

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Kristine McIntire
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Kester Avenue Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5353 Kester Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Van Nuys State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 91411-4022

County Los Angeles County

Telephone (818) 787-6751 Fax (818) 787-5480

Web site/URL https://kester elementary.org/ E-mail kmcintir@lausd.net

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* Mr. Alberto Carvalho E-mail alberto.carvalho@lausd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Los Angeles Unified School District Tel. (818) 299-5861

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 Mrs. Kelly Gonez
(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 signatures 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 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 436 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 77 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 86 High schools
 - 27 K-12 schools
- 626 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	4	2	6
K	75	71	146
1	68	51	119
2	81	63	144
3	83	78	161
4	75	70	145
5	85	64	149
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	471	399	870

*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 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 % Asian
 - 7 % Black or African American
 - 40 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 34 % White
 - 8 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 11%

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	105
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	105
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	945
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

Amharic, arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Creoles and Pidgins, Farsi, Filipino, Hebrew, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Mardarin, Mongolian, Nepali, Pashto, Portuguese, Russian, Sinhalese Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Turkish, Uzbek, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8 %
71 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 47 %

Total number students who qualify: 408

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 9 %
80 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>27</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>30</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
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	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	39
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 39:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	95%	0%	87%	94%	93%
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 2021.

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.

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

At Kester Avenue/Kester Magnet Elementary, we believe quality elementary education provides the cornerstone for college and career readiness, enabling students to achieve their own personal academic excellence. We guide them in an evolving, nurturing, and collaborative environment which promotes respect and motivates students to learn and act responsibly. Kester educates all students to be life-long learners, develops their critical thinking skills, and provides them with the solid academic foundation for advanced studies in middle school and beyond.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

<http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/3654>

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

Kester Avenue Elementary/Kester Gifted Magnet is composed of a resident school for kindergarten through fifth grade and a Gifted Magnet school for first through fifth grade students. The Magnet program was created by the LAUSD Office of Student Integration as a result of a court-ordered voluntary integration initiative for racially balanced schools. There are specific criteria for admission to the Gifted Magnet program as well as a point priority lottery system, which is managed by district personnel downtown.

There are three different pathways that a student may become eligible for our Gifted/High Ability magnet program. One criteria for admission includes a student score of Standard Exceeded range on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) of 85% or above for two consecutive years in the same subject area. Qualifying tests include English Language Arts and Mathematics. Another way to qualify for admission to a gifted/high ability magnet includes an identification as gifted by an LAUSD GATE School Psychologist. Possible categories of Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) identification include: Intellectual Ability, High Achievement, Specific Ability categories, Arts, Creative Ability, Leadership, and Visual Arts. Some of our Magnet students are identified as gifted in the Intellectual Ability category, while others are identified as Highly Gifted or Highly Gifted Applicable using the Intellectual Ability Assessment,

which is administered by the LAUSD Psychological Services Branch. Other students in our Magnet program are identified as gifted in the High Achievement category as a result of the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT-8) assessment that is administered to all 2nd grade students throughout LAUSD. We also have students who are identified as gifted in the Arts, as a result of a portfolio and audition process, that recognizes their unique abilities. A third pathway to qualify for Kester Gifted/High Ability Magnet is student verification by the current teacher. Verification is based on meeting all four of the following critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as showing the potential to work two grades above their grade level. The first criteria is depth and complexity in explaining meanings or relationships among facts, information or concepts. The second criteria is the formulation of new ideas or solutions to elaborate on the information. The third criteria is the use of alternative or unique methods in approaching new or unfamiliar mathematical problems. The fourth criteria is the demonstration of an extensive vocabulary to easily and accurately express creative ideas.

Families at Kester are savvy and well informed about the opportunities that Magnets provide for their children both in our magnet program as well as others for middle school. Our families are well informed about the five different ways that students can accrue points for the Magnet program. Twelve points are given to students that are matriculating in a school of choice, good for only the year that they are matriculating. Four to twelve points are given to students not selected and placed on a waitlist for an entire school year. Four points are given to students in a school of residency where the population is predominantly hispanic, black and non-anglo (PHBAO). Four points are given to students that attend a school of residency that is overcrowded. Three points are given to students that have a sibling already attending our school.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Kester Elementary/Kester Gifted/High Ability Magnet School, located in Sherman Oaks, California is an ethnically, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse learning community of over 860 students. Our school consists of a resident school (grades Transition Kindergarten (TK)-5th) that provides a quality public education for our neighborhood students, and a Gifted/High Ability Magnet school (grades 1-5) that provides a quality public education for students who are eligible for the program. Students come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There are over 24 languages spoken in our community with over 30 staff members who are also bilingual. There is a strong collaboration between resident school and magnet teachers to ensure high expectations for all students. We act as one cohesive school so there is no disparity or division between the schools, and to ensure that all Kester students receive a top-notch education. As a staff we regularly monitor data to see how we can best differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. We discuss, learn through error analysis, and collaborate so that we can purposefully target student needs. At Kester we take pride in emphasizing a whole-child approach to education. Our community - teachers, staff, and parents work together to support the physical, emotional, and academic well-being of our students through a variety of programs and events. We highlight the importance of learning in core academic subject areas while offering enrichment programs in art, computer science, drama, science lab, gardening, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) activities, and music. Teachers focus on mindfulness activities, social-emotional lessons, and cultivating a growth mindset to provide a well-rounded and inclusive education. Each week we focus on one pillar of character that is driven by the philosophy of fairness, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, citizenship, and caring. These pillars of character are reinforced daily by staff as they recognize students who demonstrate these traits without prompting. Our students receive written acknowledgment for making excellent behavior choices. They value this acknowledgment as it promotes a positive, supportive environment for all.

Our Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Kester Avenue Magnet Parent Association (KAMPA), a booster club, and Kester Krew, (a group of families that fix and beautify the campus) make up our three dynamic volunteer groups. They are integral to cultivating community involvement by promoting volunteer activities to support students on campus, as well as various fundraising activities such as “jog-a-thon,” restaurant nights, Bingo night, Spring Fling dance party, school beautification days, and the book fair. These efforts help to provide special learning opportunities for our students, including the Computerwise Kids computer program, science lab, computer lab, mindfulness classes, art teacher, gardening “ranger,” purchase of Promethean boards, Chromebooks, and a full-time music teacher. School beautification days provide an opportunity for families to come together to clean up the school and fill several planter boxes around campus with flowers and other plants. We are fortunate to have strong community support to help create a true learning environment.

The quality of education provided at Kester is exceptional. Kester was first recognized as a California Distinguished School in 2008, 2014, and then again in 2020. Our teachers are dedicated professionals who are continually committed to improving their practice through professional development and training. Our teachers take their pursuit of pedagogical excellence off campus, through observations at other schools, and additional professional development opportunities. They bring back their learning to share with their colleagues. We have a core group of teachers who are National Board certified, as well as teachers who are former literacy coaches and math coaches and many others who have earned advanced degrees and credentials. We have received extensive professional development in programs that truly guide our instruction - including the “Write from the Beginning” writing program, Thinking Maps, foundational literacy training in Orton-Gillingham, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling, Heggerty phonemic awareness, Sandra Kaplan “Depth and Complexity” training, Next Generation Science Standards and Full Optin Science System (FOSS) curriculum, as well as the UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles) math initiative in Cognitively Guided Instruction. These programs all have a direct impact on student learning and achievement.

Our school leadership team works together collaboratively to support students, staff, and parents. We value open, transparent communication with all stakeholders to promote a cohesive, close knit school community. This year has been challenging with all the changing COVID safety protocols. Our leadership team has done

an excellent job of keeping up with information and communicating clearly to staff and parents through many modes - including phone calls home, texts, emails, school website, social media, school site committees, and “Coffee with the Principal” Zoom meetings. Staff and parents feel confident in reaching out to the leadership team for information, clarification, and support and feel comfortable in sharing ideas for school enhancement. We have a welcoming and caring administrative team. Our team is part of a larger community of staff and parents that supports our students. Our community is affectionately and proudly known as the “Kester Rainbow,” diverse, beautiful, and strong.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

At Kester, staff feel that the key to encouraging all students to reach their full academic potential is teacher collaboration and training. Our teachers meet regularly to discuss strategies, data, and outcomes in order to share best practices and identify challenges. Through this process, student needs have been identified and programs adopted to provide targeted instruction to meet those needs. For example, years ago Kester introduced “Write from the Beginning,” a program designed to progressively teach students writing skills, to ensure that students could effectively meet grade-level objectives in writing. Four years ago, Kester adopted “Cognitively Guided Instruction” (CGI) in math to help students better grasp Common Core math standards and develop a deeper understanding of number sense as well as problem-solving skills. A group of our Kester teachers support and train other teachers in the District under the CGI initiative. In addition, a cadre of teachers at Kester have volunteered to participate in advanced training in building fact fluency as well as foundational literacy skills this year with the Orton-Gillingham and Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) approach. They are sharing what they have learned through grade-level meetings, banked time meetings, and demonstration lessons to help teachers grow in their professional skills. Teachers attend training in other subject areas as well as initiatives. Many teachers completed the Future-Ready technology training during the pandemic to improve and enhance their technology skills. Teachers of gifted students have attended 16 hours of gifted and talented education training, with a focus on “Depth and Complexity.” Recently, a group of teachers attended Full Option Science System (FOSS) training offered through the district. They are sharing best practices with other teachers at our school. The philosophy of teacher leadership, reviewing data, constant learning, building capacity, and implementation of research-based programs is the foundation for student success at Kester.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our common core English Language Arts program at Kester Elementary/Gifted Magnet builds upon the goal of strong, foundational reading skills in the primary grades. We have lead teachers who are extensively trained in the Orton-Gillingham approach and Heggerty phonemic awareness strategies. In addition, they utilize assessment data such as the Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to group students for differentiated instruction in daily 45-minute “academies.” These research-based programs and assessments were implemented at our school with the goal of strengthening the fundamentals of phonological awareness to ensure reading success. Another strategy to support students is our after-school and Saturday school intervention classes. Students in Kester's after school and Saturday classes are chosen using data. Our intervention coordinator carefully reviews the data to pinpoint areas of need for struggling students. The classes are small groups, so students get more directed, individualized instruction. Students either receive instruction in Language Arts, Math, or English Language development, based on their areas of need. Students benefit from enrichment opportunities to explore core-literature in depth. Benchmark Advance Reading Program is our main reading program as well as our designated English language development program, used to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. This program is aligned with Common Core standards in English Language Arts and includes fiction as well as non-fiction passages. The English Language development program in Benchmark Advance compliments the reading program, providing scaffolding, vocabulary, speaking, writing, and comprehension to support achievement for our English learners. There are also enrichment resources as part of Benchmark for our gifted students. In addition, students are guided through the writing process with the “Write from the Beginning” program which incorporates the use of “Thinking Maps,” highlighting effective techniques and strategies to develop writing skills. Thinking maps has built-in scaffolding techniques which help our English learners and students in special education, as well. Many of our teachers have attended the Sandra Kaplan “Depth and Complexity” training. Teachers introduce “Depth and Complexity” icons to students to give students tools to go deeper to analyze content and ideas. These tools benefit all students and can be

used in any subject area. Teachers have a variety of assessments at their fingertips, including DIBELS benchmark assessments three times a year with progress monitoring, PAST, Benchmark assessments, writing assessments with rubrics, and anecdotal observation. DIBELS and PAST assessments help teachers group students for differentiated instruction and academics. Third through fifth grade teachers give interim assessments at least two times a year to prepare students for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium testing (SBAC) in the Spring. Data from the assessments is used to provide differentiated instruction and intervention for students as well as enrichment activities. We have a wide range of resources to meet the needs of all students in reading and English language arts. Teachers continually review data, organize groups for targeted interventions as well as enrichments, and attend training to deepen their instructional practices. Programs and assessments are thoughtfully chosen to benefit all student populations.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Kester's mathematics program is focused on the common core standards content and math practices, guided by the UCLA math project "Cognitively Guided Instruction." Our school has been a CGI school for the last three years. Each year we participate in training to enhance our skills. This year we have participated in several staff development sessions to review best practices of CGI. Teachers go back to their classrooms to collect student data from number sense and problem-solving activities. They bring student work to our sessions. We discuss best practices and challenges in math as teachers reflect on their practice to improve student outcomes. Many of our teachers have received extensive training in CGI and provide professional development at our school and other schools, as well as provide mentoring through drop-in sessions and class demonstrations. The guiding principles of CGI are at the core of our math instruction. These principles include an assets-based approach that defines students as coming to class knowing some math, capable of extending and sharing their ideas, and valued as participants during math. Teachers support students as mathematicians by observing the path of student thinking to help develop ideas and concepts, creating a space that encourages and accepts all ideas as well as active participation, and creating routines to develop a strong number sense. These routines include problem-solving, number sense, and reasoning routines, and counting collections. Our common core standards-based, state-adopted program, Illustrative Math, compliments the CGI strategies and routines. Students make sense of problems by using their prior understanding of math and the world around them. Their experiences and insights are valued and recognized. Teacher mindset is that the students are capable of learning grade-level math and that students "learn by doing." Teachers focus on content and development of mathematical practices to support our mathematicians. Students are encouraged to share ideas, extend thinking, and have a more solid knowledge and ability to apply mathematical concepts through depth of learning. Problem-solving centers around real-world problems and multiple strategies are encouraged. Manipulatives are integrated into the math curriculum to enhance understanding and help students make meaning of math. Students are engaged in the math process because their ideas are valued. Students take center stage as the teacher guides learning and encourages active listening while creating a safe, supportive environment where student math identities grow and solidify in confidence. DreamBox math is another resource for our teachers. It is a digital math program for our kindergarten through fifth grade students. It is used as an additional intervention and enrichment activity. It incorporates an initial assessment to place students at their level for intervention activities. It is a fun, engaging online program that provides adaptive technology and engagement for students in our after-school and Saturday intervention programs. Math assessments include anecdotal records that help guide instruction, Edulastic assessments, interim assessment blocks in math for third through fifth grade students, informal observations, and formal publisher assessments. Data from assessments is used to guide instruction, offer intervention and enrichment activities to promote student achievement.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Kester Elementary/Gifted Magnet has a science curriculum that is in alignment with the Next Generation Science Standards. We are fortunate to have a science lab instructor that utilizes hands-on activities that focus on the three paths of learning in science. These include core ideas, science and engineering practices, and cross-cutting concepts that can be applied in all areas of science. Our science lab offers students inquiry-based lessons that highlight real-world problems, hands-on activities, and integration of the scientific process. For example, first grade students explore caterpillars in the Spring in tandem with a unit on life

cycles. Students observe and record firsthand observations of the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly. Recently, our science lab instructor set up an experiment outdoors with 5th grade students that demonstrated the effects of different colored containers filled with water on solar energy retention and water temperature. Students made predictions, observed, and recorded data to reveal information to support or refute their hypotheses and solidify their dynamic learning. Our curriculum is centered on the Full Option Science System (FOSS) Next Generation science kits, state-adopted FOSS science textbooks and motivating hands-on activities through Mystery Science. Teachers enrich the curriculum through field trips to places such as the Marine Museum, Astrocamp, Griffith Park Observatory, and the Sepulveda Basin nature reserve. Our teachers construct engineering challenges such as tower construction and marble runs in class to promote problem-solving skills in support of engineering practices in science. These hands-on activities are engaging. In the past, we have sponsored science fairs for all students. These fairs encouraged students to follow the scientific method, conduct experiments, present and display their findings. Teachers conduct formal and informal assessments during science lessons through observations, notes, conversations with students, and formal publisher unit assessments. Assessment data is used to guide instruction as well as prepare fifth grade students for the California Science Test (CAST).

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Teachers thoughtfully engage students in activities and projects that create meaningful learning experiences. Our primary social studies textbook is Impact California Social Studies by McGraw-Hill. Teachers go above and beyond the textbook to make learning exciting and relevant to student's lives while covering the common core social studies standards. First grade Magnet students apply the "depth and complexity" icons to their study of change over time, technology, and community helpers. For example, students are asked to consider multiple perspectives when thinking about the future use of robots. Students consider how employees, a business owner, the community, or a first grader would feel about a robot. During a unit on community helpers, a father who works in an emergency room (ER) "Zoomed" with the class and shared about his job and answered questions. Second grade teachers combine letter writing with a geography unit as they have students send their "Flat Stanley" all over the world. A field trip to the post office gives students a real-world, hands-on experience. In the past, they have held "heritage feasts" that tie in with a unit about ancestors. Third grade students create maps of the different geographical features in California. The mission project for fourth grade students allows creativity. Students may choose to visit a mission and create a narrated travel video that talks about mission life or provide a multi-dimensional model of a mission with a class presentation. An example of a fifth grade project is the Native American albums. Students study a particular tribe that was in North America before the time of Columbus. They create an album detailing the daily life, resources, area where they lived, and other details of that tribe. Student assessments include informal observations, grades on projects based on criteria and rubrics, and formal publisher assessments. These assessments help guide learning and enrichment activities to promote student understanding.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Kester Elementary/Gifted Magnet students participate in the LAUSD District arts program. Theater, music, dance, and visual arts teachers provide engaging, standards-based lessons for our students. Students participate in hands-on activities through acting, creating works of art in different mediums, studying styles of art, dancing, and singing with instruments. For example, during one session our visual arts teacher taught a lesson on Gustav Klimt and his gold filigree signature art. Students completed a "tree of life" art project in the style of Gustav Klimt utilizing gold paint and jewel accents. Our District arts teachers use an interdisciplinary approach to engage students. Music, theater, dance, and visual arts integrate language arts, social studies, writing, and communication skills. Students are given journal prompts to reinforce their

learning in the arts. Teachers take what they learn and reinforce the concepts and skills in class. Students have a wide exposure to the arts and an opportunity to develop their interests as they move on to middle school. This program is especially important for our students who might not be strong academically but show interest and strength in the arts. It gives them an area in which they are successful and feel confident.

We are fortunate to have a physical education teacher provided by a three-year grant through LAUSD's physical education department. He is at our school one day a week to work with one teacher from each grade level - first through fifth grades to create teacher leaders in physical education. Kester's dedicated and hardworking PTA and KAMPA booster club sponsor fundraisers throughout the year in order to give our school the opportunity to provide several enrichment programs while building our Kester community. These enrichment programs include a full-time drama teacher that works with students to perform a full-length musical production during the year. These amazing professional productions are special experiences for our students that positively impact their lives forever! The PTA also fundraises to provide a full-time program in our computer lab through Computerwise Kids. Students learn 21st century skills while receiving lessons geared towards each grade level's needs and abilities. The Computerwise instructor has created a website to host projects completed by each grade level throughout the year to review and enjoy. Our PTA also provides our full-time science lab instructor who works with all classes to provide engaging, hands-on lessons based on the Next Generation Science Standards. The Kester school garden is maintained by the "garden ranger" who guides students through science lessons revolving around the garden and the environment. The garden was created by "Enrich L.A.," a non-profit organization that seeks to provide gardens for schools in Los Angeles. Students are excited to see the variety of fruits and vegetables that grow in the garden, as they learn about nutrition and important life science concepts. Kester's PTA also provides our resident school with a full time arts teacher for all grades. Kindergarten students, for example, learn all about famous artists, study, and practice various styles of art media such as torn-paper collage, oil pastels, and water-tempera paint.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

There are multiple layers of academic support for students performing below grade level, or in jeopardy of not meeting their grade level standards. Teachers provide daily small-group, targeted intervention in their classrooms and during "academy" time (30-45-minutes daily), where students are grouped at grade-level according to need after data review. Teachers in the primary grades are being trained on the Science of Reading and incorporating research-based instructional strategies and activities to support our most vulnerable readers. We utilize district and school-purchased adaptive computer programs such as Amplify reading, Dreambox, and Lexia for home and school support. These programs provide an initial student assessment that places them in a level based on their needs. Our intervention coordinator creates engaging lessons and organizes blocks of intervention for our students by progress monitoring and looking at data to find targeted needs. Students have the opportunity to attend after-school or Saturday school intervention classes in language arts or math at least once a year for a total of 20 hours. This year our school has purchased a non-register carrying intervention teacher to work with small groups of primary students to support the development of their foundational reading skills during school hours. In addition to all of the above mentioned support systems in place, teachers can refer students to the Student Support and Progress Team, headed by the assistant principal. This team of general and special education teachers, and administration meets with the classroom teacher and parents/guardians of the student to discuss student strengths, weaknesses, areas of concern, results of interventions already in place, and next steps. The team monitors student progress and schedules follow-up meetings to re-evaluate in six week cycles. If it is determined that the student is not making progress after multiple interventions and supports have been in place, the child may be referred for special education testing to determine if they qualify for additional assistance.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Our Magnet coordinator ensures that teachers of gifted and high-achieving students attend at least 16 hours of gifted and talented conferences and training to learn effective, research-based strategies that challenge and motivate students performing above grade level. Teachers of gifted learners in the residential school, as

well as the magnet school, integrate Sandra Kaplan’s icons of “depth and complexity” in their daily instruction so that their students are provided with strategies to move students to a deeper level of thinking and learning in all subject areas. For example, instead of asking students to compare two characters in a book, a teacher may approach the conversation by inviting students to investigate how multiple perspectives contribute to the characters’ actions and traits to encourage deeper analysis and understanding. In Social Studies, teachers of upper elementary learners might engage students in conversations that require them to analyze how power, as a universal theme, impacts the rules or ethics of our society within any given historical context. Students learn the icons and how to implement the thought processes represented by the icons independently. Teachers of gifted or high achieving learners also support higher skill levels by including core literature units that are integrated across subject areas. Each year our goal is to purchase high interest units that lend themselves to creative activities to challenge students and provide opportunities to utilize the icons of “depth and complexity.” Math instruction at Kester is an active, “noisy” time of day as students follow their mathematical intuitions to discuss solution strategies, to identify similarities and differences, and to debate the effectiveness of varying strategies. Students in our math classrooms view math as a subject area that supports creative thinking, as opposed to procedural learning. All of these efforts allow our gifted and high achieving learners to extend their learning and work to their full potential.

3c. Special education:

We are fortunate to have a full-time special education assistant principal at our school this year. She is actively involved in monitoring all aspects of our special education program. She works with the assistant principal to provide insight and to assist at the Student Support and Progress Team meetings when we have students with significant issues. These meetings provide support for students before they are possibly referred for testing. She works with support staff that assist students, the resource teachers, families, and students. She calendars initial, annual, and triennial Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings throughout the school year. Interpreters are provided for non-English speaking families. She coordinates with the school psychologist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, and DIS providers on campus to make sure students receive the services they require. All staff strive to create caring, empathetic relationships with students with disabilities. Students feel comfortable asking for assistance or encouragement. The special education assistant principal is also accessible to parents who have questions or concerns about IEPs or services at our school. Our resource program specialists support our special education students with pull-out and push-in programs. They work with small groups of students to help them reach their IEP goals. The resource teachers collaborate with classroom teachers on strategies to help students with disabilities be successful in the general education setting. Kester is unique in that all of our students with special needs are fully included in our classrooms. These students are on the classroom teacher’s roster and, except for pull out services, receive all their instruction in the classroom with their grade level peers. This not only allows the students with disabilities to learn in the least restrictive environment but also gives our typical students the opportunity to make friends with and support our students with special needs. Kester’s students are especially caring, understanding, and accepting because of this unique situation.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

Teachers who have English learners in their classes receive regular training and support from our English Learner coordinator and local district training in designated and integrated English language development. These trainings are based on the latest research in English language development including vocabulary development, productive conversations, academic language, comprehension strategies and scaffolding to support all levels of language production. Teachers utilize resources provided by publishers in all academic areas to specifically support English learners. These resources help teachers scaffold the learning according to student language level - emerging, expanding or bridging. Teachers regularly review the requirements for reclassification to English proficiency, and resources to help students prepare for the annual English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC). Teachers receive training in the format of the ELPAC assessment and strategies to support English learner standards in tandem with English language arts standards. We provide scaffolding of concepts and vocabulary, and small group intervention for students to improve their English language development skills in all areas. Our English Learner coordinator regularly goes over student data with teachers so they can provide targeted instruction to focus on the goal of

reclassification before middle school. Teachers review English learner monitoring rosters to provide targeted intervention for students according to their reclassification goals. Parents and students are involved in this process through the Individual Reclassification plan, where students make goals for themselves and identify people who can help them. The plan is signed by the teacher, student, and parent. We have a group of students who are newcomers to our country. We provide access to online lessons for newcomers through the district purchased program, Rosetta Stone. They build solid everyday conversational skills through structured immersion activities as well as basic vocabulary practice to begin to access the English language. Our goal is to provide resources and support to English learners at all levels to ensure academic growth.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:

We do not have a large population of migrant or homeless students. However, we do have a social worker dedicated to our migrant and foster youth population. She comes to our school for three hours each week to provide support. She engages in outreach to families to make sure they have what they need and offers resources as well. She checks in with students at our school regularly. For example, she was able to set up a tutoring program for one student at our school during after-school hours, twice a week for academic support. She brought a backpack and new shoes for another student in need. She visits classrooms to observe the students under her supervision to make sure that they are adjusted and thriving. She also keeps in contact with classroom teachers to check in on the students as well as offer support if needed.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The engagement of students is achieved through strong communication, behavior incentives, fun activities and dynamic curriculum. Teachers use electronic communication pathway's such as phone calls, in-person conversation, email and the "Remind" app to keep parents and guardians informed and supportive of their child's engagement at school. Many teachers outreach to families through room parents, as well as social sites such as Shutterfly to post information and pictures. Kester also has instituted practices such as school tours, orientations, and welcome events to support a culture of inclusion and engagement. Students have a variety of behavior incentives at school. Each week, we highlight a character trait from the six pillars of character during our Monday morning Kester Cougar Kid's News (KCKN), recorded by our 5th grade students. When staff members see students demonstrating the trait, the student receives "Cougar Cash" that they turn into the office as part of a Friday raffle for prizes. It is highly motivating and students enjoy the rewards. We also give out "Golden Tickets" when we see an entire classroom with good behavior. These tickets are redeemed after 15 have been collected for a whole class reward, such as special play time on the yard or board games in the library. Special events help students with school spirit. These special events include restaurant nights, Bingo night, Spring Fling, Literacy week, and spirit days. For example, 2/22/22 was "McTwosday." Students were encouraged to dress up as twins, dynamic duos, or wear "tutus" to celebrate the day, then headed over to McDonalds for a restaurant night. Other motivating, community-building events for entire families through the years include Family School Beautification days, dances, concerts put on by Kester students, and plays. Teachers play an integral role in the engagement of students, as well. Teachers go "above and beyond" to provide enriching class activities, discussions, and projects. They have integrated technology into the curriculum to create engaging lessons with the Promethean board, student videos, Kahoot! Quizzes, Seesaw student journals, and hands-on activities. The variety of enrichment activities keep students involved in their learning. These include computer lab and science lab lessons, art, music, dance, theater, mindfulness lessons, library, garden, and physical education. After-school programs are available to provide enrichment. As part of our PTA's fundraising efforts, teachers provide a special opportunity for our students called "Time with Teacher" where students spend time with teachers outside of instructional time to get to know one-another in activities such as movie nights and ice cream socials. This is a highlight of the year for both students and teachers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

There are many ways that families and the community are encouraged to participate at school to support student achievement and social-emotional well-being. We have a strong PTA that promotes attendance at meetings, membership, and active participation. The PTA organizes many fundraising events to support our special enrichment programs at Kester. These events draw a huge number of parents and are a great way for families to socialize while raising money for our school. We have been limited as to in-person events as a result of the pandemic. However, our fabulous PTA has creatively presented virtual Bingo nights, a magic night, various restaurant nights, and an upcoming Spring Fling dance party on campus due to new guidelines. Our PTA introduced an overwhelmingly successful virtual jog-a-thon for the first time this year to support our special programs. Our students were physically engaged and were thrilled to receive lots of prizes for their efforts.

Our volunteer program has been a great way for parents to support our school during these COVID times. They have been helping before school to manage student check-ins, during lunch time on campus, taking food carts to the gates at dismissal, and recently helping out at our Spring scholastic book fair. Our PTA has also helped families in need with gift baskets and presents during the holidays. The Kester Krew, another parent group, organized a School Beautification day this year. Families got together on a Saturday to provide campus clean-up and maintenance activities. Our KAMPA booster club is a group of Magnet parents that raise funds for the Magnet. For example, they are purchasing some Chromebooks to support technology. We have a Parent Center director that offers outreach to parents to help them complete applications and sign up for programs. She also provides valuable parent training on a variety of topics. We survey parents each year to see what workshops parents would like to attend. One of her recent and well-

received meeting with parents highlighted the importance of kindness in our lives. Parents participate in our English Learner Advisory Council and our School Site Council. These councils provide a way for parents to have a voice and participate in decisions that affect our school. We offer additional resources to assist at-risk students, such as counseling services like Pennylane and Bridges that work with students and their families. There are a variety of ways that we engage families and the community to provide support, volunteer opportunities, socialization and fundraising to ensure we are able to continue the wonderful enrichment programs here at Kester each year and to strengthen our community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Kester teachers and administration have a strong support and leadership system, with a continuous goal of self and school improvement. Professional development is based on teacher and student needs each year in addition to the training the district requires. During the challenging time of distance learning there was a recognized need to learn about how to integrate educational technology into the curriculum while keeping students engaged online. Many teachers attended the Future-Ready certification program to hone their skills as teachers in an online environment. This program provided support for teachers preparing to navigate learning management systems, educational websites, apps and digital citizenship resources. In addition, our teachers attended a valuable Doug Fisher seminar on student engagement strategies for online and hybrid learning. During staff meetings some of our own teachers and administrators have shared their area of expertise in technology. We have provided teachers the opportunity to choose the training that fits their needs. This year we are focusing on research-based strategies to support student achievement in math and reading. We need to address the gaps in learning created by the pandemic and limiting nature of online instruction. We have a core group of teachers along with our assistant principal who are attending a “Building Fact Fluency” training in math based on CGI principles. In an effort to purposefully build capacity within our staff, another group of instructional leaders, along with the principal, is attending foundational reading skills training this year in the Science of Reading. These teachers share what they have learned during staff development, grade level meetings, and on their own time at the request of other teachers at our school. One of the follow-up support structures includes the opportunity for teachers to observe other teachers or get clarification on any concepts. Recently we had an opportunity to provide support for teachers dealing with emotional trauma in the classroom. Our local district behavior team presented “Preventing the cycle of acting out” to provide strategies to address social issues that affect students and learning. We plan on reviewing professional development in restorative justice practices and introducing restorative justice circles in some of our classrooms to promote self-expression and positive conflict resolution. The pandemic has created a gap in social skills among our students. Our Kester Instructional Leadership Team (KILT) meets monthly. Representatives from each grade level provide input from teachers to administration to calendar our professional development topics each year. Teacher collaboration and professional development based on academic and social need is key for students to reach their full potential.

4. School Leadership:

Our school leadership team values open communication, a welcoming environment, and strong parent partnerships to create a positive community. Our principal is a visible, accessible, welcoming contributor to all the daily activities of the school. Students and staff members alike see her as a true example of leadership. Parents and teachers feel that their concerns are heard because she relays information to the staff and parents through the many modes of communication - “Coffee with the Principal,” committee meetings, faculty meetings, emails, robocalls, and PTA involvement. Her open-door policy demonstrates her efforts in going above and beyond for our school community. She participates alongside teachers and parents in many of the PTA’s fundraising experiences, and can be seen co-teaching in classrooms. The leadership team, including the principal, assistant principals, and coordinator instill a sense of support, calm, and security, even during trying times this year. We have worked hard to keep in touch with all stakeholders and address any concerns or misunderstandings in a timely manner. The school creates multilingual channels of communication to reach our families. Weekly messages from the principal come via phone and email to remind parents of upcoming events, holidays, COVID testing dates, and other timely issues. The teachers use apps (primarily Remind or Class Dojo) to help the families connect with not only the teacher but also the other families, and are responsive to texts over those apps. Our PTA is a valued partner as part of the

leadership team. The PTA organizes fundraisers to support many enrichment programs at our school. The PTA meetings are readily accessible on Zoom, and the PTA's regular updates come via email in bi-monthly newsletters, or through other social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or on our school's website, and through its "room parent" program. This helps keep everyone on the same page for things like standardized testing, classroom get-togethers, fundraising deadlines, masking requirements, school picture days, and more. Our PTA bought all the classrooms air filters at the beginning of the year. The PTA has made the most of this year's circumstances to support the Kester community. Their ability to communicate school initiatives, fundraisers, and programs has helped parents feel like they are a vital part of our Kester community. The positive practices of school leadership create a strong school community through partnerships with parents, open communication, kindness, and a commitment to the "whole child" with a goal of well-rounded students who realize academic progress. We see students as respectful, caring, and responsible global citizens.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Culturally responsive teaching and learning at Kester is evident in curriculum, professional development, multicultural book acquisitions, role models, and an encouragement of acceptance as well as friendship among diverse students. This year, we applied for the Black Student Achievement Grant to provide new classroom sets and library books to highlight achievements and stories of African American people in history. Another element of the grant includes assemblies to invite role models to highlight real-life stories of positive achievement of African Americans. We are in the process of receiving hundreds of updated multicultural books for our school library to educate and inspire our students to learn about other cultures. These books will help our African-American students know that their culture is valued. Classroom teachers include presentations on different cultures and holidays as part of their curriculum. Teachers are proactive in teaching about diversity by sharing books, history, and lessons. Students have been learning about different holiday traditions. One parent gave a Zoom presentation about the Lunar New Year in February and another parent presented to a class about Hanukkah in December. Students engage in discussion around topics such as civil rights and understanding different cultures and points of view. Students make presentations on famous African Americans as part of Black History month. Kester teachers seek ways for students to use their cultural background in the classroom. During pre-COVID time, we celebrated our diversity and the arts with our annual World Music and Arts festival which showcased student musical performances and artwork. Staff are participating in a special training titled "Phase 3 of Our Antiracist Journey in LA Unified." The goals of this training are to examine implicit bias, microaggressions, and understand the impact that implicit bias and microaggressions have on our students and adults in schools and offices. Reflections and discussions are a part of this training as we strive to improve our relationships with all stakeholders and create a more positive school community. Kester has a naturally diverse population. Students are taught to value and respect differences and appreciate the experiences of other students. Although 47% students come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, our school community is grounded in respect for our diversity and ensures that no child is elevated or diminished. Students are provided with scholarships to participate in extracurricular activities, and they receive food baskets and presents during the holidays according to need. Every child is cared for and supported at Kester. The grades and test scores are a reflection of this support. The diversity of our school provides wonderful opportunities for students to make friends with other students from completely different cultural backgrounds to enrich their lives.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Kester Elementary/Kester Magnet's most dynamic strategy for success is the value of supportive school and parent partnerships to champion the academic and social-emotional growth of each student. Kester Elementary/Kester Magnet students have the opportunity to experience a variety of intervention and enrichment programs that help reach all students to motivate, inspire and keep them engaged. Our parents support this effort through PTA and KAMPA. The fundraising efforts of parents and staff help provide the programs that make Kester special. These programs motivate students to come to school and inspire them to dream about the future. In addition, programs such as mindfulness sessions help students with strategies to deal with emotions in a positive way. Parents are so grateful for the rich and varied experiences that Kester has to offer in an atmosphere that fosters acceptance and inclusivity. There is something for every type of student - the artist, performer, scientist, gardener, technology enthusiast, to name a few. In this way, Kester develops and nurtures the whole child. Our many volunteers add to the safety of our school. Students prosper in an environment with adults that care about them and create a support system. Our KesterKrew family volunteers (formerly KesterPops) have fun together and make memories during Saturday school beautification days. Students return to school on Monday and see an environment that has been cared for and nurtured by their own hands and the hands of their family. This gives them a sense of pride and feeling of community. Another example of our supportive community is our kindergarten lunch program. Parent and community volunteers sustain our kinder lunch program, which allows our youngest students to eat lunch in a special area to alleviate congestion in our outdoor cafeteria. In addition, during these Covid times, volunteers help during student arrival and check-in, as well as food cart delivery to gates at the end of the day. The cooperation and dedication of our volunteers is evident in the ongoing commitment to keep the opportunities going strong. Perhaps more importantly, when our students see their parents engaged, it helps impress upon them the importance of their own education and the power of partnerships. Elementary school provides the foundation and mindset for a lifetime of learning, so the experience our students have at Kester will influence their educational career and life endeavors. Several staff members have children that attend Kester. Our staff participate in fundraising and volunteer activities as well. This creates an even stronger bond to our Kester community. We are committed to partnering with parents to make the elementary school experience a positive and fulfilling one.