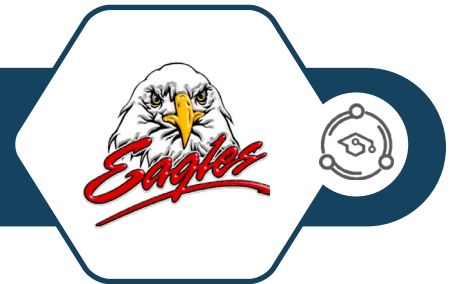


**The To&Through Middle Grades Network (MGN)** is a group of CPS schools dedicated to creating more equitable and responsive educational environments where middle grades students thrive. The network aims to *increase the number of students with attendance at or above 90% and GPAs at or above 3.0 (i.e. condensed elementary on-track) through a meaningful increase in students' sense of belonging.*

Participating schools in each cohort work to redefine the middle grades experience by using qualitative and quantitative data to understand student experiences, develop a problem of practice, and test change ideas that positively impact the experiences and outcomes of middle grades students.

This profile shares the journey of one MGN school in hopes of inspiring others to reimagine systems and structures to ensure that middle grades students thrive.

## EDWARD K. DUKE ELLINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LOCATED IN AUSTIN



### SY2022 - 2023 TEAM MEMBERS

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Middle School Diverse Learners Teacher
- Middle School ELA Teacher
- Middle School ELA Teacher
- Two Middle School Math Teachers
- Middle School Science Teacher

### STUDENTS

**School Grades:** PreK – 8  
**Number of Students:** 420  
**Middle Grades Enrollment:** 106

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**93.3% Black**  
**19.8% Diverse Learners**  
**3.6% English Learners**  
**85.7% FRPL**

### DEFINITION OF STUDENT

*Students at Ellington are successful when:*

- Instruction is effective;
- They are actively engaging and learning;
- Attendance and behavior has improved;
- Student voice is evident and empowering; and
- They experience the joy of learning.

# Edward K. Duke Ellington Elementary School

## Year One Improvement Story

### YEAR ONE

### CHANGE IDEA RATIONALE

In spring 2022, the Ellington team conducted surveys, focus groups, and student shadows with their middle grades students. Survey results revealed that 42% of students felt school was not welcoming for everyone, and 20% said they did not have a trusted adult in the building. Bright spots included 90% of students saying they felt respected by their teachers and more than 75% of students saying that teachers make what they are learning interesting. In focus groups, students mentioned wanting more say in policies and feeling like they are often grouped together and not seen as individuals, especially when it comes to discipline. They also noted feeling stressed out by how fast teachers were teaching material and by assessments.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. Oftentimes students just want to be heard and understood. Once they feel that, they know that teachers are there to guide and help them succeed.
2. Intentional connections between the IB curriculum and the Elevate learning conditions help to make sure that all students experience success.

### Data Sources

- Quarterly [Elevate survey](#) results related to the Teacher Caring, Classroom Community, and Meaningful Work learning conditions.
- **Classroom data discussions** to gather additional information from students regarding specific questions related to the targeted learning conditions.

### YEAR ONE

### CHANGE IDEA

### Intentional rollout of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile + connections to Elevate learning conditions

- From January to March 2023, two attributes from the [IB Learner Profile](#) were rolled out biweekly. Teachers focused on these attributes in their classroom and intentionally tied them to their curriculum.
- Quarterly Elevate results were used to identify changes in learning conditions that are connected to relevant attributes from the IB Learner Profile.

### YEAR ONE

### IMPACT

*By intentionally rolling out the IB Learner Profile and connecting it to the Elevate learning conditions, Ellington teachers were able to identify specific ways that they were using the learner profile to strengthen relationships with their students and to connect the curriculum to their students' lives inside and outside of school. Through the Elevate survey and the IB Learner Profile, teachers became more open to incorporating social emotional learning (SEL) and, as one teacher said, "SEL matters! If it's not there, then you are not going to get much done."*

Ellington saw a 5% increase in both the Meaningful Work and Classroom Community learning conditions and 2% increases in both Student Voice and Teacher Caring. On individual Elevate questions, the team also saw 8% increases in students feeling like they have more time to interact with one another and work being more meaningful in their classes. During team meetings, Ellington teachers shared that they saw the positive impact of eliciting student voice through these surveys, especially when they followed up with class discussions about the resulting data. This helped to better engage students and create a stronger classroom community.

They want to continue to think about how their change idea inside the school impacts students outside the school and how to meet students where they are. As one teacher reflected, "*There has to be an openness for [the] timing of their learning. Students need to know that they can go at their own pace. [They] need to have productive struggle; students will have their "ah ha" moment and we need to be ready when they are ready!*"