



# **Executive Summary**

## **Eastwood College**

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### Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School**

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

Eastwood College was founded in 1973 by Mr. Amine Khoury and Ms. Hazel St. John to provide a progressive educational environment for students of diverse nationalities and religions. The school was originally located in the town of Kafarshima, a southern suburb of Beirut. During the civil war, the school had to abandon its locations and transfer operations to a rented facility in Mansourieh, a northern suburb of Beirut approximately 15 kilometers from the city center. Since the end of the war, the original location was reclaimed, and operations in Mansourieh continued. Eastwood College currently operates a full preK-12 program in both campuses.

The school is a proprietary school, owned by the founding Khoury family. Mr. Amine Khoury is the president of the institution and the school is headed by a director, Mr. Michel Khoury in charge of the daily operations of the school.

The school is located on a facility of 3100 square meters. The facility is a reconditioned orphanage consisting of four main buildings, and three main playgrounds. The clientele Mansourieh is characterized by being francophone; as such, most parents opt to send their children to French-speaking schools. In this context, the location of Eastwood hinders its potential to attract more students from the immediate surroundings.

The school serves 340 students from Pre-K through Grade 12; catering to a diverse student population. The school does not discriminate based on gender, religion, creed, race, or belief system; but embraces students' differences through multicultural education. It is characterized by a family atmosphere and international flair. This attracts a large expatriate community and local nationals wanting to provide their children with a multicultural experience. The school includes many students whose parents work in the diplomatic corps. In recent years, Eastwood has opened its doors to many refugee students from neighboring Syria and Iraq. They are easily integrated and placed in programs suited for their needs and ability.

The school offers plenty of financial aid to many families (around 70%) who are not able to pay the complete tuition fees. This allows for families of various economic backgrounds to become Eastwood College members.

### **Educational Programs**

The school offers Lebanese-based and American-based curricula. A varied program offering ensures students find success at all levels. The main programs offered are the American High School College Preparatory Program, the Lebanese National Program, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, the Special Needs Program, the English as a Foreign Language Program and the Arabic as a Foreign Language Program. Eastwood College caters to individual learning styles. Differentiated instruction is a distinctive feature of our teaching methodologies.

### **The Lebanese Program**

This program prepares students for the national official examination, the Lebanese Brevet and the Baccalaureate in General Sciences, Life Sciences, Sociology and Economics or Literature and Humanities. The language of instruction is English except for courses in social studies, philosophy and Arabic literature, which are taught in Arabic. French is introduced in Early Years classes as a third language.

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### The American High School Diploma Program

(For students with a legal exemption from advanced studies in Arabic)

The American program leads to a High School Diploma, accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education on completion of Grade 12. The language of instruction is English; Arabic and French are taught as second languages. Support is offered for students sitting internationally recognized external exams such as the SAT I, SAT II, and TOEFL. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are additionally offered to able and motivated students who wish to pursue college-level studies while still at school. All students explore a subject in depth, develop analytical reasoning skills, and form disciplined study habits which will contribute to continued academic success. At the High School level, the program follows a credit system, where students have to complete a total of 18 credits and community service requirements within the last three years.

### The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

(For students with a legal exemption from advanced studies in Arabic)

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) is an internationally recognized, academically rigorous program that equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary for the 21st century. Eastwood College's high standards, goals and professional approaches are strongly aligned with the IB vision and mission which creates a natural partnership. Students in the IBDP are given the power of choice; they choose their subjects- one subject from each of the six academic groups. This diversity ensures that the students gain the necessary knowledge and skills needed to face the various challenges of the 21st century.

### The Special Needs Program

The school was one of the pioneers in Special Education services, beginning in 1986. Since then, the school has developed a comprehensive and holistic program for children with mild learning difficulties, including counseling services, speech therapy, psychomotor therapy and specialized pull out programs.

This program caters to students with learning difficulties. At Eastwood College, we believe that each student has the right to be given a quality education. We provide this to all students with special rights, respecting each as a unique learner. The Special Rights Department draws up an individualized Plan (IP) for each student, tailored to his or her educational, social, and emotional needs. In a supportive environment, students with a disparate range of learning difficulties are able to avoid failure and develop a sense of pride and accomplishment in their achievements.

### The English As a Foreign Language Program

This program is offered to those students whose mother tongue is not English. Close to twenty different nationalities may be represented at any given time at Eastwood College and consequently, some students arrive with little knowledge of English. Beginners focus on verbal communication skills, applying oral lessons in reading and writing activities. Vocabulary, comprehension proficiency, reading and writing abilities are developed as the student progresses and fluency is acquired, after which full integration into the Eastwood College High School Program ensues.

The program is structured to include small group teaching, where students are withdrawn from classes for more intensive studies, as well as in-class support to help students with the language of specific subjects. Each course is carefully graded according to the student's language proficiency. Students are given the opportunity to practice these skills orally and then to use them functionally in their writing. Writing skills such as problem solving, describing cause and consequence, discursive and letter writing help them towards the activities they need for all subject areas.

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### The Arabic as a Foreign Language Program

The Arabic Department offers a special Arabic Program to students with little or no Arabic. The four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are taught at many levels within the department to enable students to gain a working knowledge of Arabic. The curriculum is enhanced by having students of different nationalities and backgrounds within the school. Students gain confidence, self-respect and mastery of the Arabic language.

Eastwood College prides itself in the family atmosphere that is pervasive in all school operations. The family atmosphere is created by ensuring that all stakeholder groups contribute effectively to the learning journey. Eastwood College is keen on ensuring a high level of transparency and open communication with all its stakeholders. The school is strongly committed to the open-door policy where students, teachers and parents feel comfortable and are frequently encouraged to voice their concerns, suggestions or questions. Moreover, the small student-teacher ratio of 15:1 helps with creating personal relationships between and across the school community.

The school is proud of the quality of staff that work with the school. All teachers are qualified in their area of expertise, and have a keen approach to learning and self-development. They all embody and embrace the vision of Eastwood in their daily practices. An impressive aspect of Eastwood College is the quality of interaction between teachers and students. Teachers not only set high standards, but are willing to spend extra time with students to help them work towards their individual learning goals. A formal differentiated professional development plan and formal staff appraisals allow all teachers to reflect on their own practices and strive for improvement.

### Support Services

The school believes in nurturing the whole child. As such, the school provides student services which complement a student's academic experience. Students must be healthy to do well in their studies; therefore, a full time registered nurse is available to tend to ill students. Health counseling is also given to students on a wide range of subjects, from sexual education to hygiene and care. The nurse and school counselor work together for the physical and emotional well-being of the children.

A guidance counselor works with students who are in need of individual counseling and is utilized as a resource center for teachers, students, and parents. She deals with students experiencing academic or personal difficulties. Also, she organizes and runs awareness sessions regarding self-understanding, study skills, bullying, etc.

The guidance counselor also acts as a career counselor to help students in the planning, applications, and placements into universities. Students are guided in considering various career paths and finding the right options that would help them reach their goals.

### Significant Changes in the Last Three Years

Eastwood has experienced a number of improvements on various levels. In its attempt to cater for the wide range of students' abilities and interests, Eastwood sought to set the foundation to become an International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme authorized school, adding yet another educational programme to its list. The school has introduced the Reggio Emilia approach to teaching and learning in the Early Years, as it inspires children to be inquirers and critical thinkers of their world.

To fulfill Eastwood's philosophy to develop individuals who are capable of making sustainable to their community, Eastwood was keen to introduce technology as a pedagogical tool. The school was the first in the Middle East to introduce a 1:1 iPad program.

## **School's Purpose**

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

The mission and purpose of Eastwood College is clearly stated in the school's founding motto "Children Our Purpose and Our Future".

### School Vision

Eastwood College strives to be a leading educational community in the Middle East for students of all nationalities and religions. The success of our vision depends on the commitment of all members of the school community to take an active part in its effort to provide an instructional system that conforms to the high standards of international education. Eastwood College is committed to a program of continuous improvement and development

### School Mission

Eastwood College provides a supportive environment in which learners can develop their academic potential, their personal and social awareness, and their career goals. The school offers a diversified curriculum that allows students to select the course of study that best meets their educational objectives and the requirements of Lebanese and international institutions of higher learning.

Existing programs and practices are subject to periodic review and assessment. Equipment and facilities are regularly upgraded. An organized program for professional staff development ensures that the quality of instruction is consistent with best-practice educational research.

In order to fulfill its Vision and Mission, Eastwood College has the following objectives:

1. Create a Values-Based Educational Environment by:

- Having a holistic approach to the education of a child.
- Developing the spiritual, cultural emotional and social aspects, along with the physical and academic.
- Teaching the values of love, respect for others, honesty, and tolerance.
- Encouraging and practicing in all contexts the principles of truthfulness, kindness, consideration, compassion, responsibility, respect for others, and legitimate authority.
- Maintaining a character education program wherein children are taught these universal values
- Promoting education programs in which ethical and moral issues are discussed and students learn about other religions.

2. Curriculum Delivery and Content

- Provide an environment where children can develop their academic potential and career goals.
- Provide programs where all the children may achieve academic excellence.
- Provide a broad, balanced curriculum that fulfills the requirements and meets the goals and objectives of both Lebanese and International Programs.
- Provide two parallel streams, and a third stream only at the high school level. A Lebanese Program that follows the Lebanese National Curriculum and an American College Preparatory Program that provides students with a High School Diploma and prepares them for \_\_\_\_\_

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internationally recognized exams such as TOEFL, SAT I, and SAT II. The third stream at the high school level is the International Baccalaureate which prepares students for a rigorous well-rounded education to allow them

- Ensure international standards in both content and delivery in all the core subject areas and develop an international educational perspective.
- Allow students to select the course of study that best meets their needs and educational objectives.
- Offer elective courses at the high school level that addresses their interests leading to a well-rounded education.
- Encourage environmental awareness and attitudes that become a way of life.
- Provide for the development of information technology skills so that students are well prepared for life in the 21st Century.
- Provide a program that places an emphasis upon skills, discovery, research and analysis rather than content and memorization so that students are adequately prepared for a life-long process of learning.
- Continually update and improve textbooks and resource materials.
- Promote high staff performance in all curriculum areas through a program of continual staff assessment and professional development also by hiring the best possible staff locally and internationally.

3. To be a child-centered school recognizing the right of every child to be educated and seeing them as our purpose and future.

- To recognize the right of every child to learn by catering to students with a wide range of abilities and needs.
- Provide curriculum that is appropriate to the child's abilities and age.
- Provide a Special Rights program with specialized staff who will develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with learning difficulties, emotional, social and/or behavioral needs so that they can be partially or totally mainstreamed depending on their abilities and needs.
- Provide an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program for non-English speakers, students with language gaps, and students with language difficulties.
- Supply extension materials and programs for more intellectually able students by arranging the timetable so that they can move into higher levels in subjects where they are gifted.
- Emphasize the rights and responsibilities of each member of the community.
- Ensure that the policies, programs and disciplinary procedures are fair, equitable and maintain a proper balance between the needs of the individual and the school.
- Acknowledge differences, such as gender, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and promote social equity.
- Address difficulties experienced by students, parents, or staff arising from these differences, or other social or family problems and provide appropriate counseling.
- Celebrate our diversity as an International Community.

4. Student progress and achievement

- Promote student achievement to the highest potential and encourage continual pursuit of excellence.
- Promote the development of independent and co-operative learning skills, self-confidence and self-assessment.
- Regularly monitor and analyze student progress.

5. To be committed to a program of continuous improvement.

a. School Program

- To be an organization that is constantly learning and improving.
- To maintain the standards of international accrediting bodies.
- To prepare all our students for further education and help them achieve the standards required for acceptance into institutions within Lebanon and abroad.

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### b. Personnel

- To be a good employer striving to maintain a harmonious, family atmosphere and sound equitable personnel policies.
- Provide and facilitate staff training and development for both teaching and support staff.
- Enhance working conditions and acknowledge personal and professional needs.
- Encourage continual professional development.
- For the leadership to evaluate and constantly ensure academic improvement and the pursuit of excellence through regular monitoring and evaluation.

### c. Parents and the Community

- Foster a spirit of community and positive attitudes towards social responsibilities.
- Foster partnership and regularly communicate with parents.
- Encourage attitudes of tolerance and understanding of different sects and political groups.
- Promote healthy lifestyles and good relationships.
- Help students, as family members, appreciate the uniqueness of Lebanon; to understand and respect its cultural/historical heritage; the diversity of its population, and its responsibility within the region.

### d. Property facilities

- Plan building development that will facilitate optimum delivery of the curriculum.
- Develop buildings and grounds in the best possible way so as to provide an attractive, safe and appropriate environment for learning and teaching, and for social, cultural, and sporting activities.

### e. Periodic Review

- Ensure that regular review of all programs, policies and procedures is carried out.
- To continually strive for excellence in all aspects of school life.

At Eastwood College, the mission drives every aspect of the school. The school's motto "Children: Our Purpose and Our Future" drives, reinforces, and permeates the school environment. The school provides a supportive environment allowing teachers and students to be unhindered lifelong learners. The school mission guides and binds the whole teaching and learning process. Eastwood's vision and mission provides a lens through which all decisions are made. The curriculum is strongly aligned with the mission of the school. Varied program offerings support the development of students' academic potential and help them realize their career and life goals.

## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

Eastwood College is always looking for ways to reinvent itself in order to offer best-practice services and quality education to its students. In the last three years, the school has made many advances on many levels.

The most notable change has been the implementation of the one-to-one iPad program for students from Grade 1 through Grade 12. Eastwood was a pioneer in introducing the tablet to education in Lebanon. In 2011, it became the first school in the Middle East to pilot a one-to-one iPad program, and in 2012, the program was adopted in all middle and high school classes. In 2013, the iPad program was introduced in Grade 1 and continues to be a success. Technology has become an invaluable pedagogical tool. Technology has enabled the differentiation of instruction in order to cater for our diverse student population.

In the Early Years, the school adopted the Reggio Emilia philosophy to teaching and learning. The Reggio Emilia approach emphasizes hands-on discovery learning that allows children to use all their senses and all their languages to learn and make their learning visible. Teachers underwent intensive training in Reggio Emilia; classroom and resources were changed to reflect the approach; teachers engaged in weekly training and collaborative meetings to reflect on practices and engage in constructive dialogue. This shift in philosophy reflected in the teaching and learning has resulted in a joy of learning that is evident in all teachers, parents and children.

The school has been striving to offer programs to cater to the needs of all students. The school has been working hard to maintain international standards in terms of its curricular programs. It decided to implement the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in order to increase student choices and academic standards. Teachers have all undergone intensive training, and resources were allocated for the successful implementation. Seminars for parents, students and teachers have been conducted to make them aware of the benefits of the program and provide a platform for their concerns and suggestions.

The school MAP results in reading and language arts were considerably lower than norm data in the last 2 years.. After careful analysis of the data, a leveled reading program in the elementary school was implemented, in line with the school purpose of differentiating learning for all students to find success and reach their potential. The reading program has been correlated with increased results in the MAP tests over the last year.

The school has shifted towards standards-based reporting at all levels. The reason this shift has taken place is due to the need to clearly communicate to parents and students learning outcomes. Additionally, reporting is now aligned with instructional goals and assessments. When specific learning goals are identified, assessed and communicated, appropriate rigor can ensue as specific areas of strength are identified and areas of weakness are targeted.

In the Early Years, and in Reggio-inspired settings, reporting follows an emphasis on carefully displaying and documenting children's thoughts and progression of thinking; making their thoughts visible in many different ways: photographs, transcripts of children's thoughts and explanations, visual representations (drawings, sculptures etc.), all designed to show the child's learning process.

Research indicates that learning happens when it is authentic, when it is connected to real-life experiences and when it integrates different disciplines. Eastwood College implemented a homeroom system in the elementary school three years ago in an effort to facilitate challenge-based learning where students actively explore real-life problems and acquire deeper content knowledge. Teachers were trained in how to

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devise essential questions and topics for students to investigate. A homeroom system allowed for a natural integration across different disciplines.

Eastwood College strongly believes in providing equal opportunities in education to all students. The school believes that all students should be included in school life and participating as members of the school community. The school piloted an inclusion program two years ago where students with learning difficulties who were previously receiving pull-out support were placed in a mainstream classroom, participating in all activities of the class with additional support and services. In the inclusive setting, adaptations are made to the materials, the curriculum and the expectations of the activities for the individual child, maintaining achievement of all individual and academic goals. After the success of the pilot, a co-teaching system has been implemented in all elementary classes which allows for the full participation of special rights students in the classroom. Adoption of an inclusive teaching setting is facilitated by the fact that teachers already use differentiated teaching methods.

Despite the achievements which the school has made over the last years, Eastwood remains fully aware of the need to continuously strive for improvement.

The self-assessment has highlighted the need for a comprehensive, systematic data-analysis system. The school is striving to improve the way data is collected and analyzed. The school is adopting an online information management system which will facilitate the collection and analysis of student data to inform school-wide decisions. This information system will be implemented starting the Spring of 2016. Additionally, teachers will be trained in the collection and analysis of data for school-wide improvement through online workshops offered by leading international universities.

Another area of improvement is the school facility. The school is not purpose-built, as such, many changes have to be made to accommodate for learning in the 21st century; for example, the school library underwent renovations last year to make it more inviting for students and teachers. Data has indicated that this has resulted in increased visits to the library. Every year, the school allocates funds and resources for the purpose of facility enhancements; however, stakeholder satisfaction data still shows areas of improvement related to facilities. The school is planning to build a new playground to accommodate students. However, even with this taking place, the school is still in need of green spaces where students can play and enjoy their learning. Eastwood has strong community ties and is finding new ways to make use of green spaces around the school to enhance the learning of our students. The cafeteria is another area that the school is keen on improving. The cafeteria menu will be undergoing a change to support a healthy lifestyle important to maintaining a healthy mind. Furthermore, the laboratories will be undergoing changes to accommodate the hands on approach that we adopt. Lab equipment will be updated to include; data loggers, sensors, new microscopes, etc.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

The learning the environment stems from the heart of the leadership and permeates all aspects of the school. At Eastwood everyone is on a learning curve. Areas of improvements and suggestions are welcomed with an open mind and are perceived as learning opportunities. Stakeholders are partners in the school improvement journey. Platforms are created to encourage them to voice their opinions in the way they feel most comfortable.