world. Our subpopulations, advanced placement, and academic performance data represent the indicators that we use to assess our commitment to our mission.

In regards to our subpopulations, we exhibited growth in our Asian-American, ELL, Hispanic and White populations. We did have an increase in performance on our STAAR exam. Academic vocabulary, critical reading skills, contextualization, and analysis of the “big picture” are challenges for many students, especially for the ELL and SPED subpopulations. The use of higher-order questions, differentiated instruction, quality questioning techniques, and closure-objective alignment are areas of needed instructional growth. Students will be expected to grow from Approaches to Meets and Meets to Masters during the year. Academic progress will be reviewed using CCA’s, DCA’s and SLO artifacts.

There was an increase in academic performance with the Social Studies AP exams. The number of students scoring a three or higher increased from 2019 to 2020; the students still struggle with critical reading, writing, understanding how to use evidence in their free-response, and thinking skills necessary to be successful on the AP exam.

### **ESL**

The English as a Second Language Department collaborates with school stakeholders in order to improve content and academic language acquisition of English Language Learners.

Planning is one of the most important elements of instruction, so the department provides teachers with rosters that include academic and oral proficiency levels. This data assists them with incorporating comprehensible input strategies during instruction. Teachers, also, have an opportunity to attend campus and district trainings that emphasize best instructional practices for teaching English Language Learners. One of these trainings is Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Training is required for all ESOL and Sheltered English teachers, but it is open to all teachers. Those who need additional support after training may participate in the SIOP Coaching Cohort, which is sponsored by the District Second Language Education department. Teachers and coaches collaboratively plan using SIOP strategies.

Additionally, to ensure implementation of strategies within instruction, teachers are provided timely feedback regarding lesson plans and classroom observations. Academic progress is also monitored by reviewing DCA scores and growth writing portfolios. The department hopes these efforts will increase the English proficiency and overall academic achievement of students.

### **SPED**

Elsik Special Education Team works diligently to guide students in the adequate use of given tools to bridge the gap between their current performance and their potential

elevated level of performance. One area of focus is to increase READ180 Lexile growth for each student in the program by 2 or more grade levels. There are currently 71/290 students receiving services through the READ180 Program. While focusing on Lexile growth, 80% of the students in the Read180 Program will meet or exceed growth goals by the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

Another focus for this year is to increase our Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) percentage for students in Self-Contained Programs. This will be attained by evaluating students' functional performance and overall educational needs to determine if they can be successful in a less restrictive environment, even if it is on a part-time basis. Elsie's self-contained population is currently 27% (79/290 students).

## **Student Learning Strengths**

### **Math**

On STAAR EOC Algebra 1 in December 2019, 50% of students (Re-testers) were at approaches GL Standard or above. We have intervention classes during the school day (MMA for 10th grade, Algebraic Reasoning for our juniors and seniors) as well as offering after school tutorials for intervention as well as remediation and extra help with Math curriculum. Our AP Calculus scores increased dramatically to 39% of students receiving a 3 or higher.

### **English**

On the December 2019 administration of the STAAR English II EOC test, 53% of retesters scored at the Approaches level, while. 54% of our English I EOC retesters met the required passing score. STAAR EOC intervention is provided on all grade levels. In addition, RtI intervention is provided to English III and English IV retesters through Schoology, tutorials, and Specialist pull outs. On the College Board SAT test, 27% of Elsie students met the College Board English Reading and Writing Benchmark which identifies them as college ready.

### **Science**

Pre-AP Chemistry students participated in various field investigations to display their knowledge of the scientific method and utilize 21st Century skills to create experiments and present their information at the Alief District Science Fair. Six of the nine teams that competed in the Alief District Science Fair qualified for the Science and Engineering Fair of Houston (Regional).

Although there was a significant decrease in overall student participation in the AP exam testing in 2020; growth was shown in AP Environmental Science and AP Biology. Also there was an increase in students receiving a score of 3 or higher for AP Biology.

The implementation and use of Project Based Learning (PBL) activities in Science classrooms has had a positive effect on building students' ability to create, communicate, collaborate, and think critically. The implementation of various online learning tools to enhance student growth will be utilized during hybrid/remote and face to face learning.

### **Social Studies**

For the Social Studies department instructional practices, the content teams meet weekly during planning periods to construct daily objectives and lesson plans aligned to the TEKS and the district is pacing guides. Content area teams meet on compressed scheduled Wednesdays during their PLC to analyze students' work and formative assessment

data. Project-Based Learning is another focus for PLC as the teachers develop projects centered on driving questions and 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning skills. Project-based learning is a dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges, simultaneously developing cross-curriculum skills while working in small collaborative groups. The department uses data to drive instructional practices. Teachers and students are engaged in data analysis and reflection. Teachers use DMAC data collected from both state and local assessments that are then used to make instructional decisions in lesson planning, future assessment, interventions, and remediation. Students will be able to reflect on their assessments by using data analysis for each unit/topic. The students will make their test corrections, do personal data reflection, and identify areas of strength, concern, and progress. Most missed items on local and district assessments routinely reappear on future assessments to check for on level improvement.

### ESL?

English Language Learners, who were first-time testers, demonstrated growth for STAAR English English II and English II.

Students increased the percentage of the Approaches standard for English I by 2% and English II by 3%.

### SPED

When compared to last school year, 8% of students in the Read180 program have exited and are currently receiving services through In Class Support in the General Education Classroom. This impacts our overall goal of increasing the percentage of students being educated in a less restrictive environment while providing them with extensive exposure to the same amount of grade level TEKS as their non-disabled peers.

### **Problem Statements Identifying Student Learning Needs**

**Problem Statement 1:** Math: 50% of our re-testers passed the Algebra 1 STAAR Exam on the December 2019 Exam. **Root Cause:** Learning disabilities

**Problem Statement 2:** Math: The average AP Calculus score was a 2.1 and the average AP Stats score was a 1.3. Only 5 % of AP Statistics students received a 3 or higher. **Root Cause:** Instructional practices did not meet the rigor of the test.

**Problem Statement 3:** Math: Last year our mean math score for Juniors on the school day SAT was a 435 while the state average was a 476. **Root Cause:** Vocabulary and wording of the test does not align with our TEKS.

**Problem Statement 4:** Math: 15% of our junior students met the Math Benchmark score (College Ready) on the school day SAT. **Root Cause:** Vocabulary and wording of the test does not align with our TEKS.

**Problem Statement 5:** English: 25% of our English Language Learners passed the English II EOC at the Approaches level. **Root Cause:** Curriculum and program supports (interventions) may not be adequate for our school's demographic which includes a large English Language Learner population.

**Problem Statement 6:** English: 50% of our English II EOC retesters scored at the Approaches level. **Root Cause:** Due to change in rigor of the state assessments, campus/district assessments may not provide reliable measures of student needs.

**Problem Statement 7:** English: 36% of Special Education students passed the English II EOC at the Approaches level. **Root Cause:** Students' Accelerated Instruction was implemented in pull-outs, and not embedded within classroom instruction.

**Problem Statement 8:** English: 33% of Elsik students met the College Board college ready standard. **Root Cause:** Students are not being exposed to instruction and/or materials that meet the rigor of the SAT test.

**Problem Statement 9:** Social Studies: The closing of the achievement gap has increased with the ELL and SPED populations **Root Cause:** Teachers use of instructional practices to differentiate learning.

**Problem Statement 10:** Social Studies: Differentiation instruction, academic vocabulary development and critical thinking in the classroom continue to be a challenge for the students. **Root Cause:** Teachers lack delivery of quality instruction utilizing effective instructional strategies in social studies. Also, the availability of professional development that aligns with instructional needs.

**Problem Statement 11:** Social Studies: The number of students scoring a one continues to be significant. The number of students scoring a three or higher increased from 2019 to 2020, the students still struggle with critical reading, writing, using evidence in the free response, historical thinking skills necessary to be successful on the AP exam. **Root Cause:** The availability of professional development that aligns with instructional needs and limited strategies to help make sense of the required historical thinking skills and writing practices.

**Problem Statement 12:** Social Studies: The use of higher-order questions, quality questioning techniques, and closure-objective alignment are areas of needed instructional growth. **Root Cause:** The teachers understanding how to deconstruct the TEKS and social studies skills to plan the course unit and assessment for the students.

**Problem Statement 13:** Social Studies: The percentage of students who can shift from Meets to Mastery. **Root Cause:** Teachers lack instructional practices that utilize rigor, inferences of a stimulus, historical thinking skills, use of primary sources, and reading comprehension.

**Problem Statement 14:** ESL: 17% of all English Language Learners met the approaches benchmark for English I EOC during the Spring 2019 administration. **Root Cause:** Limited English Proficiency of Academic Vocabulary, Poor Classroom and Tutorial Attendance

**Problem Statement 15:** ESL: 15% of all English Language Learners met the approaches benchmark for English II EOC during the Spring 2019 administration. **Root Cause:** Limited English Proficiency of Academic Vocabulary, Poor Classroom and Tutorial Attendance

**Problem Statement 16:** ESL: 34% of English Language Learner Re-testers met the approaches benchmark for U.S. History during the EOC Spring 2019 administration. **Root Cause:** Limited English Proficiency of Academic Vocabulary, Poor Attendance

**Problem Statement 17:** ESL: 17% of English Language Learner re-testers met the Approaches benchmark during the Biology Spring 2019 administration. **Root Cause:** Limited English proficiency of Academic Vocabulary, poor classroom and tutorial attendance

**Problem Statement 18:** ESL: 25% of English Language Learners advanced one composite level on TELPAS 2019 administration. **Root Cause:** Limited English Proficiency of academic vocabulary, poor classroom and tutorial attendance

**Problem Statement 19:** SPED: 16% (13/81) of our READ180 students is one grade level behind, the rest are 2 to or more grade levels behind. **Root Cause:** learning disabilities.

**Problem Statement 20:** SPED: 34% (80/233) of SpEd population is in a self-contained setting. **Root Cause:** learning disabilities & intensive behavior support is needed

**Problem Statement 21:** Science: 54% of our ELL population met Approaches for the Spring 2019 BIOL STAAR EOC. **Root Cause:** English language speaking and reading deficiencies.

**Problem Statement 22:** Science: The number of students scoring a 1 on all AP science exams continues to be significant. **Root Cause:** Instructional practices do not meet the rigor of the exam; lack of content specific professional development that aligns with instructional needs.

# School Processes & Programs

## School Processes & Programs Summary

### Instructional & Curricular

Elsik offers academic support for students at all levels. On-level, Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP), Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual-Credit courses are available to our students based on level of academic performance. Our on-level courses are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards; AP courses align to the College Board's Advanced Placement standards and Dual Credit courses meet the Texas Education Higher Education Coordinating Board standards. Curriculum for all classes are written by district Content Coordinators, Content Area Specialists and Master Teachers. The district provides pacing guides which are centrally designed curriculum maps to all campuses. The pacing guides are distributed in hard copy format to campuses and shared electronically in the district's internal learning management system.

Elsik faculty and staff use data from a variety of sources to drive instruction and improve student performance. Data comes from the End-of-Course (EOC) exams, AP tests, Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Tests (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and course success rates.

### Personnel

At Elsik, our culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community among all stakeholders. In addition, teachers collaborate in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to focus on the learning of each student. Our PLCs are guided by a clear and compelling vision of what we must become in order to help all of our students.

There is district and campus-wide professional development for teachers/staff who are novice or seasoned in the field to support their continued growth and address any deficiencies. Staff also participates in local regional, state and national professional development in an effort to enhance their skills.

### Organizational & Administrative

We strive to provide an effective learning environment which maintains and communicates to all stakeholders a purpose and direction for continuous improvement. We are committed to high expectations for all students. There is a sense of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning at the school. At the core of our values, is how we as a school community build meaningful relationships while engaging in meaningful work. We believe how much you know does not matter, if time is not dedicated to showing others that you truly care about them.

In an effort to sustain our mission, vision, values and beliefs, we will continue to work collaboratively to ensure that our students are ready to compete in the 21st century. This starts with constant communication and reflection of best practices. We must remember that there is a positive correlation between meaningful relationships and meaningful work. We have to continue to expose our students to those opportunities that will help them to make a connection between classroom learning and real-life applications. We will forge ahead partnering with all stakeholders to impact student achievement, evaluating effectiveness of current programs, making data-driven decisions to guide instruction and investing in the professional growth of our educators.

## School Processes & Programs Strengths

### Instructional & Curricular

Our curricular framework is created by district content coordinators in collaboration with writing teams, including campus specialists and master teachers. The curriculum is TEKS aligned. The district pacing guides are created for all subjects and are available online. We use various strategies to release the learning to students which includes but is not limited to workshop model, inquiry and exploratory learning.

We utilize weekly PLC meetings for all teams and departmental horizontal planning. District content coordinators work with our elective teachers in monthly vertical alignment meetings. District content coordinators also meet throughout the year to vertically align Advance Placement coursework.

Assessments are used as formative and summative measures. Teams and Departments use CCAs and DCAs throughout the year. The campus expectation is that there are at least 3 major, 3 minor and 3 other types of assessments per 9-weeks grading cycle.

### **Personnel**

We are performing at a high standard, when it comes to implementing policies and practices that clearly and directly support our school's purpose and direction and the effective operation of our school.

There are district and campus policies and procedures in place to guide the professional development of our staff. Teachers in years 1 through 3 of service in the district are provided with a prescriptive plan for professional growth. The district has a prescriptive plan called Alief U. Some of the trainings that take place in Alief U for Year 1 Teachers include digital learning, teaching English Language Learners and classroom management. For Alief U Year 2 teachers, training sessions focus on action based learning, corrections and interactions and thinking maps. Alief U Year 3 teachers dive into professional development that focuses on technology, meaningful relationships and increasing student engagement. All of these sessions are in addition to the trainings that teachers take to increase their content knowledge.

In addition to district-wide training for Year 1 teachers, Elsik has a New Teachers' Academy that meets once a month to offer support to teachers in many areas such as lesson design, classroom management, technology, instructional practices and quality questioning to support their confidence and growth. These teachers also participate in a book study, conduct classroom observation of other teachers, including their mentors. A powerful component to the new teachers' training is the video recordings of their instruction to help them reflect on their practices. We also have a Year 2 and Year 3 Teacher Academy that meet throughout the year for added support and guidance.

There is campus-wide professional development for teachers that addresses the areas of technology, instructional practices, policies, procedures, PLC and teambuilding.

We participate in job fairs and support several Alternative Certification Programs.

### **Organizational & Administrative**

Elsik has a strong commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. For the past four years, we have committed to improving and strengthening literacy across the curriculum. It is through our literacy initiative that we will:

- Transform to a college and career readiness culture
- Develop better readers, writers, thinkers and communicators
- Increase rigor, engagement and discourse in all classes
- Increase collaboration in Professional Development Communities (PLC)
- Create relevant lesson plans which includes project-based learning

- Increase scores on all state/district/campus tests
- Increase the number of students applying for colleges
- Increase the number of students applying for scholarships

### **Problem Statements Identifying School Processes & Programs Needs**

**Problem Statement 1:** Class needs to be more student-centered. **Root Cause:** Some teachers are afraid to release learning to students.

**Problem Statement 2:** There is a need to build leadership capacity amongst the staff. **Root Cause:** Some staff may doubt their own abilities and/or talents; they are afraid to lead others.

**Problem Statement 3:** There has to be an increased focus on best instructional strategies such as questioning techniques, academic vocabulary, discourse and collaboration. **Root Cause:** Some teachers may lack the skills/knowledge to meet the instructional needs of students; more professional development is needed for this area of concern.

**Problem Statement 4:** We strive for a 100% Highly Qualified staff at Elsik; however, sometimes this expectation becomes challenging. **Root Cause:** For specialized classes and critical areas of shortage such as Discovery Learning Center, it's difficult to find teachers who are certified in multiple areas and/or have the skill set needed to meet the request. Also, in English, we had a teacher who was promoted close to the start of the school year and Science continues to be an area of concern for us with recruitment due science composite certification needed.

**Problem Statement 5:** Ensuring that all students are college and career ready before leaving Elsik. **Root Cause:** Some students lack the prerequisite skills needed before a deeper dive can happen in some content areas.

# Perceptions

## Perceptions Summary

At Elsik High School, we strive to provide an effective learning environment which maintains and communicates to all stakeholders a purpose and direction for continuous improvement. WE are committed to high expectations for all students. There is a sense of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning at the school. At the core of our values, is how we as a school community build meaningful relationships while engaging in meaningful work. WE believe how much you know does not matter, if time is not dedicated to showing others that you truly care about them.

We are committed to developing college and career ready students who can create, collaborate, communicate and think critically. Our vision focuses on Excellence, Honor and Spirit and represents the core of how we do things at Elsik.

Our beliefs and values are rooted in our meaningful work and meaningful relationships that we build with all stakeholders.

## Perceptions Strengths

In line with our campus vision and purpose, the campus has embraced research-based initiatives which include schoolwide literacy, project-based learning and AVID strategies. In addition to these initiatives, we continue to build a strong Pre-AP/AP pipeline as evidenced by an increase in enrollment and sustained course offerings.

## Problem Statements Identifying Perceptions Needs

**Problem Statement 1:** There is a need to build a strong school/home relationship. **Root Cause:** Many of our parents feel that when students enter high school that they can take care of their own educational and social needs because they are moving into young adulthood.

**Problem Statement 2:** It is important to engage in cross curricular learning and team building. **Root Cause:** Master Schedule concerns; staff involved in multiple committees and activities that take up a lot of their time.