



PARENT/SCHOLAR HANDBOOK

2025-2026





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WE BUILD.

Building Block 1: Introduction

WE LEAD.



1. Introduction to the Parent/Scholar Handbook

Welcome to the El Paso Leadership Academy! This handbook provides scholars, parents, and guardians with essential policies, procedures, and expectations for a successful academic year. It serves as a reference guide for navigating school operations, academic requirements, behavior expectations, and scholar support services.

Our mission is to educate and empower scholars with the tools essential to achieving their full academic potential, fostering leadership skills, and preparing them for future success. We believe in a collaborative effort among scholars, parents, faculty, and staff to maintain a supportive learning environment.

We encourage parents and scholars to read through this handbook carefully and keep it accessible for reference throughout the year.

For any questions or clarifications, please contact your campus:

- East Campus: (915) 298-3901
- Flagship Campus: (915) 298-3900

We Build. We Lead.

2. Mission

Our mission is to educate and empower scholars with tools essential to achieve their self-actualization, academic potential, and success.

3. Vision

Our vision is to create a nurturing environment as an elite and collaborative organization, that shapes independent thinkers and people ready to make their own rules.

4. Pillars

EPLA is built on the following foundational principles:

1. **High Expectations** – We hold all scholars to rigorous academic and behavioral standards to ensure their success.
2. **Strong School Leadership** – Our leadership team is dedicated to creating a



structured, supportive learning environment.

3. **Effective Instructional Time** – Targeted academic interventions and enrichment ensure that scholars master key skills and knowledge.
4. **College & Career Readiness** – We prepare scholars for future success through a robust curriculum and advisory programs.
5. **Community & Family Engagement** – We believe in the power of strong relationships between school, families, and the community to support scholar growth.

5. Non-Discrimination Statement

El Paso Leadership Academy does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, or any other protected category in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices. Discriminatory activities include, but are not limited to, bullying or harassment based on identity, denial of participation in school programs due to protected status, or unfair treatment in disciplinary actions. We are committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all scholars.

For concerns regarding discrimination or harassment, please contact:

- **Title IX Coordinator (Flagship Campus):**
- **Title IX Coordinator (East Side Campus):**
- **Section 504 Coordinator (Flagship Campus):**
- **Section 504 Coordinator (East Side Campus):**

We appreciate your support in making EPLA a welcoming and academically rigorous school community. Let's work together for a fantastic school year!

WE BUILD.

Building Block 2: Enrollment and Attendance Policies

WE LEAD.



1. Admissions Policy & Lottery Process

El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) is an open-enrollment public charter school. Admission is open to all scholars who meet residency requirements within the designated geographic boundaries. Applications for admission will be available starting the **first Monday of November**, and the deadline to submit completed applications is the **second Wednesday of April at 5 p.m.** Applications must either be received by the school or postmarked by the deadline to be considered.

If the number of applicants exceeds the available seats, a **randomized admissions lottery** will be conducted during the **last week of April** or as otherwise scheduled by the Board of Directors. Each applicant will be assigned a number, and all numbers will be placed in a container and drawn one at a time in a public setting. Applicants whose numbers are drawn will be offered admission.

Selected applicants will receive a **Letter of Intent to Enroll and Register** and must complete registration within **30 calendar days** of receipt. Failure to complete the process within this timeframe will result in forfeiture of the applicant's position.

2. Waiting List & Late Applications

Once all seats have been filled, the remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order their numbers were drawn. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the school year, the next applicant on the waiting list will be offered admission.

Applicants on the waiting list will be notified by phone or, if unreachable, by mail. They will be required to return a **Letter of Intent to Enroll** within **one week** to confirm their intent to register. Failure to respond will result in forfeiture of the applicant's position.

Late applications received after the deadline will be added to the waiting list behind those who applied on time.

3. Lottery Exceptions

Federal guidelines allow certain applicants to be exempt from the lottery, including:

- Siblings of scholars already enrolled at EPLA.
- Children of school founders, teachers, and staff (provided they constitute only a



small percentage of total enrollment).

For definition purposes, **siblings** are two or more children related by birth or legal adoption. El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) is an open-enrollment public charter school. Admission is open to all scholars who meet residency requirements within the designated geographic boundaries. If the number of applicants exceeds the available seats, a **randomized lottery system** is used to determine enrollment. Families of selected scholars will be notified and must complete registration within the specified deadline to secure their spot.

4. STUDENT INFORMATION

Based on the scholar's discipline record the scholars will be admitted to the school. If the scholar has any discipline problems, the scholar will need a meeting with the parent and campus leadership. After a scholar is admitted to the school, the scholar must include registration documents (birth certificate, social security if applicable, proof of address, copy of an ID and immunization records).

No later than 10 days after enrolling in the school, the parent and school district in which the scholar was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the scholar. These records may include the scholar's birth certificate, or a copy of the scholar's school records from the most recently attended school.

The school will forward a scholar's records on request to a school in which a scholar seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parent's consent.

5. Residency Verification, Student Information & Required Documents

The Texas Education Code §25.001 authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in the school, each scholar's parent must show proof of residency at the time of enrollment. Residency may be verified through documentation and other means, including but not limited to:

- A current lease agreement.
- The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership.
- A current utility bill (water, electric, or gas) indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers.



- Proof of residence of the residence occupiers.
- Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1 of the school year in which admission is sought as evidence of residency for the school year in which admission is sought only.

Falsification of information and documentation concerning residency is a criminal offense.

Additional required documents include the scholar's birth certificate, immunization records, proof of guardianship (if applicable), and any prior school records. The Texas Education Code §25.001 authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in the school, each scholar's parent must show proof of residency at the time of enrollment. Proof of residency may include a lease agreement, utility bill, or other verified documents. Additional required documents include the scholar's birth certificate, immunization records, proof of guardianship (if applicable), and any prior school records. To enroll, families must provide proof of residency, which may include a lease agreement, utility bill, or other verified documents. Additional required documents include the scholar's birth certificate, immunization records, proof of guardianship (if applicable), and any prior school records.

Student Information & Discipline Considerations

Admission to El Paso Leadership Academy is contingent upon a review of the scholar's discipline record. If a scholar has prior disciplinary issues, a meeting will be required with the parent/guardian and campus leadership before enrollment is finalized.

Once admitted, scholars must submit all required registration documents, including a birth certificate, social security card (if applicable), proof of address, a copy of a government-issued ID, and immunization records.

No later than 10 days after enrollment, parents must provide verification of the scholar's identity through prior school records or other official documentation. The school district in which the scholar was previously enrolled is responsible for furnishing these records upon request.

If a scholar transfers to another school, EPLA will forward scholar records to the receiving institution upon request, without requiring parental consent. To enroll, families must provide proof of residency, which may include a lease agreement, utility bill, or other



verified documents. Additional required documents include the scholar's birth certificate, immunization records, proof of guardianship (if applicable), and any prior school records.

6. Attendance Expectations

El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) recognizes the critical role attendance plays in scholar achievement and overall success. Missing school regularly can negatively impact academic performance and social development. We encourage families to prioritize daily attendance and communicate promptly regarding any absences. Regular attendance is essential for academic success. Students are expected to be present and on time every school day. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and communicates any necessary absences in accordance with school policies.

Absences (Excused vs. Unexcused)

- **Excused Absences:** The following are acceptable reasons for an excused absence:
 - Observing religious holy days recognized by the scholar's denomination (with prior written notice).
 - Medical or dental appointments (must return to school the same day and provide documentation).
 - Sounding "Taps" at a military funeral (grades 6-12, with prior notice).
 - Pursuing enlistment in the U.S. military (up to four excused days for scholars 17+ with documentation).
 - Required court appearances (must provide court documents).
 - Completing paperwork at a government office related to U.S. citizenship.
 - Attending a U.S. naturalization oath ceremony (documentation required).
 - Visiting an accredited institution of higher education (Juniors and Seniors only, up to two days per year, with prior notice).
 - Serving as an election clerk (scholars 16+ with training and prior notice).
 - Participating in activities related to Department of Family and Protective



Services conservatorship.

- Visiting an active-duty military parent or guardian before or after deployment (up to five days per year, with prior notice).
- Bereavement for a family member (up to three days per instance; additional days require administrative approval and documentation).
- Unexcused Absences: Any absence that does not meet the criteria above, including:
 - Personal vacations or travel.
 - Oversleeping or missing transportation.
 - Non-emergency family obligations.

Attendance for Course Credit

Per Texas Education Code §25.092, scholars must attend at least 90% of class sessions to receive credit. Falling below this threshold may result in retention or a required intervention plan.

Tuancy & Chronic Absenteeism

Tuancy prevention measures are in place for scholars accumulating excessive unexcused absences:

- Three unexcused absences in a four-week period: Warning notice sent to parents/guardians.
- Six unexcused absences in a semester: Mandatory attendance meeting and intervention plan.
- Seven unexcused absences: Home visit from school administration and implementation of a truancy prevention plan.
- Nine unexcused absences: Required meeting with the principal, grade level team lead, and attendance clerk. Parents/guardians are required to attend.
- Ten unexcused absences in six months: Referral to truancy court, per Texas Education Code §25.093.



- Chronic absenteeism: Defined as missing 10% or more of the school year (18+ days), whether excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism will trigger an attendance review meeting. Truancy prevention measures are in place for scholars accumulating excessive unexcused absences:
- Three unexcused absences in a four-week period: Warning notice sent to parents/guardians.
- Six unexcused absences in a semester: Mandatory attendance meeting and intervention plan.
- Ten unexcused absences in six months: Referral to truancy court, per Texas Education Code §25.093.
- Chronic absenteeism: Defined as missing 10% or more of the school year (18+ days), whether excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism will trigger an attendance review meeting.

Make-up Work Policy

(For detailed guidelines on make-up work, please refer to the Academics & Grading Policies section.) Students with excused absences are responsible for requesting and completing all missed assignments within the timeline set by their teacher. Typically, scholars receive one day per absence to complete work. Unexcused absences may result in partial or no credit for assignments missed.

Doctor's Note Requirements for Extended Absences

- A doctor's note is required if a scholar is absent for more than three consecutive days due to illness.
- If a scholar has frequent absences due to medical reasons, the school may require additional medical documentation or an Individualized Health Plan (IHP).

Withdrawal for Non-Attendance

Students missing ten consecutive days without contact from a parent/guardian may be withdrawn from EPLA. Prior to withdrawal, the school will make repeated attempts to contact the family and address the attendance issue. Families who wish to re-enroll must go through the standard admissions process.



- **Excused Absences:** Include illness (with documentation if exceeding three consecutive days), medical appointments, religious holidays, family emergencies, or other reasons approved by administration.
- **Unexcused Absences:** Any absence without valid justification, including oversleeping, missing school for vacations, or transportation issues.

Truancy & Excessive Absences Policy

EPLA follows Texas state laws regarding truancy. If a scholar has excessive unexcused absences, parents may receive warning notices, and legal action may be taken for continued violations. Excessive absences may also impact a scholar's ability to receive credit for coursework.

Make-up Work Policy

Students with excused absences are responsible for requesting and completing missed assignments within the timeframe set by their teacher, typically within the number of days absent. Unexcused absences may result in partial or no credit for missed work.

Doctor's Note Requirements for Extended Absences

For illnesses exceeding three consecutive days, a signed note from a healthcare provider is required for the absence to be considered excused. For chronic medical conditions, parents should coordinate with school health services.

7. Arrival, Tardiness, & Early Dismissal Policies

- **Arrival:** Students must arrive before the first bell to avoid tardiness.
- **Tardiness:** Students arriving late must check in at the office and obtain a tardy pass.
- **Early Dismissal:** Parents/guardians must sign out their child from the main office. Early dismissals should be reserved for necessary appointments or emergencies.

8. Withdrawal & Transfer Process

A scholar under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent or legal guardian. The school requests at least three days' notice to prepare records and necessary documents. Any scholar withdrawn will be assigned a leaver code of 98 and considered a drop-out



until El Paso Leadership Academy receives documentation that the scholar has enrolled in another institution. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the main office.

On the scholar's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages. The Registrar/PEIMS Clerk will provide copies of health records, the last report card, and course clearance. The form must be finalized with the signature of the Executive Director/Principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the scholar, and the original will be placed in the scholar's permanent record. Withdrawals will not be processed for scholars with outstanding fee balances. All outstanding balances must be paid in full to the EPLA Dean of Operations, with written notice of payment provided to the Registrar/PEIMS Clerk.

A scholar who is 18 or older, married, or has been declared an emancipated minor by a court may withdraw without a parental signature.

Involuntary Withdrawal

The school may initiate withdrawal of a scholar under the age of 18 for nonattendance under the following conditions:

- The scholar has been absent for ten consecutive school days.
- Repeated efforts to locate the scholar have been unsuccessful. Families wishing to withdraw or transfer their scholar must notify the school administration and complete the required documentation. Student records will be transferred to the new school upon request.

WE BUILD.

Building Block 3: Daily Operations and Logistics

WE LEAD.



1. School Hours & Bell Schedules

El Paso Leadership Academy operates on a structured schedule to maximize learning time.

- **Middle School:** 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM
- **High School:** 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- **Early Dismissal Days:** 8:00 AM – 12:30 PM
- **Professional Development Days:** No school for scholars (dates provided in the school calendar).

Students arriving after the designated start time will be marked tardy. If tardiness becomes habitual, families will be contacted for an attendance meeting.

2. After-School Dismissal & Late Pick-Up Policy

Dismissal occurs promptly at the end of the school day. For safety and supervision reasons:

- **Students must be picked up within 30 minutes of dismissal.**
- Any scholar not picked up on time will be supervised in the office, and parents/guardians will be contacted.
- Repeated late pick-ups (more than three times per quarter) may result in administrative intervention and loss of after-school privileges.

Authorized Pick-Ups:

- Students will only be released to individuals listed on their **Authorized Pick-Up Form**.
- Photo identification will be required for verification.
- Parents should update this form promptly when changes occur.

After-School Activities & Extracurriculars

EPLA offers a range of after-school programs, including clubs, tutoring, and athletics. Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege that requires meeting the following criteria:

Eligibility Requirements:

- Maintain a passing grade in all core subjects.



- Adhere to the scholar code of conduct.
- Attend at least 85% of scheduled practices, rehearsals, or meetings.
- Submit a signed **Parent/Guardian Permission Form** before participation.

3. Behavior Expectations:

- Students must remain in designated areas while waiting for activities to begin.
- Inappropriate behavior may result in removal from the program.
- Students must be picked up promptly after activities end.

4. Field Trips & Parent Permission

Field trips are an extension of classroom learning and require adherence to specific policies:

- A **Field Trip Permission Form** must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian before participation.
- Parents are responsible for any costs associated with field trips, including entry fees and transportation.
- **Chaperones:** A limited number of parent volunteers may be required for trips. Chaperones must complete a background check prior to the trip.

Field Trip Expectations:

- Students must wear the designated school uniform unless otherwise specified.
- All school rules apply during field trips.
- Any scholar demonstrating inappropriate behavior may be excluded from future trips.

If a scholar has an outstanding fee balance, participation in field trips may be restricted until the balance is resolved.

5. School Transportation Policy (Bus, Walkers, Rideshare)

EPLA provides **limited bus transportation** for eligible scholars. **Bus riders must adhere to the following rules:**

- Arrive at the bus stop **five minutes before** the scheduled pickup time.
- Remain seated while the bus is in motion.



- Keep hands, feet, and belongings inside the bus.
- Use respectful language and follow the driver's instructions.

Failure to follow bus rules may result in:

- **First violation:** Verbal warning.
- **Second violation:** Written warning and parent notification.
- **Third violation:** Temporary suspension from bus services.
- **Severe infractions** may result in permanent loss of bus privileges.

Walkers & Rideshare Services:

- Students walking home or using rideshare services must have a **Walker/Rideshare Permission Form** signed by a parent/guardian.
- EPLA is not responsible for scholars once they leave school property after dismissal.

6. Lost and Found

Lost items should be reported to the front office immediately. A **Lost and Found** area is available for misplaced belongings.

Lost Item Policies:

- Students are encouraged to **label personal items** with their name.
- High-value items (e.g., electronics, jewelry) should not be brought to school.
- Unclaimed items will be donated or discarded at the end of each grading period.

EPLA is not responsible for lost or stolen personal belongings. Students should avoid bringing valuable items to school.

7. School Hours & Bell Schedules

El Paso Leadership Academy operates on a structured schedule to maximize learning time. The school day begins promptly at **8:00 AM** and ends at **3:30 PM** for middle school and **4:00 PM** for high school. Students arriving after the designated start time will be marked tardy.

Bell schedules are subject to change for special events, professional development days, and early dismissal days. Families will be notified in advance of any adjustments to the regular schedule.



8. After-School Dismissal & Late Pick-Up Policy

Dismissal occurs immediately following the end of the school day. Students must be picked up no later than **30 minutes** after dismissal. Any scholar not picked up within this timeframe will be taken to the main office, and parents/guardians will be contacted.

For safety reasons, scholars will only be released to individuals listed on their **Authorized Pick-Up Form**. Identification may be required for verification. Parents are encouraged to update this form as needed throughout the school year.

Students participating in after-school programs must be picked up immediately following their scheduled activity. Repeated late pick-ups may result in exclusion from extracurricular activities.

After-School Activities & Extracurriculars

EPLA offers a range of after-school programs, including clubs, tutoring, and athletics. Participation is a privilege and requires adherence to academic and behavioral expectations.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Maintain a passing grade in all core subjects.
- Adhere to the scholar code of conduct.
- Submit a signed parent/guardian permission slip.

Students must be picked up promptly after activities end. Failure to arrange timely transportation may result in suspension from the program.

9. Field Trips & Parent Permission

Field trips are an extension of the academic experience and align with curriculum objectives. Prior to each trip, a **Field Trip Permission Form** must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian.

Field Trip Expectations:

- Students must wear the designated school uniform unless otherwise specified.
- Students must follow all school rules and behavior expectations during trips.
- Any scholar demonstrating inappropriate behavior may be excluded from future



trips.

If a scholar has an outstanding fee balance, participation in field trips may be restricted until the balance is resolved.

10. School Transportation Policy (Bus, Walkers, Rideshare)

EPLA provides **limited bus transportation** for eligible scholars. Bus riders must comply with all transportation rules, including:

- Remaining seated while the bus is in motion.
- Following the driver's instructions.
- Keeping noise levels appropriate to avoid distractions.

Failure to follow these rules may result in suspension of transportation privileges.

For scholars who walk home or use rideshare services, a **Walker/Rideshare Permission Form** must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian. EPLA is not responsible for scholars once they leave school property after dismissal.

11. Lost and Found

Lost items should be reported to the front office immediately. A designated **Lost and Found area** is maintained for misplaced belongings. Unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each grading period. Students are encouraged to label personal items with their name to facilitate identification.

EPLA is not responsible for lost or stolen personal belongings. It is recommended that scholars refrain from bringing valuable items to school.

- School Hours & Bell Schedules
- After-School Dismissal & Late Pick-Up Policy
- After-School Activities & Extracurriculars
- Field Trips & Parent Permission
- School Transportation Policy (Bus, Walkers, Rideshare)
- Lost and Found

WE BUILD.

Building Block 4: Uniform and Scholar Fees

WE LEAD.



1. Dress Code Policy

As authorized by state law and the school's charter, scholars are required to wear uniforms to school. The school's uniform policy is designed to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, minimize safety hazards, promote team/class camaraderie, and provide a dress standard that offers flexibility for the parent and scholar. Students must arrive in a proper school uniform every day, cleanly and neatly groomed, ensuring that their clothing does not create a health or safety hazard or distract from the educational atmosphere of the school.

Parents are responsible for purchasing and providing their scholar(s) with the required uniform unless they qualify as economically disadvantaged, as provided in the Texas Education Code. The school may provide uniforms for such scholars upon request, which must be made in writing to the Office Coordinator or Principal.

A parent may request an exemption from the uniform requirement for their scholar by providing a written statement of a bona fide religious or philosophical objection to the policy, as determined by the Board of Directors.

2. Middle School Uniform Policy

Polo Shirt with EPLA Logo

- Grade-level polo shirts with the EPLA logo must be tucked in at all times.
- Excessively baggy or tight shirts are not permitted.
- Grade-level colors:
 - **6th grade:** Black
 - **7th grade:** Green
 - **8th grade:** Maroon

Pants

- Solid black or black denim pants with belt loops.
- Pants must not sag, be excessively baggy, or excessively tight.
- Jogger-style pants, leggings, or pants with rips, holes, or tears are not allowed.
- Girls' slacks may be mid-calf or longer.
- All pants must be worn with a belt at all times.

Black Shorts



- Solid black shorts with a dark-colored belt.
- Shorts must not sag, be excessively baggy, or excessively tight.
- The hem of shorts should be no shorter than one inch above the knee and no longer than one inch below the knee.
- No rips, holes, or tears are allowed.
- All shorts must be worn with a belt.

Girls' Black Skirts or Skorts

- The hem or slit must be no shorter than one inch above the knee, including uneven-edged skirts.
- Skirts/skorts must have no rips, holes, or tears.
- Leggings may only be worn underneath skirts of the appropriate length.
- Leggings **CANNOT** be worn in place of pants, including leggings with pockets.
- Skirts or skorts do not require belts.

Shoes

- Closed-toe shoes with a firm bottom.
- Heels must be **1.5 inches or less**.
- **Not allowed:** Crocs, flip-flops, sandals, or open-toe shoes.

Physical Education (PE) Uniforms

- Only shirts and shorts approved by the PE department may be worn.
- Basketball or athletic shorts must be no shorter than mid-thigh.
- Bicycle shorts may be worn underneath appropriate-length athletic shorts.
- Athletic shoes are required.
- PE uniforms must be changed after class; scholars may not wear them throughout the school day.

CRSHH T-Shirts

- Students who earn a **CRSHH T-shirt** may wear it with blue jeans on Fridays or days when CRSHH assemblies are held.
- CRSHH shirts must be tucked in and adhere to all dress code guidelines, including size and fit.

Headwear



- The following items are **not allowed** inside the campus:
 - Baseball caps
 - Beanies
 - Hoods (Raised hoods)
- Exceptions for inclement weather must be approved by administration.

Outerwear

- Only **EPLA official jackets or hoodies** may be worn indoors.
- Non-EPLA outerwear must be removed upon entering offices or classrooms.

Free Dress Day Guidelines

- Free dress must be pre-approved by the **Executive Director/Principal** or **Assistant Principal/Deans**.
- Shorts must follow the usual guidelines for length (**one inch above the knee to one inch below the knee**).
- Shirts must adhere to the same fit guidelines and must have sleeves (e.g., **no tank tops, spaghetti straps, or visible shoulders**).
- Clothing must not display inappropriate content (e.g., **drugs, alcohol, violence, or offensive language**).

Prohibited Items

- See-through clothing.
- Facial piercings (lip, cheek, eyebrow, or nose rings of any kind).
- Sunglasses (unless prescribed by a doctor).

3. Uniform Progressive Discipline

EPLA enforces a progressive discipline policy for uniform violations to ensure compliance while providing scholars with opportunities to correct their attire.

1. **First Violation:** Verbal Warning.
2. **Second Violation:** Meeting with the scholar to discuss uniform expectations.
3. **Third Violation:** Phone call to parent/guardian.
4. **Fourth Violation:** Required meeting with parent and scholar.

Repeated violations beyond this progression may result in further disciplinary action in



accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

- **First Violation:** Warning and parent notification.
- **Second Violation:** Parent conference and temporary loss of privileges.
- **Third Violation:** Mandatory uniform compliance meeting and possible disciplinary action.

Families facing financial hardship can request assistance with uniform costs through the school administration.

Students must wear the proper uniform at all times unless otherwise specified for special events or dress-down days approved by school leadership.

4. High School Dress Code Policy

High school scholars at EPLA are not required to wear uniforms; however, they must adhere to a strict dress code to maintain a professional and focused learning environment. The following guidelines outline acceptable attire:

Headwear:

- Baseball caps, beanies, and hoods may not be worn inside the school building.
- Exceptions may be made for inclement weather with administrative approval.

Shirts/Blouses:

- Must be of an appropriate length and able to be tucked in.
- No low-cut tops or display of cleavage.
- No crop tops, midriffs, or bare backs.
- No strapless shirts, spaghetti straps, or altered shirts (e.g., cut sleeves).

Pants:

- Pants must be worn at the waist, with no sagging or exposed undergarments.
- Jeans are allowed but may not have rips, holes, or tears (even with patching or leggings underneath).
- No excessively baggy pants.
- Leggings, yoga pants, tights, or see-through bottoms are not allowed.

Shorts/Skirts:



- The length must be at least mid-thigh (arms at side length requirement).
- Shorts must be worn at the waist.
- Spandex or biker shorts are not permitted.

Shoes:

- Shoes must be appropriate for school activities.
- Sandals or slides must have a back strap.
- Flip-flops, slippers, and Crocs are not permitted.
- Closed-toe shoes are required for lab participation.

Accessories & Makeup:

- Accessories must not pose a safety hazard or disrupt the classroom environment.
- Makeup should not be applied during class time.

Prohibited Items:

- Clothing displaying vulgar, obscene, or offensive language, drug, alcohol, or gang-related imagery.
- See-through or translucent clothing.
- Exposed undergarments.
- Excessively baggy clothes.
- Facial piercings (except for earrings) including:
 - Lip, cheek, eyebrow, nose rings, septum, and bridge piercings.
 - Large hoop earrings or long chains.
- Pajamas or sleepwear.

Dress Code Enforcement

Failure to comply with the high school dress code will result in:

1. **First Violation:** Verbal Warning.
2. **Second Violation:** Meeting with the scholar to discuss uniform expectations.
3. **Third Violation:** Phone call to parent/guardian.
4. **Fourth Violation:** Required meeting with parent and scholar.
5. **Fifth Violation:** Student must wear a school-provided uniform for the day.

Administration reserves the final discretion in determining appropriate dress. If families



need assistance in acquiring appropriate attire, they may contact the school counselor.

5. Student Fees & Payment Policies

EPLA requires scholars to maintain responsibility for school-issued materials, extracurricular costs, and other school-related fees. Below are the categories of scholar fees and policies regarding payments and financial assistance.

Textbook, Technology Use Fees & Fines

EPLA provides scholars with school-issued technology and materials to support learning. The following policies govern the responsibilities and potential fines for lost, damaged, or stolen devices.

- Students are issued textbooks and technology (such as Chromebooks) for academic use.
- Lost or damaged textbooks will result in a fine equal to the replacement cost.
- **Technology fines and replacement policies:**
 - Technology use fees help maintain scholar access to devices:
 - **Middle School:** \$20 per year
 - **High School:** \$25 per year
 - Fees for lost, damaged, or stolen technology are as follows:
 - **Minor damage (e.g., cracked screen, missing keys):** \$50 repair fee
 - **Major damage (e.g., motherboard failure, unrepairable condition):** Full replacement cost
 - **Lost device:** Full replacement cost
 - **Lost or damaged charger:** \$25 replacement fee
 - **Minor damage (e.g., cracked screen, missing keys):** \$50 repair fee
 - **Major damage (e.g., motherboard failure, unrepairable condition):** Full replacement cost
 - **Lost device:** Full replacement cost
 - **Lost or damaged charger:** \$25 replacement fee
 - To support scholar access to technology, a **Technology Use Fee** is required annually:
 - **Middle School:** \$20 per year
 - **High School:** \$25 per year
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** If a scholar's device is damaged or lost due to an event beyond their control (e.g., car accident, fire, theft with a police report), the school



may assess a reduced fine or waive the fee based on administrative review.

- **Repeated Misuse or Negligence:**
 - **First instance of misuse:** Warning and refresher on responsible use.
 - **Second instance:** Parent meeting and potential temporary loss of device privileges.
 - **Third instance:** Full replacement cost and potential suspension of technology access.
- If a scholar withdraws from EPLA, all materials must be returned in good condition before withdrawal paperwork is processed.

Extracurricular & Field Trip Costs

- Some extracurricular programs, such as athletics, clubs, and competitions, may have associated fees:
 - **Athletics participation fee:** \$50 per season
 - **Band instrument rental fee:** \$40 per semester
 - **Club membership dues:** Varies by club; typically \$10–\$25 per year
- Field trips require **advance payment** to cover transportation, entrance fees, and activity costs:
 - **Local field trips:** \$10–\$25 per trip
 - **Out-of-town trips:** Varies based on distance and lodging requirements
 - **End-of-year reward trips:** \$50–\$150, depending on location
- Students with outstanding balances may be restricted from participating in field trips or extracurricular activities.

Financial Assistance for Fees

- Families experiencing financial hardship may request assistance for uniform costs, field trips, or school-related fees.
- Requests must be submitted in writing to the school office and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Families may apply for a **payment plan** if unable to pay fees in full.
- No scholar will be excluded from an educational experience solely due to financial constraints.

WE BUILD.

Building Block 5: Academics & Grading Policies

WE LEAD.



1. Purpose and Principles

The goal of El Paso Leadership Academy is to reward the growth of our scholars not only academically, but through the development of their leadership and character development. While there is ongoing character development and leadership training throughout our classes during the year, we wish to recognize scholars that are growing, demonstrating, and excelling within this capacity.

- **Collaboration:** The 21st century workplace has added a new component to any successful individual's skill set. Students should not only be capable of self-managing and completing their individual work, but also learn to work with one another to create a common goal, divide responsibilities, and collaborate efficiently to achieve their goal.
- **Responsibility:** EPLA scholar leaders should demonstrate the ability to not only solve their own issues, but accept responsibility for their teammates and the school by identifying areas of improvement, creating small groups to address the issues, and working toward resolution. This exemplifies an ability to provide service to the scholar body, teachers, and staff of EPLA.
- **"Smarts"/Growth Mindset:** EPLA honors the intellectual growth of our scholars by rewarding those who take risks, are unafraid to make mistakes, and work diligently to learn and grow continuously.
- **Humility:** While we aspire for all our scholars to acquire unwavering confidence in themselves and their abilities, that confidence should be matched with humility. Students should understand they are lifelong learners, that each individual has something special to contribute, and that treating others with kindness, respect, and joy is a fundamental characteristic of great leaders.
- **Hunger:** With the understanding that learning and growing do not stop, scholar leaders should demonstrate the desire for continuous improvement. Each individual has unique interests and skill sets, and leaders should strive to have an inherent motivation to achieve individual and collective goals.

Students who demonstrate excellence in character may be recognized at weekly CRS HH assemblies and awarded CRS HH "Builder" t-shirts that they may wear with jeans every Friday.



2. Gradebook System

The official gradebook for all El Paso Leadership Academy schools is Ascender, which is used to document and track scholar grades across all courses, including core subjects and electives.

3. Grading Scale

All schools will implement the unified El Paso Leadership Academy Grading Scale:

Middle & High School Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Unweighted GPA	Weighted GPA
A+	100	4.00	5.00
A	95	3.75	4.68
A-	90	3.50	4.37
B+	89	3.45	4.31
B	85	3.25	4.06
B-	80	3.00	3.75
C+	79	2.90	3.625
C	75	2.50	3.125
C-	70	2.00	2.50
D+	69	1.97	2.46
D	65	1.85	2.32
D-	60	1.71	2.14

F	59 or Below	1.97 - 0.00	2.46 - 0.00
INC	Incomplete	0.00	0.00

4. Loss of Credit

Scholars enrolled in high school credited courses may lose credit due to excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused. Administrators will initiate and manage the loss of credit process as follows:

1. Notification of Credit Loss Risk:
 - Families will receive a Loss of Credit Notice Letter from the Attendance Office via US mail or directly with the scholar. The letter will include an attached Attendance Report, highlighting class periods where excessive absences have occurred.
 - Families and scholars must sign and return the acknowledgment of the notice.
2. Issuance of Attendance Contract:
 - Administrators will provide scholars with an Attendance Contract if they have accumulated between 5-10 absences in a year-long course. The contract will require scholars to limit absences to no more than five additional absences over the next nine weeks.
 - For scholars exceeding 10 absences, the contract will include a requirement to make up 45 minutes of instructional time per additional absence through approved recovery programs such as after-school tutoring or Saturday School.
3. Example: If a scholar has 20 absences in a course, exceeding the limit by 10 absences, they must make up 7.5 hours (10 absences x 45 minutes = 7.5 hours).
4. Completion of Attendance Contract:
 - Scholars must fulfill the terms of the Attendance Contract before the end of the semester following the credit loss risk notification.
 - Failure to complete the requirements by the end of the academic year will result in credit denial, requiring course repetition.
5. Credit Recovery Options:
 - After-school tutoring sessions (minimum 1 hour/session, Monday-Thursday).



- Credit recovery via Edmentum modules.
- Summer or Saturday School, if available.
- Scholars must document completed hours on a Credit Recovery Log, signed by the supervising teacher or administrator.

6. Appeals Process:

- Families wishing to challenge credit loss or contract terms may request an Absence Review Conference with the Campus Attendance Committee. The committee includes a counselor, an administrator, and one or more teachers.

7. Credit Recovery Options:

- After-school tutoring sessions (minimum 1 hour/session, Monday–Thursday).
- Credit recovery via Edmentum modules.
- Summer or Saturday School, if available.
- Scholars must document completed hours on a Credit Recovery Log, signed by the supervising teacher or administrator.

8. Appeals Process:

- Families wishing to challenge credit loss or contract terms may request an Absence Review Conference with the Campus Attendance Committee. The committee includes a counselor, an administrator, and one or more teachers.

9. Credit Recovery Options:

- After-school tutoring sessions (minimum 1 hour/session, Monday–Thursday).
- Credit recovery via Edmentum modules.
- Summer or Saturday School, if available.
- Scholars must document completed hours on a Credit Recovery Log, signed by the supervising teacher.

10. Appeals Process:

- Families wishing to challenge credit loss or contract terms may request an Absence Review Conference with the Campus Attendance Committee. The committee includes a counselor, an administrator, and one or more teachers.

5. Redo of Assignments or Tests

Scholars may redo or retake a class assignment or test for which they received a grade below 70. The redo or retake must be completed within five school days after the failing



grade was received. The higher score, between the original and redo/retake grade, will be recorded in the gradebook.

Make-Up for Missed Work Due to an Absence

For excused absences, scholars will have a minimum of one day for each day absent to complete and submit missed work. Teachers will provide necessary guidance and materials to support scholars in completing the work.

6. Promotion and Retention

Middle School

Promotion is determined by averaging the final grades in core subjects: English Language Arts & Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies. An overall average of 70% or higher is required for promotion. Scholars with grades below 70% may attend summer school to improve their eligibility for promotion.

High School

Promotion is determined by the number of credits earned:

Grade Level	Credits Earned
9th Grade	0 to 6
10th Grade	7 to 12
11th Grade	13 to 18
12th Grade	19 or more

Parent Request for Grade or Course Repetition

Your Rights as a Parent



At El Paso Leadership Academy, we believe in working in strong partnership with families to support each scholar's academic success. If you believe your child needs to repeat a grade level or course, you have the legal right to make this decision—but you must act quickly and follow the proper steps.

What the Law Says

The Texas Legislature has granted parents the right to make the decision for their child to repeat a grade or high school course for the upcoming school year. This includes:

- Elementary or middle school grade levels.
- Specific high school courses, especially if the scholar struggled in a foundational course such as Algebra I or Computer Science.

Repeating a course or grade may be beneficial if your scholar needs more time to master key content before advancing to the next level.

Steps You Must Take

1. Submit Your Request in Writing

If you decide that your child should repeat a grade or course, you must notify El Paso Leadership Academy in writing before the start of the new school year.

- **Deadline:** Submit your request before the first day of school. Please refer to the EPLA school calendar for specific start dates.
- **Where to Send:** Send your written request to the Campus Principal or designated school official.

2. What Happens Next

- If the school agrees with your decision, the process moves forward.
- If the school disagrees, a Retention Committee will be formed to meet with you and discuss your decision.



- After the meeting, you as the parent will make the final decision, and the school must honor your choice.

Support for Your Scholar

Whether your child repeats a grade or continues to the next, we are here to support their growth. Please speak with us about:

- Tutoring programs
- After-school academic support
- Summer enrichment or intervention opportunities
- Other academic supports designed to help your scholar succeed.

7. Homework Policy

Homework is an essential component of scholar learning at EPLA. It reinforces classroom instruction, builds independent learning habits, and helps prepare scholars for assessments.

Homework Expectations

- Homework assignments will be meaningful, aligned with instructional goals, and appropriate for the scholar's grade level.
- Students are expected to complete and submit all assignments by the due date.
- Teachers will communicate homework expectations and grading criteria clearly.
- Parents are encouraged to provide a structured environment at home to support homework completion.

Time Guidelines

- **Middle School:** Homework should not exceed **60 minutes** per night across all subjects.
- **High School:** Homework should not exceed **90 minutes** per night across all subjects.

Late & Missing Assignments

- Homework turned in **one day late** will receive a **maximum of 80% credit**.



- Homework turned in **two days late** will receive a **maximum of 60% credit**.
- Homework turned in **three or more days late** may receive **no credit** at the teacher's discretion.

Homework Support

- Students who need additional help may attend after-school tutoring or intervention sessions.
- Teachers will provide feedback on assignments to support scholar learning and improvement.

8. Required High School Curriculum

EPLA provides instruction aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills of the appropriate grade levels in the following required curriculum:

1. A foundation curriculum that includes:
 - a. English Language Arts, and Reading
 - b. Mathematics
 - c. Science and
 - d. Social studies
2. An enrichment curriculum that may include:
 - a. Career and Technical Education
 - b. Fine Arts
 - c. Health education
 - d. Languages other than English
 - e. Physical education (PE)
 - f. Personal financial literacy and
 - g. Technology applications

The Table Below lists the graduation course and credit requirements.

Subject	Credit	Course
English Language Arts &	1.0	English I



Reading	1.0	English II
	1.0	English III
	1.0	Advanced English Course
Mathematics	1.0	Algebra I
	1.0	Geometry
	1.0	Algebra II
	1.0	Advanced Math Course
Science	1.0	Biology
	1.0	Chemistry
	1.0	Physics or Adv Science Course
	1.0	Advanced Science Course
Social Studies	1.0	World Geography
	1.0	US History
	1.0	US GOVT. (0.5)/ECON. (0.5)
	1.0	Advanced Social Studies course
Physical Education	1.0	PE
Languages Other Than English (LOTE)	1.0	Spanish I
	1.0	Spanish II
Fine Arts	1.0	Art I or Music I
Health	0.5	Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness
Speech	0.5	Professional Communications
Multidisciplinary Electives	5.0	



Total	26.0
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9. Testing Requirements for Graduation

Scholars at El Paso Leadership Academy are required, with limited exceptions, to perform satisfactorily on the following End-of-Course (EOC) assessments:

- English I
- English II
- Algebra I
- Biology
- United States History

Scholars who do not achieve sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments.

If a scholar fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, El Paso Leadership Academy will provide remediation in the content area where the performance standard was not met. This may require scholar participation before or after regular school hours or at times outside the normal school calendar.

In limited circumstances outlined under state law, a scholar who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer required assessments may still be able to graduate if an Individual Graduation Committee (IGC) unanimously determines eligibility for graduation. The IGC meeting must be convened for each eligible scholar at the end of or after their 11th-grade year.

For additional information, visit [TEA's Individual Graduation Committees page](#).

10. Honor Roll and Perfect Attendance Honors

Honor Roll

- **A Honor Roll:** Nine-weeks or semester average of at least 90 in each subject/course.
- **A-B Honor Roll:** Nine-weeks or semester average of at least 80 in each subject/course.



Perfect Attendance

Eligibility requires 100% attendance in all classes during the quarter or semester. Tardies are not considered absences; however, a single absence disqualifies eligibility.

Passing Grade

For grades 6–12, a minimum average of 70% is required to pass a course. High school credits are awarded based on semester averages:

- **Semester Grade Calculation:**
 - 45% (Q1 or Q3 grade) + 45% (Q2 or Q4 grade) + 10% (final exam grade).
- Scholars must achieve an overall course average of 70% or higher to earn credit. Grade averaging is allowed if the second semester grade compensates for a failing first semester grade, provided the overall average meets 70%.
- A passing first semester grade cannot compensate for a failing second semester grade.

11. High School Course Final Exam Exemptions

Scholars maintaining a 90%+ course average (based on Q1 and Q2 or Q3 and Q4 grades) and with three or fewer excused absences in a semester may qualify for final exam exemptions. Dual Credit courses and courses requiring STAAR EOC exams are excluded from this exemption. Absences that are unexcused do not qualify a scholar for exemption of a final exam. Excused absences will be considered by the principal on a case-by-case basis.

12. Grading Periods

Grading periods are nine weeks long, as defined in the district calendar. Teachers must enter grades weekly into Ascender, with at least two grades recorded per week. End-of-year grades are computed by averaging all grading periods for middle school courses and by semester for high school courses.

Progress Reports and Report Cards



Progress reports are issued twice during each nine-week grading period (at weeks three and six). Report cards are issued at the end of each grading period. Families receive these electronically via the Ascender ParentPortal Application, with printed copies available upon request.

13. Academic Integrity

El Paso Leadership Academy values academic integrity and does not permit dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating on exams or assignments
- Plagiarism (submitting others' work as one's own)
- Providing or receiving unauthorized assistance
- Using unauthorized devices or materials during assessments

Consequences for academic dishonesty may include a failing grade on the assignment, referral to administration, and loss of privileges, in addition to other disciplinary actions as deemed necessary.

14. Transfer Students

1. Grades and credits will be retrieved via the Texas Records Exchange (TREx) system and applied to the Ascender gradebook.
2. **From a Non-Accredited School:** Grades will be awarded at the discretion of the campus principal. The principal may require assessments (e.g., STAAR Exam, NWEA Exam) to determine appropriate grade placement and credit eligibility.

Out-of-State/Out-of-Country Transfers

Credits and grades will be reviewed in a case-by-case basis to determine which credits will transfer from the state or country of origin and which will not be transferred. Grades transferred from another state will transfer based on the numeric grade to the local designation of the El Paso Leadership Academy (see Grading Scale above). Grades transferred from another country will be reviewed and converted based on the grading system of the other country using a conversion scale. The EPLA conversion scale to transfer Mexican Grades to the U.S. Grade is attached below, for reference.

Grade Conversion Chart (Mexican to U.S. Grades)

Mexican Grade	U.S. Grade
5.0	63
5.1	64
5.2	64
5.3	65
5.4	66
5.5	67
5.6	67
5.7	68
5.8	69
5.9	69
6.0	70
6.1	71
6.2	72
6.3	73
6.4	74
6.5	75
6.6	75
6.7	76
6.8	77



6.9	78
7.0	78
7.1	79
7.2	80
7.3	81
7.4	81
7.5	82
7.6	83
7.7	84
7.8	84
7.9	85
8.0	86
8.1	87
8.2	87
8.3	88
8.4	89
8.5	89
8.6	90
8.7	91
8.8	92



8.9	92
9.0	93
9.1	94
9.2	95
9.3	95
9.4	96
9.5	97
9.6	98
9.7	98
9.8	99
9.9	100
10.0	100

Note: Passing grade in U.S. schools is 70 and above.

Policy on Awarding Credit for Out-of-Country Transcripts

This policy establishes guidelines for evaluating and awarding academic credit to scholars transferring from international educational institutions. The policy ensures consistency in transcript translation and credit allocation while maintaining alignment with Texas state standards.

General Guidelines

- Scholars must provide authenticated transcripts with official seals or signatures from their previous institutions.



- Course equivalencies are determined based on curriculum alignment with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- English as a Second Language (ESL) courses from international institutions will not be considered for English language arts credit.

Credit Equivalencies for Secondary Education (Secundaria & Preparatoria)

The following equivalencies apply for coursework completed in an international system:

Secundaria (Equivalent to Grades 7-9 in the U.S.)

U.S. Course	Course Code	Equivalent International Course	Credit
Spanish I	9020	Español, 1st year of Secundaria (7th grade)	1.0
Spanish II	9021	Español, 2nd year of Secundaria (8th grade)	1.0
Spanish III	9022	Español, 3rd year of Secundaria (9th grade)	1.0
Algebra I	H200	Matemáticas, 3rd year of Secundaria	1.0
Integrated Physics & Chemistry (IPC)		Ciencias, 2nd & 3rd years of Secundaria	1.0
Physical Education	9009	Educación Física, 3rd year of Secundaria	0.5
Art	9040	Educación Artística, 3rd year of Secundaria	0.5

Preparatoria (Equivalent to Grades 10-12 in the U.S.)



U.S. Course	Course Code	Equivalent International Course	Credit
Economics/Free Enterprise	1104	Sociedad, Economía y Política	0.5
Chemistry A/B	1101	Química I & II	1.0
Biology A/B	1003	Biología I & II	1.0
Physics A/B	S201	Física I & II	1.0
Algebra II A/B	9052	Álgebra & Geometría y Trigonometría	1.0
Geometry A/B	9002	Matemáticas I & II	1.0
Spanish IV		Taller de Lectura y Redacción I & II	1.0
Spanish V		Literatura I & II	1.0
Business Information Management		Informática I & II	1.0
Physical Education	9009	Educación Física (2 Semesters)	0.5

Non-Eligible Courses for Credit

The following courses will not receive credit due to misalignment with U.S. high school standards:

- English language courses such as "Lengua Extranjera" or "Inglés I & II"
- Ethics & Civic Education courses (e.g., "Formación Cívica y Ética")
- History of Mexico, Introducción a las Ciencias Sociales
- Certain vocational courses (e.g., "Ofimática" - Office Automation)

WE BUILD.

Building Block 6: Special Services and Student Support

WE LEAD.



1. Title I and Parental Rights

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides financial assistance to states and school districts to meet the needs of academically at-risk scholars. The goal of Title I is to provide extra instructional services and activities to support scholars identified as failing or most at risk of failing the state's challenging performance standards in mathematics, reading, and writing.

EPLA qualifies as a **Title I school** and receives federal funding under Title I, Part A to supplement existing academic programs. These funds are used to:

- Identify scholars experiencing academic difficulties and provide timely interventions to help them meet state standards.
- Provide additional instructional resources, such as high-quality staffing, programs, materials, and supplies.
- Conduct parent and family engagement meetings, training, and activities.

2. Parental Involvement & Rights

- Any Local Education Agency (LEA) with a **Title I, Part A allocation exceeding \$500,000** is required by statute to set aside **1% of its allocation** for parent and family engagement.
 - Of that 1%, **5% may be reserved** at the LEA for system-wide initiatives and administrative expenses related to parent and family engagement.
 - **95% of the 1% allocation** must be distributed to Title I schools for parent and family engagement activities.
- **Parents have the right to be involved** in decisions regarding how these funds are used.

The Title I Plan outlines how EPLA uses **Title I, Part A funds** within the school district. It is incorporated into the **District Improvement Plan (DIP)** and addresses:

- High-quality scholar academic assessments.
- Supplemental services to assist struggling scholars.
- Coordination and integration of federal funds and programs.
- Strategies to implement effective parent and family engagement.

For more information on **Title I services and parental involvement opportunities**, families are encouraged to contact the school administration or attend parent engagement



meetings.

EPLA is committed to providing comprehensive support services to ensure that all scholars, regardless of ability, background, or circumstances, receive an equitable and high-quality education. Below are the special services available at EPLA, along with the legal compliance requirements governing each program.

3. Special Education & Section 504 Services

EPLA follows all state and federal laws regarding Special Education and Section 504 services to ensure scholars with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations and services.

- **Special Education Services:**
 - EPLA adheres to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and ensures that scholars with disabilities receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
 - Students eligible for special education services will have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), developed by an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee.
 - The ARD Committee determines accommodations, supplementary aids, and related services necessary for scholar success.
 - The Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities is available from the Special Education Director or the Texas Education Agency (TEA).
- **Section 504 Services:**
 - EPLA follows Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ensuring that scholars with qualifying disabilities receive accommodations to access education on an equal basis.
 - Students may be evaluated for Section 504 eligibility, and, if qualified, a Section 504 Plan will be developed outlining necessary accommodations.
 - Parents may request a Section 504 evaluation at any time.

For more information or to request an evaluation for Special Education or Section 504 services, parents should contact the Special Services Director.

4. Bilingual/ESL Services



EPLA provides Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) services in accordance with state and federal law to support English Language Learners (ELLs).

- Students are assessed using state-approved language proficiency tests to determine eligibility.
- Upon qualification, scholars receive targeted language instruction to develop English proficiency while accessing the general curriculum.
- Parental consent is required for program placement, and scholars will be monitored for continued support as they transition to full English proficiency.

For questions regarding Bilingual/ESL services, please contact the ESL Coordinator.

5. MTSS & Intervention Supports

EPLA utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to provide academic and behavioral interventions to scholars who need additional assistance.

- **Tier 1:** Universal, high-quality instruction and behavioral expectations for all scholars.
- **Tier 2:** Targeted small-group interventions for scholars identified as needing additional support.
- **Tier 3:** Intensive, individualized interventions for scholars with significant academic or behavioral needs.
- MTSS teams regularly review scholar data to determine appropriate intervention plans and adjust supports as necessary.

Students identified as needing intervention will receive additional services, including tutoring, counseling, and behavior support, as part of their personalized learning plan.

- Counseling & Mental Health Services
- College & Career Readiness (Advisory, Power Hour)
- Title I Services

6. Homeless Student Resources & McKinney-Vento Support

EPLA adheres to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, ensuring that scholars experiencing homelessness receive necessary supports to access education.



- **Definition of Homelessness:** A scholar is considered homeless if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including but not limited to:
 - Living in shelters, motels, or transitional housing.
 - Sharing housing due to economic hardship or eviction.
 - Living in cars, parks, public spaces, or abandoned buildings.
 - Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement.
 - Living in substandard housing, bus or train stations, or other places not designed for regular sleeping accommodations.
 - Residing in emergency or transitional shelters.
 - Staying in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations.
- **Rights of Homeless Students:**
 - Immediate enrollment without proof of residency, immunization records, or school records.
 - The right to remain in their school of origin and receive transportation assistance if needed.
 - Access to free meal programs, school supplies, and academic support.
 - Flexibility regarding:
 - Proof of residency requirements
 - Immunization requirements
 - Educational program placement
 - Award of credit
 - Eligibility for extracurricular activities
 - Graduation requirements
 - Suspension and expulsion policies

For assistance with McKinney-Vento services, contact the Homeless Student Liaison.

WE BUILD.

Building Block 7: Student Health and Safety

WE LEAD.



1. School-Based Mental Health Services

El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) is committed to supporting the **mental health and well-being** of all scholars by providing a **safe and nurturing environment** where they feel seen, heard, and supported. The **School-Based Mental Health Team** exists to promote scholar success, provide preventative services, and respond to identified scholar needs through a **comprehensive mental health support program**.

Available Mental Health Services

The EPLA **School-Based Mental Health Team** consists of licensed mental health professionals and trained counselors who offer:

- **Individual and Group Counseling Services** – Short-term, solution-focused counseling to address emotional, social, and behavioral challenges.
- **Responsive Services** – Immediate intervention for scholars in crisis, including suicide prevention and de-escalation support.
- **Parent Education & Consultation** – Providing families with strategies to support their child's emotional well-being at home.
- **Teacher Consultation & Training** – Equipping educators with tools to recognize and respond to mental health concerns.
- **Guidance Lessons** – Classroom-based instruction focusing on coping skills, emotional regulation, and social-emotional learning.
- **Community Referrals** – Connecting scholars and families with external mental health providers for long-term care.
- **Crisis Management Services** – Providing immediate support during emergencies, including grief counseling and behavioral intervention.

How to Access Mental Health Support

Students and parents can request support from the **School-Based Mental Health Team** by:

1. **Speaking with a teacher, counselor, or administrator** to request services.
2. **Filling out a Student Assistance Request Form** (available online or in the school office).
3. **Contacting the Mental Health Services Coordinator** for additional resources and referrals.

2. Suicide Awareness & Prevention



EPLA is committed to **suicide prevention** by educating staff, scholars, and families on identifying warning signs and providing immediate intervention.

Warning Signs of Suicide Risk

Students may exhibit one or more of the following:

- Talking about suicide or making threats.
- Seeking access to means of self-harm (e.g., weapons, pills).
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, or extreme guilt.
- Giving away personal belongings or saying goodbye in an unusual way.
- Social withdrawal, changes in eating/sleeping habits, or reckless behavior.

If a scholar demonstrates any of these signs, **immediate action is required**.

Crisis Support Resources

For immediate crisis assistance, please reach out to:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text "HELLO" to 741-741 (24/7, free, confidential support)
- **Texas Suicide Prevention Resource Center:** [texassuicideprevention.org](https://www.texassuicideprevention.org)
- **Local emergency services:** Call 911 for immediate danger or medical emergencies.

3. Mandated Reporting & Child Protection

All school personnel are **legally required** to report suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, or trafficking under **Texas state law**. Reports must be made within **48 hours** of suspicion and can be filed with:

- **Texas Abuse Hotline:** 1-800-252-5400 or [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](https://www.abusehotline.org)
- **Local Law Enforcement** (Call 911 for immediate concerns)

4. Commitment to a Safe and Healthy School Environment

EPLA strives to provide an **inclusive and supportive school culture** that prioritizes the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of all scholars. Through **preventative care, early intervention, and crisis response**, we ensure scholars receive the resources they need to thrive academically and personally.



For more information or to request mental health services, please contact the **EPLA Mental Health Services Coordinator** or visit the school's counseling office.

5. Communicable Diseases & Illness Policies

A communicable disease is an illness that can be transmitted directly or indirectly from one person to another. If a scholar is diagnosed with, suspected of having, or exposed to a communicable disease, the parent or guardian must inform the **school nurse/clinic coordinator** immediately. The school will follow **Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS)** guidelines for exclusion and re-admittance.

If a scholar has a reportable disease that requires exclusion, they will not be allowed to attend school until they meet re-admittance criteria outlined by the **TDSHS communicable disease chart**. Conditions that require exclusion include but are not limited to **hepatitis A, chickenpox, measles, bacterial meningitis, pertussis, scabies, and infectious conjunctivitis (pink eye)**.

Re-Admittance After a Communicable Disease

Students excluded due to a communicable disease may return to school once they meet **one or more** of the following conditions:

- Provide a **written medical clearance** from a healthcare provider.
- Obtain a **readmission permit** from the local health authority.
- Meet the required non-contagious period as per the **TDSHS communicable disease chart**.

Specific Illness Guidelines

- **Fever:** Students with a fever of **100.4°F or higher** must stay home and may return only after being **fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications**.
- **Vomiting:** Students experiencing multiple episodes of vomiting must stay home until symptoms have stopped.
- **Diarrhea:** Students with **three or more loose stools within 24 hours** must remain home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of anti-diarrheal medications.
- **Ringworm:**
 - **Body:** Must be covered with a bandage or clothing until healed; no exclusion



required.

- **Scalp:** Requires a **doctor's prescription for treatment** and must begin treatment before returning.
- **Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis):** Students with red eyes, discharge, or crusting around the eyes must remain home until **symptom-free** or cleared by a physician.
- **Head Lice:** Students with live lice will be excluded from school until **one treatment has been completed**. The parent/guardian must check in with the school nurse upon return.

COVID-19 & Other Infectious Disease Protocols

To protect the health and safety of scholars and staff, EPLA follows **CDC and Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines** for managing COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Policies include:

- **Students showing symptoms** must stay home and notify the school.
- **If symptoms appear at school**, scholars will be separated and must be picked up immediately.
- **Students with a confirmed case** must follow current public health isolation guidelines before returning to school.
- **Handwashing and sanitizing stations** are provided throughout the campus.
- **Face coverings may be required** in healthcare settings, such as the nurse's office.

6. Medication Administration Policy

Medications may be administered at school only under the following conditions:

- A **Medication Authorization Form** signed by both a physician and parent/guardian must be submitted to the school nurse.
- Prescription medications must be **in the original pharmacy container** with the scholar's name, dosage instructions, and prescribing physician's details.
- Over-the-counter medications **must be accompanied by a doctor's order** and kept in their original packaging.
- **Self-Carry Medications:**
 - Students may carry **inhalers, EpiPens, or diabetes supplies** with **proper documentation**.
 - The privilege to self-administer medication may be revoked if the scholar violates school safety policies.



- **Medication Storage & Disposal:**

- All medications will be stored in a **locked area** in the nurse's office.
- Parents/guardians must pick up unused medication at the end of the school year, or it will be properly discarded.

7. Chronic Medical Conditions & Emergency Medical Treatment

Students with chronic medical conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, severe allergies, epilepsy) must have an **Individualized Health Plan (IHP)** on file, developed in collaboration with the school nurse and the scholar's physician.

- **Diabetes Management:**

- Students requiring diabetes care at school must submit a **Diabetes Medical Management Plan (DMMP)** in accordance with **Texas Health & Safety Code Section 168.001**.

- **Emergency Procedures:**

- If a scholar experiences a medical emergency at school, **911 will be called** and parents will be contacted immediately.
- The school has **Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)** and trained staff for emergencies.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring **emergency contact information is up-to-date**.

For further information on scholar health policies, please contact the **EPLA Health Services Coordinator**. EPLA follows all state and local health guidelines regarding communicable diseases. A scholar should remain at home if they have:

- A fever of **100.4°F or higher** (must be fever-free for **24 hours without medication** before returning to school).
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the last **24 hours**.
- A **contagious illness** such as strep throat, flu, chickenpox, or pink eye (requires a doctor's note to return).
- Head lice (must complete appropriate treatment before re-entry).

Parents should notify the school immediately if their child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease.

8. Immunization Requirements



The State of Texas requires that every child be immunized against preventable diseases caused by infectious agents, following the **Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students**. The specific number of doses required for each scholar can be found on the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Immunization Branch website under the “**School & Childcare**” section. This information is also posted on the **EPLA website at www.epleadershipacademy.org**.

Proof of Immunization

Proof of immunization may be provided through **personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic**, with a **signature or rubber-stamp validation**.

Provisional Enrollment

A scholar may be enrolled **provisionally for up to 30 days if:**

- They are transferring from another Texas school and awaiting the transfer of immunization records.
- Their immunization record indicates they have received at least **one dose** of each required vaccine, with a plan to complete the remaining doses as rapidly as medically feasible. The school will review their immunization status every 30 days to ensure compliance. If the scholar fails to receive the required doses within the timeframe, they will be **excluded from school attendance** until they meet compliance.
- If a **homeless scholar**, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302), does not have available immunization records, they will be admitted temporarily for 30 days while obtaining the necessary vaccinations through public health programs.

Exemptions from Immunization Requirements

Exemptions from immunization compliance may be granted for:

- **Medical Reasons:** A scholar must provide a **signed statement from a licensed physician** (M.D. or D.O.) indicating that the required vaccine is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the child or household members. Unless a **lifelong condition** is specified, the exemption is valid for **one year from the date signed**.
- **Reasons of Conscience, Including Religious Beliefs:** Parents may submit a **signed**



DSHS affidavit declining immunizations for reasons of conscience. The affidavit is valid for **two years** and must be **notarized** and submitted to the school within **90 days of notarization**. The form must be an official **DSHS-issued affidavit**, as no reproductions or unofficial forms will be accepted. If an emergency or epidemic is declared by the **Commissioner of Public Health**, scholars without required immunizations **may be excluded** from school.

- **Military Service:** Students actively serving in the **U.S. Armed Forces** are exempt from immunization requirements.

Immunization Records & Reporting

- Immunization records are **confidential** but may be reviewed by the **Texas Education Agency (TEA)**, **local health departments**, and the **Texas Department of Health**.
- Immunization records will be transferred **along with scholar records** when a scholar enrolls in another school.
- EPLA encourages families to participate in the **Texas Immunization Registry (ImmTrac2)**, which securely consolidates immunization records for easy access by authorized entities. More information is available at the **DSHS Immunization Unit website**.

For further immunization requirements or exemption forms, please contact the **EPLA Health Services Coordinator**. Texas law requires all scholars to be **up-to-date on immunizations** before attending school.

9. VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Departments of State Health Services. Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually.

Screening records for individual scholars may be inspected by the Texas Department of State Health Services or a local health department, and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

Exemption: A scholar is exempt from screening requirements if screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the individual or, if



the individual is a minor, the minor's parent, managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the Nurse or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

SPINAL SCREENING

All children in 6th–9th grade must be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. The screening requirement for scholars entering grade six or nine may be met if the child has been screened for spinal deformities during the previous year.

A parent, managing conservator, or guardian who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by the school must submit to the Nurse documentation of a professional examination, which includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to the school during the year the scholar is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

Exemption: A scholar is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the scholar's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the Nurse on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

10. FITNESS TESTING

According to requirements under state law, the school will annually assess the physical fitness of scholars. The school is not required to assess a scholar for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate.

Excuses from Physical Education

Any child who is to be excused, for reasons of health, from physical education or any other normal school activity, must bring a note from home to the school office stating the reason why and the duration of the excuse. This note will be sent to the appropriate teacher.

11. FOOD SERVICES

El Paso Leadership Academy participates in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs and offers nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches.



Guidelines set by the Texas Department of Agriculture (“TDA”) and United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) are followed to meet the nutritional needs of all scholars. Menus may be obtained at the main office with the front office staff. Information about a scholar’s participation is confidential. All scholars are entitled to a free breakfast and lunch if qualified.

If your child has special dietary needs, please communicate those needs to the Nutrition Clerk at the scholar’s campus. If you bring lunch to your scholar during the day, you must drop it off in the office. Parents and scholars may not deliver meals directly to them such as “uber eats, doordash, postmates, any fast food delivery etc. If the lunch arrives after your child’s scheduled lunchtime, the scholar must generally wait until after school to eat the lunch.

Parents and/or scholars are not permitted to order food from outside the school, but scholars can bring lunch on their own.

State-Mandated Nutrition Guidelines

The TDA places strict limits on any food or drink provided or sold to scholars other than through the school’s food and nutrition services. More detailed information may be obtained at the school office or online at www.squaremeals.org.

12. PEST CONTROL INFORMATION

El Paso Leadership Academy periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Students may not reenter a treated area inside a building or use an area on school grounds for at least 12 hours following application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact our Director of Operations/Assistant Principal of Operations.

13. ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986 (AHERA) requires all School Districts to notify parents, scholars, faculty, and other employees annually of the presence of asbestos in our school building and to inform them as to how the Asbestos is being



managed. AHERA also requires that the district's Asbestos Management Plan be approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

All El Paso Leadership Academy school facilities built after 1986 have adequate documentation to prove that they are free of Asbestos Containing Building Materials and ACM's are banned from being used in any renovation work as well.

El Paso Leadership Academy's Asbestos Management Plan, for the school facility built prior to 1986, was written and approved in 2022. The plan has been reviewed and updated to include condition assessments, every three years, by a licensed and accredited Asbestos Inspector/Management Planner as required by law. A copy of the District's Asbestos Management Plan is available for review, during normal business hours, in the office of the Compliance Coordinator at 1918 Texas Avenue.

The individual Asbestos Management Plan for each school facility is also available for review within 5 working days of request, during normal business hours, in the office of the respective school. El Paso Leadership Academy will periodically contract with consulting services and an abatement contractor for removal and disposal of Asbestos Containing Building Materials in designated locations as needed, during summer months. Detailed information is available to review in the Management Plans.

If you wish to know more about how El Paso Leadership Academy is managing asbestos in our school facilities or report potential asbestos exposure or concerns, please contact El Paso Leadership Academy's Compliance Coordinator.

AHERA

EPA requires schools to be responsible for a number of asbestos-related activities, including the implementation of a plan for managing asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) in the school buildings and compliance with the federal asbestos regulations. Under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), schools are required to appoint an Asbestos Manager, called the "AHERA Designated Person."

INFORMATION ON ASBESTOS

Asbestos has been used in thousands of products, largely because it is plentiful, readily available, cheap, strong, does not burn, conducts heat and electricity poorly, and is



resistant to chemical corrosion. Products made with asbestos are often referred to as asbestos-containing materials (ACM). Asbestos proved particularly useful in the construction industry. Building materials that contain asbestos are referred to as asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM). Commercial usage of asbestos products in the construction industry was most common from about 1945 to 1980. Some of the most common uses of ACBM include:

- Fireproofing material
- Insulation material
- Acoustical or soundproofing material
- Miscellaneous materials

EPA POLICY FOR ASBESTOS CONTROL IN SCHOOLS

EPA bases its policy for asbestos control in schools on the following premises:

Although asbestos is hazardous, the risk of asbestos-related disease depends upon exposure to airborne asbestos fibers.

Based on available data, the average airborne asbestos levels in buildings seem to be very low. Accordingly, the health risk to most building occupants also appears to be very low. • Removal is often not a building owner's best course of action to reduce asbestos exposure. • EPA only requires asbestos removal to prevent significant public exposure to airborne asbestos fibers during building demolition or renovation activities.

Asbestos that has been identified will pose little risk if it is well maintained under an operations and maintenance program. EPA requires a pro-active, in-place management program whenever ACBM is discovered and is not removed.

All abatement and removal is conducted according to rules and regulations set forth by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS).

Not every pipe, floor tile, floor tile mastic, and ceiling tile contains asbestos material, but whether it does or not cannot be determined by the naked eye. Samples of the suspect material (collected by licensed workers) are analyzed under a microscope in a certified laboratory. Every suspect sample is considered positive until proven otherwise.



Asbestos is removed only when required for renovation, remodeling or maintenance. This usually involves moving ceiling tile, repairing plumbing, replacing flooring or anything else that contains asbestos. It is the responsibility of maintenance operations personnel or contractors to arrange for inspection and/or removal of asbestos.

Abatement is done inside enclosures to prevent fibers from spreading. Air handling units serving the affected area are turned off until the work is completed to keep the fibers from spreading to other areas. Workers wear respirators and disposable coveralls to protect themselves while working. To prevent any attached fibers from getting into the surrounding air, the coveralls are disposed of when the worker exits the enclosure.

When a job has been completed, samples of the surrounding air are analyzed under a microscope at a certified laboratory. Based on the results, the area is either cleared or re-cleaned and re-sampled. If the area is declared "clear," it is opened to normal occupancy and all warning signs are removed.

During abatement activities, All warning signs must be observed and followed

WE BUILD.

Building Block 8: Scholar Conduct and Discipline

WE LEAD.



El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and structured learning environment that fosters academic success and personal growth. This Student Code of Conduct outlines behavioral expectations and the disciplinary process for all scholars.

1. Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct exists to:

- Ensure a safe and orderly learning environment.
- Establish clear behavioral expectations.
- Provide guidelines for disciplinary actions.
- Encourage personal responsibility and character development.
- Promote restorative justice practices to address behavioral issues constructively.

Expectations for Behavior

Students are expected to uphold the values of EPLA, including respect, integrity, responsibility, and leadership. Key behavioral expectations include:

- Treating all members of the school community with respect.
- Following school rules and procedures.
- Attending school regularly and being on time.
- Engaging in learning and academic responsibility.
- Avoiding disruptive or harmful behavior.

Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy

A safe and supportive environment is essential for scholars to thrive academically and socially. The El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) prohibits bullying and retaliation as defined by this policy and is committed to taking all necessary measures to address incidents of bullying and cyberbullying effectively.

Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying

EPLA prohibits any form of bullying or retaliation against anyone involved in the reporting or investigation process.



Bullying occurs when a scholar or group of scholars engages in written, verbal, or physical behavior, including electronic communication, that:

- **Physically harms a scholar**, damages their property, or places them in reasonable fear of harm or property damage; or
- **Creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment** due to its severity, persistence, or pervasiveness.

Conduct is classified as bullying if it:

- Exploits an **imbalance of power** between the perpetrator and the victim; and
- Interferes with a scholar's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

Cyberbullying is the use of electronic communication devices, such as phones, computers, or social media, to intimidate or bully a scholar.

Prohibited Conduct

EPLA prohibits:

- Verbal, nonverbal, or physical bullying.
- Cyberbullying via electronic communication devices.
- Retaliation against anyone involved in the bullying report or investigation.
- False accusations or baseless complaints intended to harm another person.

Reporting Procedures

1. **Who Can Report:** Any scholar, parent, staff member, or community member who witnesses or suspects bullying.
2. **How to Report:** Reports can be made orally or in writing and submitted to a scholar's teacher, the Assistant Principal, or the Principal. Reports may also be submitted anonymously through EPLA's [anonymous reporting system](#).
3. **Staff Responsibility:** Any staff member who receives notice of suspected bullying must immediately notify the Principal or designee.

Investigation of Reports



1. **Initial Determination:** The Principal will evaluate whether the allegations, if proven, constitute prohibited harassment or bullying.
2. **Investigation:**
 - The Operations Manager (or designee) will conduct a thorough investigation, including interviews with the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses.
 - Interim measures, such as separating involved parties, may be implemented during the investigation.
3. **Documentation:** A report will be prepared, outlining the findings and determining whether bullying occurred.

Response to Bullying

If bullying is confirmed:

- **Disciplinary Action:** Appropriate corrective measures will be taken, aligned with the Student Code of Conduct.
- **Support:** The school will provide ongoing support to the victim, including counseling or accommodations as necessary.

If bullying is not confirmed:

- Supportive measures will still be offered to prevent further issues, and the investigation will be documented.

Confidentiality

EPLA will protect the privacy of all parties involved to the greatest extent possible. However, limited disclosures may be necessary to ensure a thorough investigation and appropriate response.

Appeals Process

Scholars or parents dissatisfied with the investigation's outcome may appeal through EPLA's grievance procedures, as outlined in the Student-Parent Handbook under "Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns."



Prevention and Education

EPLA prioritizes prevention and education to reduce incidents of bullying and foster a positive school climate:

- **Annual Training:** Staff will be trained on recognizing, preventing, and addressing bullying and cyberbullying.
- **Scholar Education:** Scholars will participate in age-appropriate lessons on SEL, conflict resolution, and bullying awareness during the first two weeks of school.
- **Parent Engagement:** Workshops will be provided twice a year to educate parents on preventing and addressing bullying at home and in school.

Retaliation and False Reporting

Retaliation against individuals involved in the reporting or investigation process is strictly prohibited. False allegations of bullying or harassment made with malicious intent will result in disciplinary action.

2. Alcohol, Tobacco, & Drug-Free Campus Policy

El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) is a substance-free school. Our campuses are declared alcohol-free, tobacco-free, drug-free, and vape-free zones to promote a safe and healthy learning environment for all scholars, staff, and visitors. The possession, use, sale, or distribution of prohibited substances is strictly prohibited on all EPLA properties, during school-sponsored activities, and in connection with any school-related functions. Violators may face disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, and potential legal consequences.

Prohibited Substances and Items:

No scholar shall possess, use, distribute, transmit, or be under the influence of any prohibited substance or item, including but not limited to:

- **Tobacco products**, including cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, and chewing tobacco.
- **Electronic smoking devices**, such as e-cigarettes, vapes, or any electronic vaporizing device.
- **Alcoholic beverages**.



- **Illegal drugs and controlled substances**, including narcotics, hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, or toxic inhalants.
- **Over-the-counter medications or supplements**, including vitamins, herbs, homeopathic remedies, or hemp-derived products, unless authorized under EPLA's medication policy.
- **Drug paraphernalia** of any kind, including pipes, rolling papers, or devices designed to conceal, distribute, or use substances.

This policy applies even if the substance in question is legal under federal or state law, unless prescribed for the scholar's use by a licensed physician.

Scope of Policy:

The prohibition applies in the following circumstances:

- On EPLA campuses or within any school buildings.
- In school parking lots, athletic facilities, or other school grounds.
- At any school-sponsored activity, function, or event, regardless of location.
- Within 300 feet of EPLA property.
- While riding in EPLA transportation vehicles, including buses or vans.

This policy also applies to any substances that are simulated or represented as controlled substances, as well as substances not intended for consumption that are used in a manner inconsistent with their purpose (e.g., inhaling toxic products).

Exceptions for Prescribed Medications:

Scholars authorized to use medications prescribed by a licensed physician must adhere to EPLA's **Distribution of Medication Policy** as outlined in the Scholar Handbook. Failure to follow proper procedures may result in disciplinary action.

Locker and Personal Searches:

To ensure compliance with this policy, EPLA reserves the right to search scholar lockers, backpacks, or personal belongings if there is reasonable suspicion of possession of prohibited substances. Scholars are responsible for all items found in their lockers or on their person.

Consequences for Violations:



Scholars found in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, which may include:

- Suspension or expulsion from EPLA.
- Referral to law enforcement authorities.
- Participation in counseling or substance education programs, as determined by school leadership.

Tobacco and Vaping Enforcement:

Scholars are prohibited from using or possessing any tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or other vaporizing devices on EPLA property or during school-sponsored events. EPLA staff strictly enforce this prohibition for scholars, staff, and visitors to ensure a safe and healthy environment.

At EPLA, we are committed to fostering a safe and supportive community that prioritizes the well-being and success of every scholar. This policy is a reflection of our core values: **Collaboration, Responsibility, Smart, Hungry, Humble (CRSHH)**.

3. Discipline Procedures

EPLA follows a **progressive discipline system** to address behavioral issues. Consequences are assigned based on the severity and frequency of infractions:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Teacher-Student Conference
3. Parent Notification & Conference
4. Restorative Justice Intervention
5. Detention or Loss of Privileges
6. In-School Suspension (ISS)
7. Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
8. Expulsion (for severe violations)

4. Restorative Justice Practices

EPLA emphasizes restorative practices to address conflicts and behavioral concerns, including:

- Mediation between scholars.
- Restorative circles involving affected parties.



- Community service or school-based restitution.
- Behavior contracts and counseling support.

5. Suspension & Expulsion Guidelines

- **Suspension (ISS or OSS)** may be assigned for repeated or severe violations of the Code of Conduct.
- **Expulsion** may be recommended for extreme cases, including threats to school safety, possession of weapons, or repeated violations of major infractions.
- Due process rights are provided for scholars facing expulsion, including an appeal process.

6. Search & Seizure Policy

To maintain safety, EPLA reserves the right to search scholar property if there is reasonable suspicion of prohibited items. Searches may include:

- Lockers and desks (school property).
- Backpacks and personal items.
- Vehicles parked on campus.
- Electronic devices (in cases of cyber threats or prohibited activity).

Students have a right to privacy, but school officials will conduct searches in a manner that respects scholar dignity while prioritizing safety.

For more details on disciplinary policies and scholar rights, please refer to the complete Student Code of Conduct available in the front office or on the EPLA website.

WE BUILD.

Building Block 9: Technology and Acceptable Use

WE LEAD.



El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) provides scholars with access to technology to support learning, enhance collaboration, and foster digital citizenship. This policy outlines the acceptable use of school devices, internet access, and personal electronics while ensuring cybersecurity and scholar privacy protections.

1. Student Use of School Devices & Internet Access

Students are provided access to school-owned devices and the internet under the following conditions:

- Devices must be used for educational purposes only.
- Students must follow teacher instructions regarding device use.
- Access to inappropriate websites, content, or unauthorized software is strictly prohibited.
- School devices must be handled responsibly and returned in good condition.
- Students must log in using their assigned credentials and may not share their login information.

Violations may result in restricted access, loss of device privileges, or disciplinary action.

2. Social Media & Digital Citizenship

Students are expected to conduct themselves responsibly online and practice good digital citizenship, including:

- Respecting others online by avoiding cyberbullying, harassment, or hate speech.
- Protecting personal information and not sharing private details with strangers.
- Citing sources properly when using online content for assignments.
- Refraining from recording or sharing inappropriate content related to school activities.
- Following school guidelines when using social media for classroom purposes.

3. Electronic Device Policy (Cell Phones, Smartwatches)

To maintain a focused learning environment, personal electronic devices are subject to the following guidelines:

- Cell phones and smartwatches must be turned off and stored away during instructional time.



- Unauthorized use of devices in classrooms, restrooms, or hallways may result in confiscation.

Middle School Reclaiming Fees:

- 1st offense: \$20 reclaiming fee.
- 2nd offense: \$40 reclaiming fee.
- 3rd offense: \$50 reclaiming fee.

High School Reclaiming Fees:

- 1st offense: \$30 reclaiming fee.
- 2nd offense: \$40 reclaiming fee.
- 3rd offense: \$50 reclaiming fee.

4. Cybersecurity & Privacy Guidelines

EPLA prioritizes the security of scholar data and safe internet use:

- Students must use school-approved platforms and software.
- Hacking, unauthorized access, or attempting to bypass school network filters is strictly prohibited.
- Students may not install, modify, or delete software on school devices without permission.
- Any suspicious activity or cybersecurity concerns should be reported to the IT department immediately.

5. Student Data Privacy & FERPA

EPLA complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to protect scholar information:

- Student records, grades, and personal data will not be shared without parental consent.
- Digital assignments and online communications must remain confidential and school-appropriate.
- Students and families have the right to review educational records as per FERPA regulations.
- The school may monitor internet activity and device usage to ensure compliance



with policies.

For further questions on technology use and acceptable practices, please contact the EPLA IT Department or refer to the complete Technology Acceptable Use Policy available in the front office or on the school website.

WE BUILD.

Building Block 10: Parent & Community Engagement

WE LEAD.



El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) values strong partnerships with parents and the community. Engaged parents and community members contribute to scholar success and a positive school environment. This section outlines the various ways parents can participate and support their child's education.

1. Parent/Teacher Communication & Conferences

Open communication between parents and teachers is encouraged to support scholar learning. Parents can engage through:

- Scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences – Held at least twice a year, or upon request.
- Regular Progress Updates – Accessible through the scholar information system.
- Email and Phone Communication – Teachers will respond within 48 business hours.
- Parent Meetings & Workshops – Opportunities for parents to learn about curriculum and school policies.

2. Parent Involvement Opportunities

EPLA welcomes parent involvement in school activities and decision-making, including:

- Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) – Parents can collaborate with school leadership.
- School Committees – Including advisory groups and policy review teams.
- Classroom Assistance – Volunteering opportunities to support teachers and scholars.
- Event Participation – Assisting with school events, fundraisers, and scholar recognition programs.

3. Volunteer & Mentorship Programs

EPLA encourages parents and community members to volunteer and mentor scholars. Volunteer opportunities include:

- Tutoring and Academic Support – Assisting scholars with homework and enrichment activities.
- Mentorship Programs – Providing guidance and support for scholars.
- Career and College Readiness – Engaging with scholars about future educational



and career opportunities.

- Campus Beautification & Support – Helping maintain a welcoming and safe school environment.

All volunteers must complete a background check prior to participation.

4. School & Classroom Visit Policies

Parents are welcome to visit the school and observe classrooms under the following conditions:

- Visits must be scheduled in advance and approved by administration.
- Visitors must check in at the front office and wear a visitor's badge at all times.
- Classroom visits should not disrupt instruction and will be limited in duration.
- Parents may request a meeting with teachers to discuss observations.

5. Surveys & Parent Feedback

EPLA values parent and community input to improve school programs and services. Surveys are conducted periodically to gather feedback on:

- School climate and culture.
- Academic programs and curriculum.
- Communication effectiveness.
- Areas for improvement.

Parents are encouraged to participate in school-wide surveys and provide suggestions.

6. Grievance & Complaint Process

EPLA is committed to addressing parent and community concerns fairly and efficiently. If a parent has a grievance or complaint:

1. Step 1: Speak with the Teacher or Staff Member – Most concerns can be resolved informally.
2. Step 2: Contact the School Administration – If unresolved, parents may escalate the concern to the principal.
3. Step 3: Submit a Formal Written Complaint – If the issue persists, a formal complaint may be submitted to the school board for review.



4. Step 4: Final Appeal – If necessary, the concern may be presented to the school district leadership.

7. Health, Safety, and Security

EPLA is dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment for all scholars, staff, and visitors. Safety measures include:

- Visitor Check-In Procedures – All visitors must sign in at the front office.
- Security Cameras – Monitored to enhance campus safety.
- Student Supervision – Staff ensures scholar safety during school hours and activities.
- Emergency Preparedness – Regular safety drills and crisis management training for staff.

8. Emergency Drills & School Closures

EPLA follows state-mandated emergency preparedness guidelines. Drills conducted include:

- Fire Drills – Practiced monthly.
- Lockdown Drills – Conducted periodically to prepare for potential security threats.
- Severe Weather Drills – Tornado, earthquake, or other weather-related response drills.

In the event of an emergency school closure due to severe weather or unforeseen circumstances:

- Parents will be notified via phone, email, and school website updates.
- Closure announcements will be made through local news and social media.
- Plans for remote learning or makeup days will be communicated as needed.

For additional information on engagement opportunities and school policies, please contact the EPLA Parent Engagement Coordinator or visit the school's website.

WE BUILD.

Building Block 11: Important Notices and Appendices

WE LEAD.



El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) is committed to transparency and compliance with legal requirements. This section provides essential notices, disclosures, and policies that parents and scholars should be aware of.

1. Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (FERPA Confidentiality Notice)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and scholars over 18 years of age (eligible scholars) certain rights with respect to the scholar's educational records. These rights include:

Right to Inspect and Review

Parents and/or eligible scholars have the right to inspect and review the scholar's educational records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible scholars should submit a written request to the Office Coordinator, identifying the records they wish to inspect. The school will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible scholar of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

If circumstances prevent a parent or eligible scholar from exercising the right to inspect and review the scholar's educational records, the school shall provide a copy of the records or make other arrangements to allow access.

The school shall not destroy any educational records if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review the records. The school may charge a reasonable fee for copies of an education record unless the fee prevents a parent or eligible scholar from exercising the right to inspect and review the scholar's records. However, the school will not charge a fee to search for or retrieve records.

If a scholar's educational records contain information about other scholars, the parent or eligible scholar may inspect and review only the specific information related to their own scholar.

Right to Seek Amendment of Student's Educational Records

Parents and/or eligible scholars may request that the school amend a record they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy rights of the scholar. This request must be submitted in writing to the Registrar/PEIMS Clerk, clearly identifying the part of the



record to be changed and explaining why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the school decides not to amend the record, it will notify the parent or eligible scholar of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

- If, as a result of the hearing, the school determines the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise violates the privacy rights of the scholar, the school will amend the record and inform the parent or eligible scholar of the amendment in writing.
- If, as a result of the hearing, the school determines that the record is not inaccurate, misleading, or a violation of privacy rights, the parent or eligible scholar has the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information or explaining their disagreement with the decision.
- The school must maintain the parent or eligible scholar's statement with the contested record for as long as the record is maintained.

Right to Consent Prior to Disclosure

Parents and/or eligible scholars have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the scholar's educational records, except when FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception permitting disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is:

- A person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement personnel).
- A person serving on the Board of Directors.
- A person or company with whom the school has contracted to provide a service (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist).
- A parent, scholar, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing their duties.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if they need to review an education record to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

Right to File a Complaint



Parents and eligible scholars have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding the school's compliance with FERPA. The contact information is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

2. Public Relations & Media Release

EPLA may use scholar names, photos, and videos for school-related publicity, including:

- School website and social media
- Newsletters and publications
- Promotional materials and media outreach

Parents may opt out of media participation by submitting a Media Release Opt-Out Form to the school office.

3. Title IX: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) is committed to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all scholars and employees. In compliance with **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972**, EPLA **does not discriminate on the basis of sex** in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices. This includes, but is not limited to, protections against sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

Definition of Sexual Harassment Under Title IX

Sexual harassment under **Title IX** includes conduct that occurs within EPLA's education programs or activities and involves:

- **Quid Pro Quo Harassment:** A school employee conditioning educational benefits on a scholar's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
- **Hostile Environment Harassment:** Unwelcome conduct that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to EPLA's educational programs or activities.
- **Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and Stalking:** As defined



under applicable federal and state laws.

Reporting Sexual Harassment

Any scholar, parent, or employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment should **report the incident immediately**. Reports can be made:

- To the **Title IX Coordinator**
- To **any teacher, school counselor, administrator, or staff member**
- **Electronically**, via the school's online reporting system
- **Anonymously**, through the designated hotline

All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.

Title IX Coordinator

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for overseeing compliance with Title IX regulations, ensuring a prompt and equitable investigation, and implementing supportive measures for involved parties.

- **Title IX Coordinator:** [Name]
- **Contact Information:** [Phone Number] | [Email] | [Office Location]

Response to Reports of Sexual Harassment

Upon receiving a **formal complaint** or report, the **Title IX Coordinator** will:

1. **Contact the complainant** to discuss supportive measures.
2. **Explain the option** to file a formal complaint.
3. **Conduct an impartial investigation** following federal Title IX grievance procedures.

EPLA will ensure:

- **Equitable treatment** of both complainant and respondent.
- **Objective evaluation** of all evidence.
- **Trained personnel** to oversee investigations and hearings.
- **A presumption of innocence** until a determination is reached.
- **A reasonable timeframe** for the complaint resolution process.
- **A clear appeals process** if necessary.



Supportive Measures

Regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed, EPLA will provide **supportive measures** to both complainants and respondents, which may include:

- Counseling services
- Schedule or class changes
- No-contact orders
- Increased security or monitoring
- Other appropriate accommodations

Disciplinary Actions

If a respondent is found responsible for **violating Title IX policies**, they may face **disciplinary action**, including but not limited to:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Loss of school privileges
- Suspension or expulsion (scholars)
- Termination (employees)

Retaliation against **any individual who reports or participates** in a Title IX investigation is **strictly prohibited**.

Formal Complaint Process

EPLA follows a **formal grievance process** to handle complaints under **Title IX**, which includes:

1. **Notification of Allegations** – Both parties receive written notice.
2. **Investigation** – Collection of evidence and interviews with relevant parties.
3. **Hearing & Decision-Making** – A trained decision-maker evaluates findings.
4. **Appeal Process** – Both parties have the right to appeal a decision.

Confidentiality

EPLA will **keep all reports confidential** to the greatest extent possible, while still fulfilling its legal obligations. Information will only be shared on a **need-to-know basis**.

Filing a Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights



Individuals who believe EPLA has violated **Title IX regulations** may also file a complaint with the **U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**:

- **Website:** <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>
- **Phone:** 1-800-421-3481
- **Email:** OCR@ed.gov

For further information, scholars, parents, and staff are encouraged to contact the **Title IX Coordinator**.

4. Other Legal Notices & Disclosures

- **Nondiscrimination Policy:** EPLA does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age.
- **McKinney-Vento Act:** Protections for homeless scholars, ensuring continued access to education and support services.
- **Student Health & Safety Policies:** Compliance with state-mandated health screenings, immunizations, and communicable disease prevention measures.

5. Sports Handbook

The EPLA Athletics Program promotes teamwork, discipline, and personal growth. All scholar-athletes must adhere to:

- **Eligibility Requirements:** Minimum academic and attendance standards must be maintained.
- **Code of Conduct:** Athletes must exhibit sportsmanship, respect, and integrity at all times.
- **Practice & Game Attendance:** Regular participation in scheduled practices and games is required.
- **Injury & Health Policies:** Students must provide a completed physical exam form before participating in any sport.
- **Uniform & Equipment Responsibility:** Student-athletes must properly maintain all issued gear and return it at the end of the season.

For full details, refer to the EPLA Sports Handbook, available in the front office or on the school website.

WE BUILD.

Appendix: Changelog of Handbook

WE LEAD.



July 17, 2025: Page 79: Cell phones and smartwatches must be turned off and stored away during instructional time ~~unless explicitly permitted by a teacher for academic purposes.~~