

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Mary Cooper Ed.S.
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Martin Luther King Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3800 Waldenwood Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Ann Arbor State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 48105-3007

County Washtenaw County

Telephone (734) 994-1940 Fax (734) 997-1258

Web site/URL https://www.a2schools.org/Domain/21 E-mail Clinkscalek@aaps.k12.mi.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Jeanice Swift E-mail swift@aaps.k12.mi.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Ann Arbor Public School District Tel. (734) 994-2200

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Bryan Johnson
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 21 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 31 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	9	5	14
K	41	29	70
1	31	35	66
2	32	45	77
3	39	36	75
4	54	43	97
5	35	34	69
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	241	227	468

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 42.4 % Asian
 - 5.6 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 32.5 % White
 - 19.3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 5%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	24
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	522
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Filipino, French, German, Hindu, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Malayalam, Marathi, Persian, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Sinhalese, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Uzbek, Wolof

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 23 %
108 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 15 %

Total number students who qualify: 68

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %

44 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>7</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	94%	96%	96%	96%	99%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2014

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Our mission is to build a 21st-century learning community where all members are encouraged to do their personal best in a safe environment where we nurture respectful, responsible and caring citizens of the world.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Ann Arbor Public Schools has been fully virtual for the 2020-21 school year.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III - SUMMARY

Students at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School strive to become respectful and engaged world citizens. This goal is carried out for our namesake, and our students are appropriately called ‘Dreamkeepers.’ With a school population of just under 500, our students hail from more than 20 countries. Our large English Language Learner (ELL) population - with almost 100 students receiving extra support to learn the English language - allow our students to learn about the world the way they know best: through personal connections and friendships.

Our classrooms are designed to be engaging and safe. To this end, students learn social and emotional skills through daily Responsive Schools’ morning meetings and during teachable moments. Students are taught that King CARES, and we each can show kindness through cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. To reinforce these tools, students across grade levels mix throughout the year to form ‘Kingdoms.’ Each Kingdom provides children with a new group of trusted students and adults that they can learn from and turn to. Additionally, students have the opportunities to participate in leadership programs, including student council, Anti-Bullying Club, and through safety posts.

Students in all grades are involved in their own academic and social growth through goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-reflection. Student-led data is collected and implemented through the use of data binders. Students are encouraged to lead their personal development and adopt a mindset of growth that will propel them to become lifelong learners.

Teachers also utilize student data available from our district’s research department. They gather, analyze, and use this data from formative to summative assessments, through informal and formal local, state, and national assessments. We work to desegregate data by student subgroups and identify focus areas to concentrate our collective efforts to find effective strategies to teach every student, every day. These identified focus areas are brought together and become our School’s Improvement Plan.

Staff participates in Data Teams and regularly meet to analyze student needs to teach, reteach, and reinforce our school-wide goals. Student growth is examined every four to eight weeks. We look closely at who is achieving based on our focused efforts and who is not. Personalized learning plans are then created for students who struggle despite our focused efforts.

At King, we take family partnership seriously. Our school’s strong connection to our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) ensures that we can best serve our students. Parents and staff volunteer to lead extracurricular and school-wide initiatives that include Science Olympiad, Academic Games, Math Olympiad, International Night, Disability Awareness Day, and National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID). Parents lead and volunteer in over 30 PTO committees. Additionally, we know that parent education is an important part of educating the whole child. Yearly, our School Improvement Team offers opportunities for families to learn more about our curriculum through Literacy Family Nights, Assessment Workshops, Curriculum Nights, and Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Our district’s COVID-19 closure was unexpected and swift. With less than 24 hours, staff organized to provide every student with printed materials that would allow them to access their classroom’s online learning modules. Additionally, a staggering 10,000+ library materials were signed out for the three-week closure. As three weeks turned into twelve months, staff worked countless hours to navigate and learn new technology while recreating all lesson plans and learning materials for remote learning.

Throughout the year, staff volunteered to organize and distribute curriculum kits, art supplies, musical instruments, and other materials to ensure that every child had equitable access to learning. More importantly, teachers and staff provided emotional support to both students and families in order to navigate a new reality. While our students may not have learned together in person during the start of the 2020-21 school year, we built strong remote learning partnerships in order to be ‘always together.’

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

So far this school year, we have been 100% virtual (four days synchronous for part of the day, one day asynchronous) and have had to adapt our curriculum, instruction, and assessments in many different ways. Last summer, teacher leaders worked in grade level teams to determine which standards would be taught and how units would be adapted based on data. All teachers in the district work in grade level teams, called TLNs (Teacher Learning Networks), and digitize and write lessons in Google Slides for all subject areas. Teachers were trained, and continue to be trained, to use many different technological tools to support instruction. TLN teams also digitize and write assessments for each unit.

The Google slide decks follow SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol), UDL (Universal Design for Learning), and CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching) strategies so that they are accessible to all students. These strategies include visuals, graphic organizers, sentence stems, etc. The slides include these sections: Welcome (title page, expectations, agenda, learning targets), Building Background, Vocabulary, Mini-Lesson (explicit instruction), Practice/Application, Independent Work Time, and Sharing/Review.

Grades three through five (3-5) use Schoology for a platform. Daily folders with subject area subfolders are used to organize slide decks and student work. Student work is presented as assignments, assessments, exit tickets, or discussions. Teachers and students use the Gradebook to monitor student work and progress.

Our Young Fives, Kindergarten, first grade, and second-grade students use Seesaw as a virtual learning platform. Activities that correspond to completed instruction are assigned for student independent completion. Teachers can monitor student work, give feedback, and provide opportunities for revisions.

For math, we use a curriculum, called Everyday Math, which closely follows the Common Core State Standards. Kindergarten works in the area of counting and cardinality. All grade levels work in the areas of operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in base ten, measurement and data, geometry., Fourth and fifth grades work in the area of number and operations-fractions. These areas are developed throughout the grades in a spiral, which means topics are introduced, practiced, mastered, and reviewed throughout each grade level, each at a new level of understanding. Topics are connected to the real-world. Each unit has many components, such as, digital, writing, manipulatives, academic language development, games, review pages, and open response.

MAISA (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Districts and Oakland Schools) is the curriculum that we use to teach English language arts (ELA), along with Words Their Way. The MAISA curriculum consists of both reading and writing units, closely follows the Common Core State Standards, and is sometimes project-based. Words Their Way develops word knowledge, spelling, and vocabulary. All grade levels work in the areas of reading literature, reading informational text, reading foundational, writing, speaking and listening, and language. These areas are developed throughout the grades at a deeper level along with reading and writing stamina. Interactive reading and writing (including read alouds), reading/writing conferences, independent reading/writing, partnerships, and book clubs are important components. Words Their Way lessons are structured so that students first sort words based on their spelling patterns, then practice sorting, and build knowledge of the meanings of the words.

For science, we use the program, Phenomenal Science, which closely follows the Common Core State Standards. The disciplines studied in each grade level are physical, life, and earth and space sciences. The components of Phenomenal Science are productive talk, integration, notebooking, literacy connections, performance tasks, exploring/investigating, asking/generating questions, analyzing data, and inquiry cycles/storylines about anchoring phenomena. The lessons, presented in Google Slides, are structured so that first students make connections to previous learning, learn new vocabulary, followed by direct instruction, practice and review, independent and group work, and sharing.

MAISA is also used for our Social Studies curriculum. These units closely follow our standards, are project-based, and include group work. Students in each grade level learn about the history, geography,

civics/government, economy, and public issues related to their area of study. Kindergarten begins with a look at themselves, followed by first grade studying their families, second grade studying the local community, third grade studying Michigan, fourth grade studying United States (U.S.) regions, and fifth grade studying the U.S.

Teachers use the technology tools, such as PearDeck, Kami, EdPuzzle., and Seesaw, along with the Schoology tools mentioned previously. Families and staff have been given opportunities to learn how to use these tools and there is technology help available. These tools are often used for formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments include observations of student participation, assignments, and the use of rubrics. Feedback is provided and students who struggle with a concept are invited to small group sessions to get support during asynchronous times. Summative assessments are given at the end of each unit and include self-assessments for students to fill out. These assessments are also used to guide further instruction for students who have not mastered the standards assessed. Teachers measure student growth through these assessments and report to families informally and formally throughout the school year.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Under the current virtual instruction plan, all students in Young 5's through fifth Grade at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary have access to special area curriculums on both synchronous and asynchronous learning days. On synchronous days, classrooms are scheduled for at least one special per day. Students are also given asynchronous lessons to complete during asynchronous learning times, to amplify their learning from the current class schedules. Each of the specials' curriculum areas engages students in ways that feel like play, encourages creativity and independence, and aims to inspire lifelong learning in every student.

Students in all grades have one synchronous class and one asynchronous learning opportunity for each of the specials, each week. This includes Visual Art, Performing Art (both General and Instrumental Music), Physical Education, Chinese, and the Media Center.

In Visual Art, students gain and then use their knowledge of artists, art history, and art processes to plan, create, reflect, and present their work. Student knowledge is connected to the lessons learned in the grade-level classroom through conversations and art creation. Students in every grade level participate in Visual Art at King Elementary School.

The Performing Arts include both General Music and Instrumental Music at King Elementary School. Students in Young 5's through fifth Grade participate in General Music. In General Music, students explore and create music during every lesson. Each lesson aims to include listening, composition, rhythmic, and singing components. These components are then tied to the students' lives and the cultures they experience. Fifth Grade students are also given the opportunity to participate in either Band or Orchestra, which is taught once a week for 30 minutes in the current operating schedule. Students in Band and Orchestra are able to choose their starting instrument and learn the basic skills of playing that instrument during the course of the entire year.

Physical Education is taught to each student at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School. Students learn to take care of their bodies physically and mentally through a curriculum that highlights the students' capabilities and stretches them to challenge themselves and grow in their physical skills.

Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School offers students in third, fourth, and fifth grades synchronous 30-minute lessons and an asynchronous lesson in Chinese each week. King Elementary is well known for its

diverse student population, where everyone's culture is welcomed and celebrated. In Chinese class, students not only learn the Chinese language and culture but also learn to view the world through different perspectives.

All students also have a synchronous and asynchronous virtual library class this year. Due to the pandemic, print books are not able to be circulated, but the students are still engaged in reading in many virtual ways. Since the beginning of the year, students have been learning how to use and access reliable online resources for schoolwork, exploring interests, and general reading. The students have also been learning keyboarding skills, digital citizenship, virtual author visits, and most recently, have celebrated "March Is Reading Month."

Students in grades three through five also participate in a program called "Project Lead the Way" (PLTW) once a week. Project Lead the Way focuses on bringing computer science, engineering, and biomedical science to students in a realistic and relatable way through hands-on activities, projects, and problems. The curriculum is typically provided in a "block" schedule, where the PLTW teacher is with the students for an entire month. But during the altered schedule due to COVID-19, the Project Lead the Way teacher has been working with the students once a week, for 30 minutes, much like the other specials offered at the school.

3. Academic Supports:

The teaching and leadership team at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School works diligently to ensure that instruction, interventions, and assessments are inclusive of every student - including students performing below and above grade level, students with various disabilities, ELLs, migrant, and homeless students.

First, our dedicated team of educators and administrators use a multitude of data measures to anchor our work. These data points include, but are not limited to: Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP), NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association), WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment), unit assessments, benchmark assessments, and anecdotal notes. Our educators utilize this data to inform instruction, interventions, and assessments. Key stakeholders, including educators, administrators, and our School Improvement Team review data on a regular basis.

Grade level teams schedule "Data Team" days three times per school year. This time is used to review classroom and grade-level data in order to plan for high-quality, Tier 1 instruction that meets the needs of every learner. During data team time, teachers review student data and discuss ways in which they can support each individual student. They then collaborate to plan for small group, differentiated instruction. This individualized instruction is an integral part of meeting the needs of the various student populations represented at King Elementary.

Small group instruction, including guided reading, strategy groups, conferring, and math workshop, allow the needs of individual students to be met. During any given instructional time, our teachers meet regularly with above grade level students to provide enrichment opportunities. They also provide supports for students performing below grade level, utilizing research-based interventions. Additionally, the classroom teacher collaborates closely with service providers, such as our speech pathologist, teacher consultant, reading interventionist, and English language teacher to provide individualized instruction for students in need.

In addition to teacher planning, every student has ownership of their own learning goals through the use of data binders. In core subject areas, such as reading, writing, and mathematics, students set goals for each unit and track their progress throughout the unit. This practice allows the teacher to identify what each student views as their individual strengths and areas for growth. It also encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and growth and provides students

with a sense of accountability and accomplishment. Our teachers use this data to plan instruction, interventions, and assessments based upon student voice and choice. Parents regularly view data binders in order to better understand their child's individual plan.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School uses data to center all that we do. Instruction, interventions, and assessments are carefully designed by analyzing and reviewing student data on a regular basis.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School continues to engage, motivate, and provide students with a positive environment that supports their academic, social, and emotional growth both in-person and during remote learning.

First and foremost, our teachers form strong relationships with our students. We know that trust and security are key to student success in all areas of child development, including their academic success, and social and emotional growth. In order to understand our students as learners, we must first understand them as people. We ensure students feel seen, safe, respected, and valued in our building. At the onset of the year and every day since, our educators have focused on community building, which has anchored our work and motivates our students to engage in high-quality learning every day. We strongly believe that teaching social and emotional skills and forming relationships with our students must happen first, and academic learning will follow.

Our school uses the Responsive Classroom framework, which grounds our practice and supports students. The core belief of Responsive Classroom is that in order for students to be successful in and out of school, students need to learn a set of social, emotional, and academic competencies in order to best engage and motivate students. At King, we teach students cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control to support their social and emotional growth. Additionally, we teach our students' academic competencies, including perseverance, learning strategies, and academic behaviors to support academic growth.

At King Elementary, our teachers truly believe how we teach is as important as what we teach. Given this mentality, teachers have been working tirelessly to learn new ways to engage and motivate students during remote learning. Our team of dedicated educators stay up-to-date with best practices by regularly attending professional development to further their growth in engaging and motivating students during school closures and distance learning. More specifically, teachers have attended professional development opportunities including Schoology and Seesaw workshops, Zoom seminars, and PearDeck learning, among many others.

Students are motivated, engaged, and incredibly valued at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School. The culture for learning is what sets our learning organization apart from other institutions.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school is strengthened by our family and community partnerships. Each year, students are given the opportunity to engage and explore in the areas of health, science, social studies, visual arts, and music. Through affiliations with the University of Michigan Museum of Art, University of Michigan Musical Society (UMS), St. Joseph Mercy's Health Exploration Station, the Detroit Institute of Art, and our district's Freeman Environmental Education Center, students are able to connect their classroom learning to the community at large. These enrichment opportunities are free for all students thanks to these affiliations and the generous fundraising of our school's PTO.

Families are always welcomed into our school and classroom communities, beginning each year with Curriculum Night and ending with a "clap-out" to celebrate the end of elementary school for our fifth graders. Throughout the year, all parents are encouraged to participate in classroom events, PTO meetings, our School Improvement Team, National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID), and through over 30 PTO committees. We also create informal, organic opportunities for families to meet, including 'Coffee on the Lawn,' monthly Bagel Fridays, Bingo Night, and our Ice Cream Social.

Nearly one-hundred parents and high school siblings volunteer to teach extracurricular activities, including Math Olympiad, Science Olympiad, and Academic Games. These activities last for months, with over 50% of eligible students participating. One-time events are also well-organized and attended. Our yearly

International Night, which celebrates the cultural diversity of our neighborhood, sees more than 50% of our students demonstrating their heritage through dance, song, costumes, activities, and displays.

Teachers and administration at the school and district level communicate to our families through newsletters, website and social media updates, and in conferences. Our many bilingual families are served through translators, available both by our district and by community volunteers. We provide extra support for our students who live in affordable housing by providing the use of our facilities for meetings and activities, by assisting with the center's after-school program, and with regular collaboration with the center's director. This philosophy of inclusivity is shared by our PTO, who financially supports students by making sure everyone is able to participate in school pictures, t-shirts, book fairs, and other opportunities.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The teaching staff and administration at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School are committed to fostering an environment of lifelong learning. Staff is regularly supported and encouraged to participate in weekly, monthly, and year-long professional development opportunities which promote extended learning. High-quality professional development is offered each week during district and staff meetings - educators engage in learning opportunities geared toward improving instructional practices, implementing new techniques, and exchanging ideas. We pride ourselves on the personal choices our educators make, with the unwavering support of the administration, to advance their understanding of students' needs and how to best support them.

Support teams, such as the Curriculum Instructional Specialists (CIS) and Teacher Learning Network (TLN), offer many opportunities for learning during weekly meetings. Five teachers from King Elementary participate in these teams as leaders; the remaining staff participate each week by receiving and applying topics discussed in these meetings. The emphasis of importance that our school has placed on the value of collaboration makes teachers feel valued. Especially in this unprecedented time of virtual and hybrid learning, dedicated time to collaborate with colleagues is invaluable.

Many staff members in King Elementary have also participated in Educational Justice Leaders meetings. Our teachers feel supported in bettering ourselves as, over the course of four days, and a total of sixteen hours, we collaborate with school, district, and intra-district colleagues to learn and grow in their understanding of the struggles that many individuals in our country face. With an emphasis on equity, equality, privilege, and self-reflection, staff members are encouraged to consider their own prejudices, privileges, and ideology and worked hard to intentionally address their own shortcomings and areas for improvement.

This year, specifically in terms of both virtual and hybrid learning, the staff at King Elementary has been supported in learning and applying new technology skills. Professional development opportunities ranging from recording and uploading asynchronous lessons, to designing, creating, and assigning virtual lessons, to leveling up with interactive applications and activities, the teachers at King Elementary went above and beyond in seeking out and participating in engaging and productive learning opportunities to better themselves as professionals perfecting their craft.

Belonging to a school in which educators are ceaselessly encouraged to better themselves both in their professional and personal lives, is invaluable and correlates directly to the exceptional instruction we serve.

4. School Leadership:

The school leaders at Martin Luther King, Jr. are transformational leaders. They facilitate and support staff members to develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture, foster teacher development, and empower teachers to become leaders of the work. Administrators share instructional leadership and balanced leadership philosophies, and this is apparent in the way they manage the organization.

The principal facilitates primary committees, including the School Improvement Team (SIT) and Responsive Classroom (RC) Team, in which teachers from each grade level and special area teachers are

represented. Additionally, the principal evaluates staff, including the assistant principal, teachers, and office professionals. The principal works closely with and manages student and parent groups, including the Anti-Bullying Club (ABC), Student Council, and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The assistant principal's roles include facilitating secondary committees, including the King Advisory Team, evaluating teacher assistants, and overseeing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans. The principal and assistant principal collaborate to create and facilitate professional learning focusing on pedagogy that positively impacts student achievement.

The school leaders ensure that all key stakeholders hold valuable leadership roles within the organization. Beyond the school leaders, teachers, students, and parents are actively involved in leading committees and student programs. Teachers are involved in leading committees, such as the SIT, RC, PTO board members, and Student Council. Parents are encouraged to serve as leaders in the organization, serving as PTO board members, ABC volunteers, and SIT members.

School leaders ensure that policies, programs, relationships, and resources focus directly on student achievement. First and foremost, the school culture is centered around positive, inclusive, and safe relationships with all key stakeholders. Student safety, well-being, and achievement are of utmost importance; and, all stakeholders ensure that our work is first grounded in strong relationships that focus on bettering the students in which we serve.

The administrative team uses data and student voice to anchor and center policies that are equitable and inclusive of all students the organization serves. Not only do individual teachers analyze data, but teams of teachers also look at student data three to four times per year in order to appropriately plan for policies, programs, and resources that ensure high student achievement. For example, the leadership team invites key stakeholders, including teachers and parents, to SIT meetings one time each month to share relevant data and to plan for equitable policies, programs, and resources that are inclusive of all students and their needs.

Additionally, over the course of the last three years, all classroom teachers have participated in Instructional Rounds at the building level. Because of this job-embedded professional development, teachers have taken on more ownership of all students' growth and achievement. Likewise, this opportunity has increased the fidelity within English Language Arts instruction and a greater sense of Collective Teacher Efficacy.

Administrators have strong collaboration and communication throughout COVID-19 and school closures. From March 2020 through March 2021, our school has been closed for in-person learning. This has impacted the daily roles and responsibilities of the administrative team, thus forcing our school leaders to adapt their familiar roles and responsibilities to reflect the needs of students and teachers. Throughout the year, school leaders have focused their efforts in sustaining strong relationships with teachers, students, and families. This has been done through regular staff meetings, office hours, personal notes, shout-outs, team "swag," and phone calls. As we begin to transition into hybrid instruction, school leaders have formed a Transition Team, which includes a team of teachers that is focused on a safe return for students and teachers.

The administrative team at Martin Luther King, Jr. truly serves as transformational leaders, and it is evident in their ability to empower all key stakeholders to take action to improve student achievement.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Our staff has taken many steps to educate ourselves on how to ensure equity, inclusion, and cultural awareness are at the forefront of our work. Our work includes attending professional learning, such as staff sessions from Pacific Educational Group, county-level sessions on becoming social justice leaders, and state-level conferences, such as "Building Mirrors and Windows: Children Seeing Themselves and Others in the Literature that We Teach." Our staff has also read many books, independently and together, such as *Courageous Conversations* (Singleton), *Cultivating Genius* (Muhammad), *How to Be an Anti-Racist* (Kendi), and *White Fragility* (Robin DiAngelo).

Within all areas of our school, our King team has made it a priority to ensure equity, cultural awareness, and respect are anchored in our curriculum, events, instruction, and daily interactions. Teachers ensure that their classroom libraries and curriculum are mirrors, sliding glass doors, and windows, so that all students see themselves and their cultures represented in the literature and curriculum. Many read-alouds and lessons have been focused on diverse groups of people, social justice leaders, social movements, and current events throughout the school year. Each grade level collaborates with teachers across the district to choose appropriate read-alouds and articles that address current events and social movements. As a King team, we believe it is essential that our students are involved in learning about our world. Our librarian is in the process of using a Diversity Audit tool to analyze the books in our library collection and help identify areas of need for future orders. Our Student Intervention and Support Staff (SISS) team takes initiative to promote equity and respect among students. They host a peer-to-peer program that matches general education students with special education students to promote inclusion and disability awareness. They also invite students to attend lunch groups that support social skills and friendship building. Additionally, once each year, our school hosts an International Night, which brings students, families, and the community together to celebrate the cultural diversity in our school.

As a school, we have implemented the Responsive Classroom curriculum framework, focusing on equity and respect. Components of the curriculum framework include Morning Meetings, Closing Circles, and logical consequences. All of these components help build a positive and safe classroom environment. Along with this curriculum, we focus on CARES (Cooperation, Assertiveness, Respect, Empathy, and Self-Control). We teach this as a whole school, in mixed-grade level groups, and in our individual classrooms. We start the school year with teachers asking students to share their hopes and dreams. These are then incorporated into a class constitution, which is inclusive of all students' ideas. These ideas are then taken by a group of students who work together to create a school constitution, which is presented and voted on by the entire student body. To start the year, teachers do many activities that provide an opportunity for students to get to know each other. This is continued throughout the year with additional activities such as Star of the Week.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

An instrumental practice, that has largely impacted our school's continued ability to successfully educate and support all students since school closures began last March, is the strong relationships we had before the pandemic and have been strengthened more throughout distance learning. The relationships among all key stakeholders, including students, staff, and the community, have been the most instrumental in successfully educating and supporting students since school closures began in March 2020.

One way in which our King staff works tirelessly to foster relationships in the classroom is through the implementation of the Responsive Classroom Framework. Ninety percent of the teachers have received official Responsive Classroom training. Because we have a primary school committee dedicated to this work, it is always a component of the twice-per-month Staff Learning time. This gives the King team the opportunity to always consider how to best support the social and emotional needs of our students. Each teacher devotes time at the onset and end of the day for class meetings, called Morning Meeting and Closing Circle. Teachers implement the Responsive Classroom Framework with fidelity. Our investment in, and commitment to the Responsive Classroom Framework and its consistent implementation is evident. In fact, its implementation is a portion of our teacher's evaluations each year.

During the past year, with school closures due to COVID-19, our strategy for building and sustaining strong relationships among our King team has been refined and strengthened. Teachers ensure students meet daily for synchronous morning meetings, closing circles, social groups, small groups, and individual meetings with their teacher. These structures have been instrumental in the school's continued success in educating and supporting students because they have provided a foundation for high-quality learning. Our team truly believes that a safe and welcoming environment with strong relationships is essential for high-quality learning to occur.

In order to adopt a school culture in which all teachers put relationships first, the staff has worked collaboratively and cohesively over the past five to seven years in order to develop a mission and vision statement in which everyone believes in. The mission and vision statement have anchored us in our collective priorities and commitment to the success of every child. Through the professional learning seminars we have attended together and our regular collaboration, we have truly prioritized forming relationships with our students in order to successfully educate and support student learning.

Through our collective work, we are confident that relationship building is the one practice that has truly transformed our students' ability to continue their learning and growth despite school closures. With safe, strong relationships, our teachers have been able to continue their essential work of educating every child through the pandemic and school closures.