

**Who We Are**

**2023**

---

**Established 2016**

# Our History

In the summer of 2014, John Boner Neighborhood Centers (JBNC) assembled a coalition of partners to respond to a federal opportunity to receive a Promise Zone designation for the Near Eastside of Indianapolis. Building on past planning efforts, the IndyEast Promise Zone would allow the City of Indianapolis and local neighborhood leaders the opportunity to partner with the federal government to achieve neighborhood-defined goals.

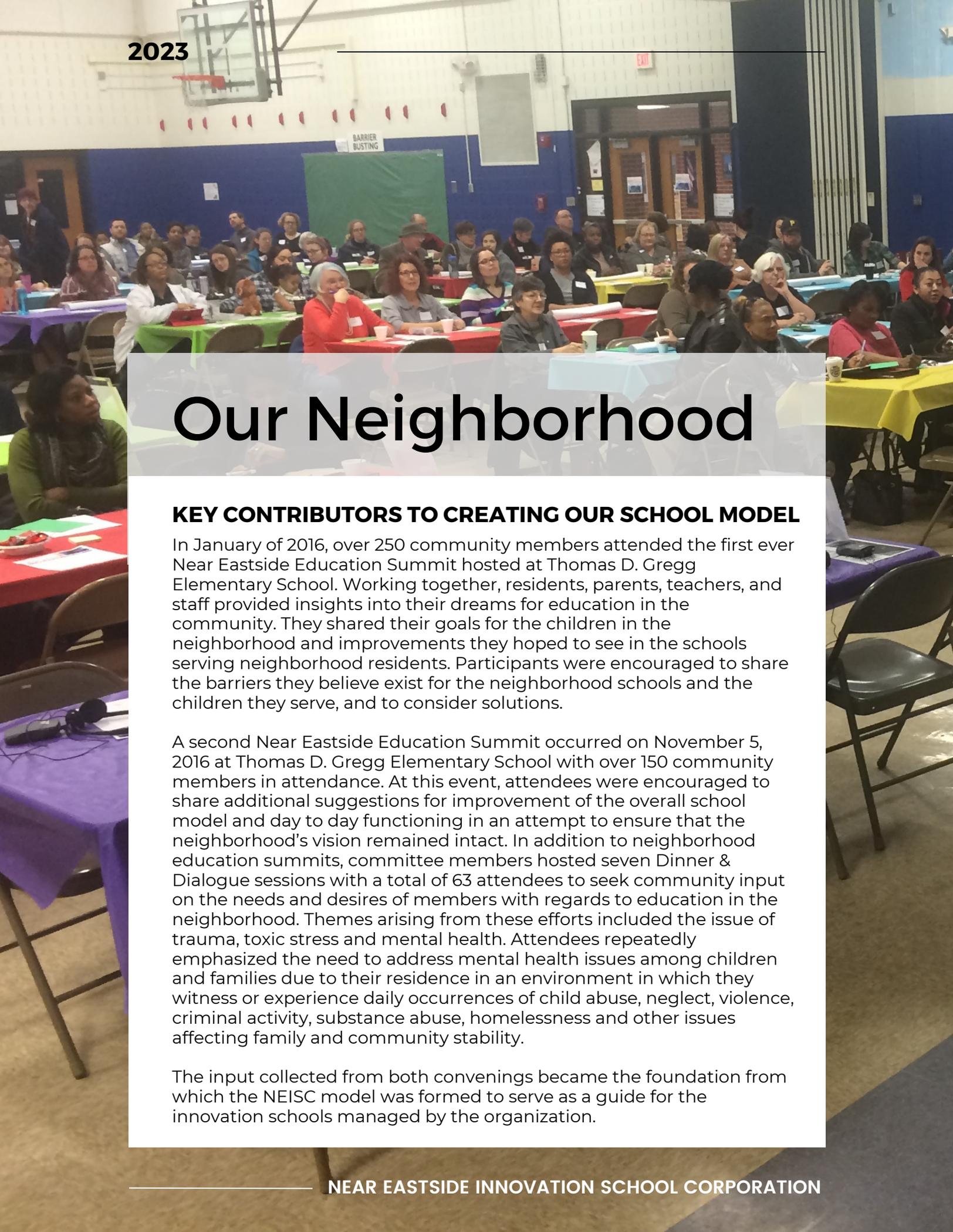
The IndyEast Promise Zone (IEPZ) designation was awarded in April 2015, resulting in five focus areas, each with three sub-goals. The five focus areas include:

- Learn IndyEast (Improve Educational Opportunities),
- Live IndyEast (Create Affordable Housing Options)
- Buy IndyEast (Increase Economic Activity)
- Work IndyEast (Create Job Opportunities)
- Safe IndyEast (Improve Public Safety).

Upon receipt of the designation, the Learn IndyEast committee, co-chaired by Indianapolis Public Schools, United Way of Central Indiana, and Westminster Neighborhood Ministries (a neighborhood partner organization), began to explore the concept of creating an Innovation Network School in the neighborhood as a way to improve educational outcomes.

The IEPZ Learn IndyEast committee saw the Innovation Network School model as a way to give neighborhood residents a voice in the structure of a neighborhood school. Created under the Learn IndyEast committee, the Near Eastside Innovation School Steering Committee was made up of members who were dedicated to coordinating an inclusive and community-driven planning process to create a neighborhood Innovation School. The group of community members and leaders was driven to develop and advocate for a model that meets the needs of all students and families in the community. They worked to ensure that any changes for our neighborhood schools allow all of our children to achieve at high levels and to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and physically regardless of race, socioeconomic status, home language or any other group membership.

In 2016, as the Innovation School model became more fully developed and a school was selected to be the recipient of the extensive work, the **Near Eastside Innovation School Corporation (NEISC)**, a 501c3, was formed to support the transition and implementation of the proposed strategy.

A large group of diverse people, including men, women, and children, are seated at long tables covered with colorful tablecloths (red, green, blue, yellow, purple) in a large room, likely a school cafeteria or gymnasium. They appear to be attending a community meeting or summit. In the background, there is a basketball hoop and a sign that says "BARRIER BUSTING".

# Our Neighborhood

## **KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CREATING OUR SCHOOL MODEL**

In January of 2016, over 250 community members attended the first ever Near Eastside Education Summit hosted at Thomas D. Gregg Elementary School. Working together, residents, parents, teachers, and staff provided insights into their dreams for education in the community. They shared their goals for the children in the neighborhood and improvements they hoped to see in the schools serving neighborhood residents. Participants were encouraged to share the barriers they believe exist for the neighborhood schools and the children they serve, and to consider solutions.

A second Near Eastside Education Summit occurred on November 5, 2016 at Thomas D. Gregg Elementary School with over 150 community members in attendance. At this event, attendees were encouraged to share additional suggestions for improvement of the overall school model and day to day functioning in an attempt to ensure that the neighborhood's vision remained intact. In addition to neighborhood education summits, committee members hosted seven Dinner & Dialogue sessions with a total of 63 attendees to seek community input on the needs and desires of members with regards to education in the neighborhood. Themes arising from these efforts included the issue of trauma, toxic stress and mental health. Attendees repeatedly emphasized the need to address mental health issues among children and families due to their residence in an environment in which they witness or experience daily occurrences of child abuse, neglect, violence, criminal activity, substance abuse, homelessness and other issues affecting family and community stability.

The input collected from both convenings became the foundation from which the NEISC model was formed to serve as a guide for the innovation schools managed by the organization.

# Our Commitment

## Our Vision

We strive to prepare students to positively contribute to the quality of life of their community.

## Our Mission

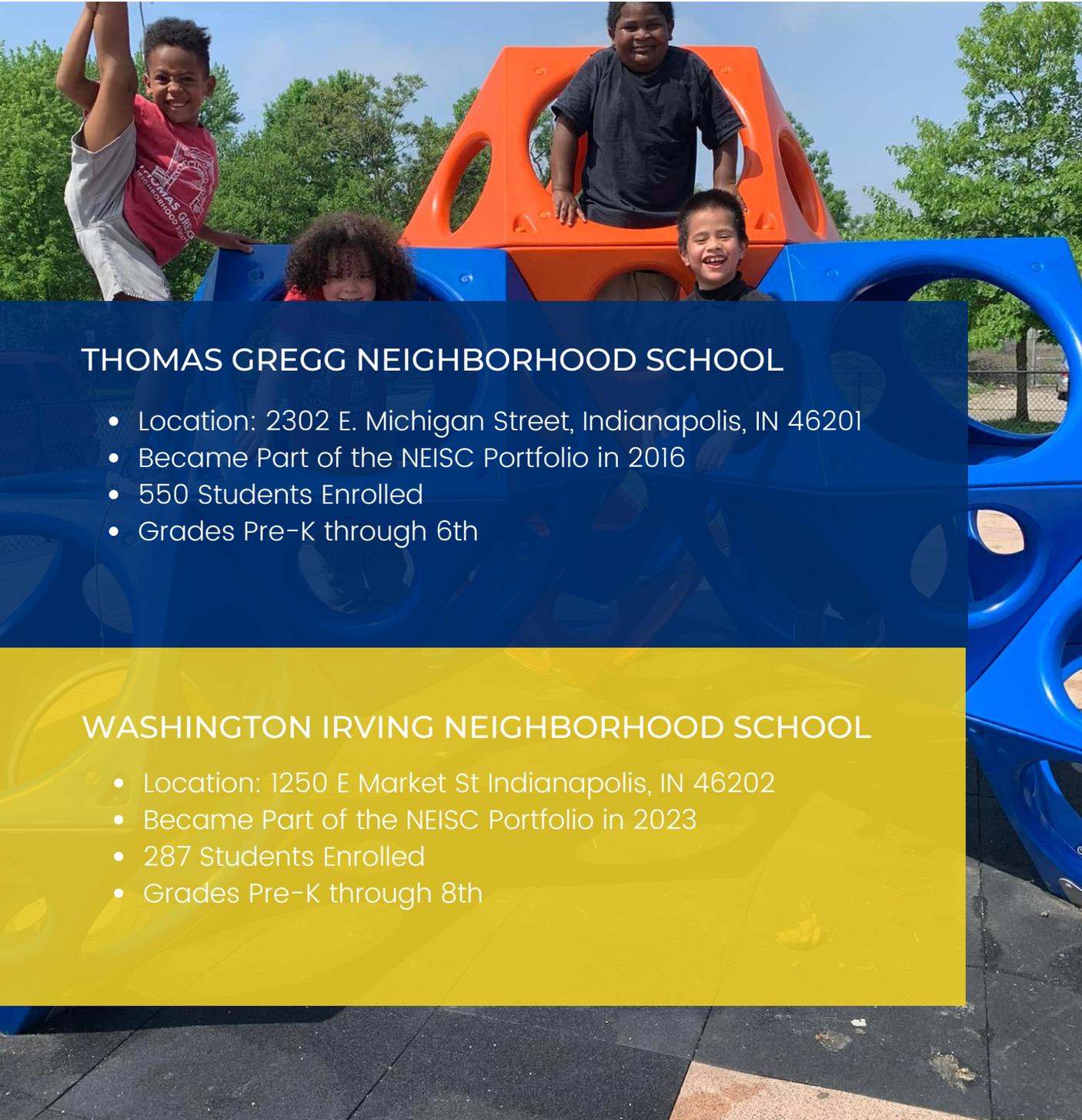
We prepare students through a whole child approach that encompasses two-generational supports, social and emotional development and personalized learning.

## Our Values

Take care of yourself  
Take care of each other  
Take care of this place



# Our Schools



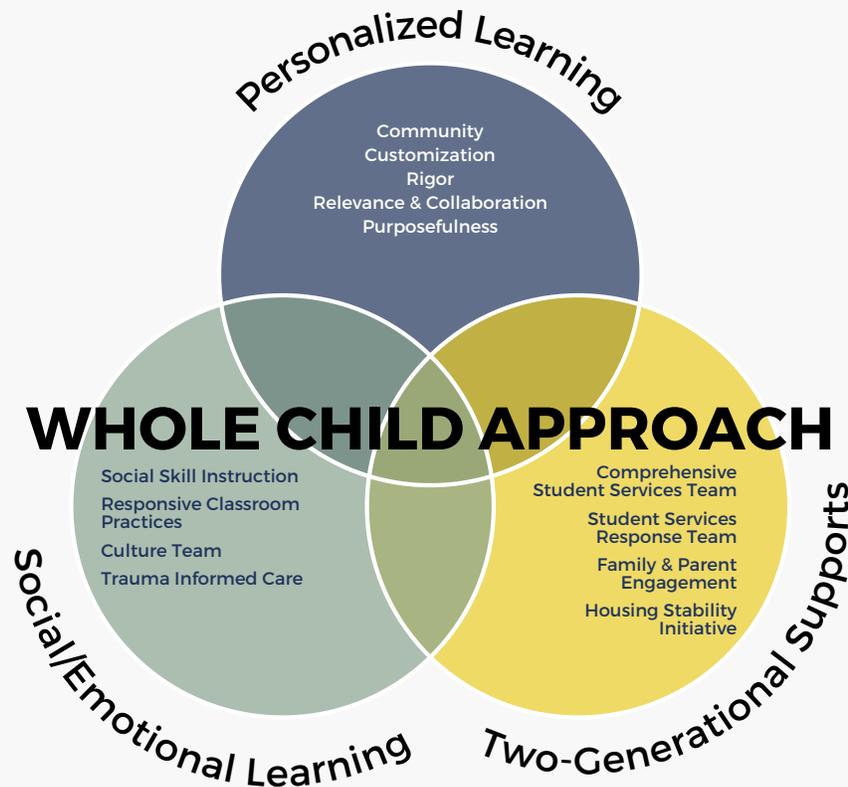
## THOMAS GREGG NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

- Location: 2302 E. Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46201
- Became Part of the NEISC Portfolio in 2016
- 550 Students Enrolled
- Grades Pre-K through 6th

## WASHINGTON IRVING NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

- Location: 1250 E Market St Indianapolis, IN 46202
- Became Part of the NEISC Portfolio in 2023
- 287 Students Enrolled
- Grades Pre-K through 8th

# Our School Model



## WHOLE CHILD APPROACH

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) defines the Whole Child Approach as “an effort to transition from a focus on narrowly defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of all children.” Our goal as a greater school community is to ensure that every student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged (ASCD).

Our approach to educating the whole child centers on three key facets that work collaboratively and in a coordinated way to attend “to cognitive, social, emotional, physical and talent development of children” (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010). Academic offerings are personalized in such a way that ensures all students are able to access grade level content where they see themselves in the curriculum and are provided opportunities to engage in learning that is meaningful. Social/emotional education inspires our young people’s compassion, self-awareness and empathy for others. Finally, our two generation supports brings together a personalized set of local resources to wrap around both the child and their family to help them feel safe, healthy and supported.

# Personalized Learning

Our students deserve to be presented with rigorous, engaging and personalized academic programming that promote mastery, address individual learning and developmental needs and prepare all students to become productive members of society, beginning at a young age. Through implementing new programs and being innovative in scheduling, we are able to maximize student exposure to core content, while also providing teachers sufficient time for data teams, grade level planning and professional development. The following describes the five components of our personalized learning structure in more detail:

## COMMUNITY

- Teachers are intentional in creating an environment of respect and rapport; where students feel like they are seen and are important members in a larger classroom community.
- Consistent routines and explicit procedures lay a foundation for academic exploration.
- Morning meetings and trauma-informed approaches assist in building community amongst students and create opportunity for meaningful social-emotional learning.
- Emphasis on building student capacity to do rigorous work through acknowledging and celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity.

## CUSTOMIZATION

- Students experience four modes of instruction in core content: whole group instruction introducing new content, small group learning with an instructor reinforcing skills, independent practice, and e-learning programs on 1-to-1 student devices.
- Instruction follows the gradual release model with a school-wide framework outlining the release to independence where students are systematically supported through a combination of remediation, reteaching, and reinforcements until they are ready for a higher depth of knowledge.
- Instruction is customized based on specific strengths, needs, interests, and goals. It can include differentiation of pace, path, place, and modality based on the student.
- Flexible teacher-to-student ratios throughout the building ensures students receive more small-group and individual attention during critical core content instruction or when demonstrating higher academic need.

## PURPOSEFULNESS

- Students are included in their own data and goal setting through collaborative conversations with teachers where growth mindset is key.
- Parents are integral partners in their child's education and are encouraged to attend conferences aligning with each reporting period to have in-depth conversations regarding their students' quarterly performance and goals.



## PERSONALIZED LEARNING

### RIGOR

- Instructional priorities are identified through data teams and student progress is tracked through regular assessment that is used to inform instruction.
- Our 12-day instructional cycle allows for elongated and rotating instructional blocks.
- Teachers are members of cross-grade level teams that include a subset of instructional support staff dedicated to improving outcomes for two specific grade levels.
- 3-hour PLC meetings are used to set instructional priorities, create assessments, analyze student data and plan for instruction.
- Lessons have targeted objectives that meet DOK demands and are assessed for mastery through aligned tasks.

### RELEVANCE, COLLABORATION & GROWTH

- Students learn through lab-style instruction in Science and Social Studies. Offering a project-based approach for learning in these subject areas promotes authentic, experiential learning of standard-based concepts.
- Students participate in service learning to authentically engage with and apply academic standards. Students work alongside teachers and community partners to identify, design and implement the projects. Student roles are selected based on readiness, strengths and personal preferences.
- An emphasis is placed on continued growth for teachers through year-long professional development plans that focus on key initiatives identified through trends in observation data.
- Teachers collaborate through Collegial Observations and Discourse, a process that provides teachers the opportunity to observe their colleagues alongside building leadership and participate in guided discourse surrounding the school's key initiatives and replication of critical strategies.

### CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

- Our model maximizes instructional time spent on ELA and Math through the incorporation of separate blocks designated for grade-level standards and remediation. Students are provided ELA instruction aligned with the science of reading that includes explicit instruction of foundational skills as well as knowledge building through quality literature. Our school sites use a compilation of Wit & Wisdom, Geodes and Foundations to ensure that students are developing both word recognition and language comprehension simultaneously.
- Instruction in Math via Eureka Math focuses on the students' conceptual development and is reinforced with Zearn, a technology component where students can explore concepts in greater depth and at their own pace.

## PERSONALIZED LEARNING

### 12-DAY INSTRUCTIONAL CYCLE

- Science & Social Studies Instruction - Schools operate on a 12-Day Instructional Cycle that promotes thorough instruction by offering elongated and rotating time blocks. Ten of the twelve days in the instructional cycle are considered the core instruction days and contain two reading blocks, one math block and a dedicated time for personalized learning needs. Day six and day twelve of the instructional cycle provide flexibility by allowing time for in-depth science and social studies labs as well as project-based service learning.
- Service Learning - We believe that students are already contributing members of their community, not just when they become adults. They can make a difference in their neighborhood right now! Students participate in service learning projects throughout the school year to authentically engage with and apply academic standards. Students work alongside teachers and community partners to identify a problem or need, design a plan and solution and implement the projects. Student roles are selected based on readiness, strengths and personal preferences. Some examples of past projects have included hosting an Art Show and auctioning the art to raise money for Wheeler Mission and selling snacks to raise funds to make blankets and purchase socks/underwear for homeless youth.
- Embedded Professional Development & Extended PLC- Ensuring that our teachers continuously strive to refine their craft is a critical component to promoting student achievement. Informal observations of instruction are conducted by building administrators and colleagues. Data from informal observations are used at the building level to inform teacher professional development. Teachers have the opportunity to observe each other, provide feedback surrounding building level initiatives and even gain strategies to implement in their own instruction via Collegial Observations and Discourse. Administrators provide teachers with formal observations and feedback using the Danielson rubric for teacher evaluation. Our instructional cycle allows teachers time to participate in a three-hour Professional Learning Community meeting dedicated to reflecting on the instructional cycle, disaggregating student assessment data, discussing student needs and planning instruction for the upcoming cycle.



# Social Emotional Learning

## SEL CURRICULA

We realize that developing children into well-rounded individuals requires an emphasis on social/emotional learning. Our schools utilize the following programming and practices to help students find an intrinsic desire to live by the school's three guiding principles: Take Care of Yourself, Take Care of Others, Take Care of This Place. Social/emotional skills are taught explicitly through a comprehensive curriculum titled Second Step. This program focuses on specific skills students need to be successful in social interaction and in managing their own wellbeing. This is intentionally taught in special area classes and reinforced in the classroom. Students that need more targeted support receive small group instruction using Curriculum Based Support Group, a program that emphasizes 5 key messages shown to improve social/emotional wellbeing.

## CULTURE SUPPORT TEAM

The Culture Support teams ensure that our students have appropriate, personalized support surrounding self-management and social interaction. This team ensures that our staff has the capacity to effectively implement best practices and build positive relationships. The Dean of Culture maintains all discipline records and works collaboratively with the classroom teachers to develop individualized, tiered support plans for student behavior. Schools use a Recovery Room to allow students time away from the classroom to reset where they are supported with both academics and social emotional skills by the Recovery Room Assistants. The Social Worker and Student Support Specialist work together to support students in a variety of ways, some of which include advocating for academically or behaviorally at-risk students and monitoring grades and attendance in order to proactively address areas of concern.

# Two-Generation Supports

The Near Eastside Innovation School Corporation believes that in order to educate a child well, we need to acknowledge and address all aspects of the child's life. This means it is imperative to bring focus on the community and family into the school to encourage the creation of a coalition working toward a common goal. This is accomplished through incorporation of the following components.

## COMMUNITY CONNECTION ROLES

Community-based services are integrated in NEISC schools through partnerships to ensure that families are connected to appropriate supports that can provide what they need to thrive. A Family Navigator works with families to increase awareness of all that is available to them within the community to aid in their success. This person works in a team approach with families to conduct a needs assessment and to identify and align specific resources. A Community School Coordinator is responsible for identifying community partners and programming that benefit students and families and ensures effective onsite program implementation.

## STUDENT SERVICES TEAM & TICKETING SYSTEM

NEISC schools employ a broad group of individuals whose roles work collaboratively to support student and family needs. This team consists of the Social Worker, Dean of Culture, Family Navigator, Community School Coordinator, Student Support Specialist, Operations Manager and is overseen by the Director of Operations and Neighborhood Engagement. Staff members can alert the Student Services team to student or family needs, concerns, etc. by submitting a student service ticket. The ticket is then triaged and assigned to the appropriate member(s) of the team who then take lead on coordinating services to meet the need. This unique approach to student services allows for quick response, constant feedback, accountability and tracking of trends.

## HOUSING STABILITY FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS INITIATIVE

Having stable housing results in a stable mindset for our students. Through partnering with John Boner Neighborhood Centers, families attending NEISC schools are given opportunities to secure stable and affordable housing in the community. Because of this support, students are afforded the opportunity to stay at their neighborhood school, where they can focus on building relationships and thriving under a routine as opposed to carrying the stress that comes from housing instability. Families in the program have access to a wide array of resources to help them succeed and reach their goals.



## TWO-GENERATION SUPPORTS

The Near Eastside Innovation School Corporation believes that a critical component in promoting academic achievement and the social emotional development of the child is the partnership of the family, the school and the community. Multiple lines of communication and opportunities to convene have been put in place to ensure that this partnership is able to not only develop, but also thrive.

Engagement with parents and caregivers of the school's students is essential for ensuring both the student and the family receive the services needed to be successful. The school model utilizes a variety of tactics and strategies to ensure strong engagement with those supporting students at home and away from schools. The following strategies are employed to ensure strong engagement:

- **Family Needs Assessment:** Completed annually, the family needs assessment is a comprehensive, strengths-based assessment tool that assesses family conditions across multiple indicators such as adult education, housing, income, employment, food, support systems, etc. Assessment results are analyzed and used to determine programming and partnerships to address the needs. Families are also able to work directly with the Family Navigator to develop an in-depth Family Achievement Plan which uses the family assessment results to develop actionable goals.
- **Family/School Compacts:** Signed annually, the compact serves as an acknowledgement of and agreement to the roles that each individual party plays in the achievement of the student. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities set the groundwork for a successful school year for all involved.
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Designed to ensure that parents and families are kept informed of student academic progress and school activities. Parent/teacher academic conferences occur three times annually and are aligned with each report card period. Students are able to set goals alongside their teachers and parents and, with this tri-annual approach, follow up on progress throughout the year or set new goals as necessary.
- **Parent Booster Club:** The Booster Club bridges the gap between parents and teachers and works together to locate needs for the school and implement plans to welcome new families, share opportunities to get involved and aid in fostering the school culture surrounding the three guiding principles.
- **Community Partners:** NEISC schools have a robust group of community partners that support our mission and vision. With our partners help, we are able to offer a variety of embedded and extracurricular experiences to our students as well as programming geared towards parents and the whole family. Community Council meets regularly to review a school's progress, network, and collaborate together to strengthen services and partnerships. Some key partners include the John Boner Neighborhood Centers, Englewood Christian Church, The Creek Church, The Patachou Foundation, East 10th Children and Youth Center, Indianapolis Public Library, Ambassadors of Hope and many others.