

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 307 Kashevaroff Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Sitka State AK Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 99835-7063

County Alaska

Telephone (907) 747-8395 Fax (907) 966-1240

Web site/URL <https://kgh.sitkaschools.org/en-US> E-mail barrym@sitkaschools.org

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. Steve Bradshaw E-mail bradshaws@sitkaschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Sitka School District Tel. (907) 747-8622

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. Todd Gebler
(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 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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 (2022-2023) 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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
2 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 5 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, 2022 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 Students
PreK	0
K	0
1	0
2	60
3	66
4	71
5	77
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	274

*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): 21 % American Indian or Alaska Native
6.6 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
8.8 % Hispanic or Latino
1.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
48.5 % White
14 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 8%

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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	274
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 41 %

Total number students who qualify: 111

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 16 %
Total number of students served 44

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>3</u> Developmental Delay	<u>23</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 2 %
Total number of students served: 5

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 13

11. 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.	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

12. 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 17:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	91%	94%	95%	94%	93%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. 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.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School celebrates student learning and personal growth. We inspire children to discover their full potential by providing a nurturing and engaging community.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.boardpolicyonline.com/?b=sitka&s=1171668>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Nestled on the outer coast of Baranof Island, Sitka, Alaska can only be reached by boat or airplane. The nearly 9,000 citizens of Sitka are proudly self-reliant, like most Alaskans. Whatever we can't get here, we make ourselves, which is why this small town on the edge of the North Pacific has a ballet studio, a world-class performing arts center, the Sitka Fine Arts Camp, the Sitka Sound Science Center, innumerable faith denominations, and six high-achieving public schools. One of these schools, Keet Gooshi Heen (KGH), is "a celebration of learning that inspires children to discover their full potential by providing a nurturing and challenging community," according to the school's mission statement. And it's the little school that could: if it can be done in education, it is either already happening at KGH, or soon will.

In a school where over 40% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch support, leveraging the community is key to student success. KGH partners with behavioral health agencies, education organizations like the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association and the Sitka Sound Science Center, fraternal organizations like the Elks, tribal entities like the Gajaa Heen Dancers and Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and arts organizations like Alaska Arts Southeast and the Alaska State Council on the Arts to provide a well-rounded curriculum that supports the academic, cultural, social and emotional needs of our students. KGH has 278 students, a third of whom are Alaska Native, and just under 9% of whom are English Language Learners. Embedded in a nurturing community, KGH students are growing on average in the 60-70th percentile, according to the nationally normed Measures of Academic Progress Growth assessment.

Keet Gooshi Heen provides developmentally appropriate school social work interventions with a full-time school social worker that include one on one and small group counseling, parenting support, teacher support, classroom social-emotional skill lessons, attendance interventions, and collateral work with local children's mental health agencies. Our school addresses students' basic needs with a daily free breakfast program and a free fresh produce snack program provided to all students. We offer a clothing closet for students in need with an emphasis on providing outdoor clothing so that students can fully access outdoor play during recess. Our school celebrates the diverse cultures of our students with a multi-level approach including the celebration of holidays, posting of the language of our place of the Lingít people throughout the school, posting American Sign Language throughout the school, specific art, and science study units on the cultures of our community, and history.

Each student is provided with twice a week music, PE, and library classes. Keet Gooshi Heen invests in exposing our students to the arts to broaden their critical thinking, cooperative learning, and school attachment skills. In addition to weekly high-quality music classes and annual grade-level singing concerts, our fifth graders participate in a full instrumental band program. Every year, our students are given the opportunity to work for two weeks with a visiting Artist in Residence. Our students are provided with multiple field trips to our performing arts center to watch professional musicians, dancers, and children's theater productions.

Keet Gooshi Heen staff offer students positive behavioral support on the playground. Our staff offers students high-quality recess interventions through intentional positive behavior interventions and is developmentally focused. Our staff wrote several grants to supplement our recess programming that now provides students with excellent recess equipment with balls, frisbees, and jump ropes as well as recess tables for making art. A team of fifth graders are trained as Playground Peacemakers who offer recess support to our second-grade students. We've found that the Peacemakers program has increased the joyful and peaceful play on our playground and provided our fifth-grade students with skill development opportunities.

Our school culture's promotion of positive behavior supports inclusiveness, and healthy social-emotional skills are reinforced by every classroom's participation in the Second Step SEL program. Teachers offer weekly lessons to students and school-wide SEL messages are promoted weekly. Staff reinforces student kindness behaviors through our Kind Keet Kids program that rewards students for kind behaviors.

The community, educators, and school leadership at KGH celebrate learning, and we celebrate our children.

Providing programs such as a dedicated science room, reading intervention, and specialists for the library, physical education, and music, KGH is a showcase for what is possible in public schools when we educate the whole child. Guided by evidence-based professional learning, staff at KGH work alongside community partners and dedicated families to ensure our students' continuing growth and success; KGH is a nurturing and challenging community that inspires each student to learn and grow while providing culturally responsible and trauma-informed teaching practices.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

In ELA, the Common Core State Standards at Keet Gooshi Heen are addressed using the National Geographic Reach for Reading Curriculum in Kindergarten through 5th grade. When a variety of programs were piloted, Reach for Reading rose to the top largely due to the alignment between grade levels as well as the quality and scope of the materials provided. At each grade level, this core curriculum includes phonological awareness, phonics and grammar instruction, language and vocabulary development, as well as a variety of resources to develop fluency and comprehension with a focus on the areas of science and social studies. The science and social studies content enhances our ability to develop background knowledge with appropriate vocabulary across curricular areas. We are currently beginning a curriculum review to determine if this is still the best curriculum to use to meet the goals of aligning our instructional approach with the Science of Reading.

Teachers use a variety of instructional approaches to meet the needs of the diverse students that are in our classrooms. Lessons are taught in a whole group format, with flexible small groupings used to address the specific learning goals of students who are below grade level expectations as well as those who are operating at grade level or above. The flexible nature of these small groups allows students to work with a diverse set of peers, which enhances social and academic connections across content areas and throughout the school day.

Our curriculum provides weekly fluency, vocabulary, and grammar assessments which enable a student to show the specific skills they have mastered that week and allow the teacher to determine the effectiveness of their instruction as well as which areas need to be addressed further. Our school also uses NWEA MAP Reading Fluency as an independent assessment tool to determine the accuracy, fluency, and comprehension growth of our students over time. In addition, our students have the opportunity to take NWEA MAP Growth assessments every Fall, Winter, and Spring.

Assessment data from these sources is combined with teacher observations and student work samples to identify any students who may need a further level of support. For these students, grade-level teams meet (and may include the previous year's teacher or specialists) and problem-solve the likely causes for the lack of expected growth in specific areas, and a plan is made and implemented at the classroom level (Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels of support). If, after an appropriate time and data supports the opportunity to learn has not yielded results, then the teacher will make a referral to our building team for a more in-depth look at possible causes and resources needed (Tier 3) for the student to take on new learning.

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

Our math program covers each of the domains that make up the common core standards. To help students work toward mastery in each of the domains, our school utilizes the Pearson enVision Math curriculum resources. One of the strengths of these curricular materials is the focus on real-world problem-solving skills. The enVision's math materials highlight the use of mathematical practices, such as perseverance, using appropriate tools, and logical reasoning, and help students learn how to explain their thinking as they solve math problems.

Each lesson begins with a Problem-Based Interactive Learning scenario. Students are given a problem, sometimes with appropriate tools to help them, and given time to solve the problem. Sometimes students work on the problems individually and sometimes with a partner or small group. There is then time for whole group discussion where students are given time to share with their classmates how they approached solving the problem. Teachers are then able to spotlight various ways of solving problems, utilizing the online components of the program to reinforce and deepen student understanding. These scenarios, along with a strong emphasis on word problems, help students with concept development.

Another strength of the program is that it helps students to develop the skills to approach problem-solving with different methods. Students are taught multiple ways to arrive at the correct answer. One example of this is when learning how to add 3-digit numbers, students are taught how to add using expanded place value, how to add by representing numbers with place value blocks, and how to add using the standard algorithm with carrying. Students can then choose which method works best for them. Students are also given basic fact fluency practice; addition and subtraction and multiplication and division in the upper grades. Students are given many opportunities throughout the year to improve their rate and recall math facts.

Formative assessments are provided through daily “quick checks” which review previous and current topics. Teachers can see where misconceptions are occurring or where students need additional practice with concepts. Summative Assessments include topic assessments that are given at the conclusion of each topic. Some topics are broken down into smaller units so that learning can be assessed mid-topic to see if any adjustments to instruction need to be made. (For example, in third grade where multiplication is introduced, multiplication is separated into three topical studies with summative assessments at the end of each sub-topic). It also includes benchmark assessments to help make sure students are retaining and building on previously learned information. This benchmark information also provides classroom teachers with information to determine what additional Tier 2 support needs to be implemented to ensure students are accessing all content and grade-level standards.

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

Keet Gooshi Heen (KGH) integrates science into its classrooms in a multitude of ways. One way we integrate science is through our Tier 1 curriculum from National Geographic, Reach for Reading. The Reach for Reading Program is intertwined with language arts, social studies, and science. The stories and articles in National Geographic bring science concepts into real life through engaging tales and non-fiction informational text. Mystery Science is another school-wide resource to support science standards at KGH. It provides hands-on lessons that meet our local and state standards in an engaging and hands-on approach.

Keet Gooshi Heen is located in southeast Alaska which provides us with ultimate access for place-based instruction. Teachers collaborate with the Sitka Sound Science Center to bring scientists into the classrooms of every grade level. Students are led through experiments using the scientific method, local flora, fauna, and many of its native species. The science curriculum is chosen based on grade-level standards and staff at Sitka Sound Science Center work closely with grade-level teams to integrate relevant learning opportunities that directly align with standards-based instruction. Through our “Scientists in the Classroom” program, students learn why whales migrate, how salmon return home to spawn, and the significance of herring in our local culture. They learn about invasive species in our ecosystem. They can use real seismic activity to predict landslides. Classes take trips to the Raptor Center to learn about rehabilitation as well as the natural life of raptors. Mount Edgecumbe, a volcano that sits fifteen miles west of Sitka’s shores lends itself to kids’ curiosity about volcanoes, landforms, and tectonic plates, which we cover through our community connections and integration of community resources.

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

KGH provides a rich and varied social studies experience that meets Alaska State Standards. These standards were adopted in 2005 and are currently at the beginning stages of being revised. KGH utilizes the National Geographic Reach for Reading Curriculum to address the present social studies standards. Each grade level focuses on a specific component of social studies. In addition, teachers supplement the provided curriculum which allows students to gain deeper knowledge and provides hands-on experiences.

Second-grade students learn about Sitka, past, and present. This includes learning about the culture of Sitka’s indigenous Tlingit people. Students are taught stories and crafts by Tlingit elders. Students make their own regalia and wear it at the annual KGH Thanksgiving fest where traditional foods are served.

The third-grade curriculum focuses on world geography. Students make their own passports and virtually

explore each continent. Students continue to learn about local geography and the importance of survival skills through a partnership with the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA). Each spring, students don survival suits, slip into the cold waters at the local harbor, and safely experience the potential effects of hypothermia.

Fourth graders learn about Alaska state history. Students participate in the reenactment of the transfer of the Alaskan territory from Russia to the United States. In the spring, every fourth grader looks forward to Klondike Day. This day is devoted to outdoor hands-on activities such as climbing the golden stairs, panning for gold, and cooking biscuits over a fire.

The fifth-grade curriculum continues the expansion from local to national history, the progression from the Age of Exploration to the Civil Rights Era. Teachers also utilize evidence-based queries to provide more writing to hone critical thinking skills.

The Reach for Reading materials provide assessments that address the state standards. Those are combined with teacher-generated assessments, observations, and student work.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

As a part of our Arts, Culture, and Technology (ACT) Program within our district, students at Keet Gooshi Heen (KGH) have access to several resources. Through the partnership between Sitka School District and the Stika Tribe of Alaska, local culture and arts have been integrated into our building. Place-based learning has been integrated through easy-to-access opportunities and resources by providing specialists. KGH hosts the Artist in Schools Residency Program where artists and performers collaborate with grade-level teams to do projects that integrate art standards.

For example, second-grade students had a local jewelry artist spend two weeks in their classrooms teaching traditional northwest coast formline shapes as part of the second-grade two and three-dimensional geometry unit. During the first week, students learned how to recognize shapes and learned how to carve the shapes in scratchboard material, much like how the artist carves her jewelry into metal. During the second week, students made large versions of the formline shapes and put the shapes together in their own way to make living creatures. Students then wrote stories about their animals and habitats and shared their projects with their peers. The ACT program also houses "Art Kits" that can be reserved to use in the classroom as part of the K-5 Visual Arts curriculum, which also provides lesson plans that address specific art standards.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Physical Education(PE) at Keet Gooshi Heen (KGH) is offered two times a week for 35 minutes to grade levels 2nd- 5th. Students participate in a wide range of activities to promote motor skills growth, support social-emotional learning, and develop lifelong fitness habits. Activities offered challenge not only different movement patterns and skills but also linked to the sportsmanship necessary to work with a partner or team. Students are introduced to a variety of competitive sports in the hope that they will continue to participate in them for years to come. Playing team sports lends itself to learning the social-emotional skills that are essential for students to be successful in all aspects of their lives. Teamwork, communication, honesty, work ethic, positive support, and trying your best are just a few important skills students acquire through PE

at KGH.

Nutrition is also important at KGH. Students are offered fresh fruit and veggies daily for snack as a part of the “Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program” offered through the Department of Education in Alaska. KGH provides students with the opportunity to try vegetables and fruits they may have never been exposed to through this program, such as cantaloupe and snap peas.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

The Sitka Native Education Program strives to revitalize the Lingít language throughout all programs and classrooms. Staff and students interact with the language through songs, stories, art, cultural guest specialists, and more. Keet Gooshi Heen (KGH) is excelling at weaving the language into the whole building with the seasonal language board. The board is updated monthly, embedded with thematic units that tie into grade-level standards. Lingít vocabulary words are posted with audio recordings for students to interact with. It also includes a “help guide” as a visual reminder of accent markings in the written text and how such markings are spoken. These Lingít markings, such as pinch, high tone, guttural, and glottal stops teach students how to make the sounds as they speak the Lingít words. Students, staff, and families can learn about seasonal words in Lingít through visual and audio resources on the language board.

Another language opportunity at KGH is provided every spring to classrooms. Spanish IV students from Sitka High School spend six weeks teaching lessons in classrooms one day a week. Students participate in vocabulary lessons, songs, and games to learn Spanish words. This learning opportunity allows our students to be exposed to Spanish in a unique way!

2d. Technology/library/media

Keet Gooshi Heen supports closing the digital divide and promotes equity by providing access to technology to everyone. We are a one-to-one student device ratio school and offer specialty devices for students that need accessibility support. Such as cochlear implant microphones for hearing impairment needs and Dynavox-assisted technology devices that include eye-gaze and tracking for students with speaking needs. By providing these resources our students are becoming technology literate, problem solvers, and responsible cybercitizens.

We celebrate Digital Citizenship each October with lessons to teach privacy, security, balance, and identity to provide the information they need to know how to be safe while using technology. Our students have access to some of the more reputable applications to provide academic support and opportunities to be creative while forming digital media. Integration is key, at any given time, you can walk into a classroom and see students collaboratively making art with Spheros controlled from their iPad, creating stop motion stories, coding Lego robots, or a Dashbot might be drawing quadrilaterals while students are calculating its area and perimeter. Technology is immersed in our daily routines and school culture.

Our technology department has made major strides to help teachers communicate our students’ needs by launching a ticketing system that returns a very quick turnaround and fast fixes. Using our Learning Management System, apps like Remind, and social media, make communication smooth between school, home, and our community.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

KGH is proud to have a comprehensive music program that serves all students twice a week. General music classes are 35 minutes long and are based on the Kodaly philosophy of music education. Students develop a repertoire of vocal music that lends itself well to music literacy. They learn sight-singing using solfege and rhythmic audiation. Movement, dance, and singing games are an integral part of the experience. In addition, each grade level has an annual concert. 3rd and 4th-grade students learn to play the recorder, a very useful building block to success on a band instrument. While the 5th Grade Band is an optional program, historically at least 75% of the students have participated. Great effort is taken to make this program accessible to students at all socio-economic levels. There are three sessions a week, primarily outside of the

school day, and the band performs three concerts during the school year. Some band students also can participate in the Music Mentor Program, which is a one-on-one tutoring program that pairs 5th-grade band students with Sitka High School band students who play the same instrument. The enrichment and remediation that this individual attention provides a deeper experience for all involved.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

For students who are performing below grade level, reading, and math services are deeply and seamlessly integrated into KGH students' broad educational experience. Title-funded reading intervention is just one on a continuum of services in the Multi-Tiered System of Support provided to ensure all students succeed. Title I funds provide only a portion of the reading specialists' positions, serving those students with the highest needs. The same interventionists also provide fewer intensive services to students with lower needs, and students move in and out of reading intervention services as their progress indicates.

KGH also provides instructional services to students eligible for intervention services through a variety of evidence-based curricular and instructional strategies and assessments. A variety of explicit instruction techniques are employed to offer additional learning opportunities for students who struggle with reading. Formative and summative achievement data are used to drive instruction and identify students in need of additional resources and time in a small group intervention setting. Data review and progress monitoring are ongoing, not only for student groups working with intervention specialists but for all students, including those identified as English language learners or in special education, to ensure students are proficient in reading by third grade. If a student is falling behind, additional interventions are implemented to address their individual needs. Group participation and materials are adjusted based on the results of frequent progress monitoring.

In addition, the reading intervention team provides a wide array of professional resources to all teachers, as well as assisting to interpret data regarding progress in reading. The reading intervention team meets regularly with grade-level teams and specialists (English learners, special education, etc.) to analyze data, place students appropriately, recommend resources, and consult on the needs of individual students.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Approximately 10% of the Keet Gooshi Heen (KGH) student population is identified as gifted and talented. These students receive specific instruction two times per week from a certified teacher with training in gifted education. This instruction includes project-based learning, STEAM activities, community outreach, academic instruction, and a monthly lesson delivered by the school counselor to address the unique challenges that a gifted and talented student might face. In addition, the gifted and talented students are part of a larger, grade-level enrichment class once per week. The enrichment class serves approximately 25% of the student population performing above grade level. The enrichment students engage in projects, activities, instruction, and experiences that enrich and extend their classroom curriculum beyond grade-level standards.

KGH students who perform above level have the chance to participate in a reading comprehension competition, a spelling bee, and a geography bee, which are all held during the school day. These events provide opportunities for community members and families to come to celebrate students who excel in academia. Many of our above-grade-level students also participate in a project fair during which they create projects that are related to any academic domain. These projects are shared with families and community members at an evening exhibit, as well as during the school day to showcase their creations with their peers. The STEAM program has offered this annual Project Fair for nearly 30 years, where students showcase long-term projects of their own choosing, many of them in science.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Our school supports and instructs students with disabilities with high fidelity to their Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Special education teachers, general education teachers, specialists, and

administrators work closely and collaboratively to ensure that each student is accessing the curriculum and school day. Special education teachers at our school are trained in the general education curriculum and can provide intervention services to support students with access to the content in the classroom. For students with more complex needs, intensive training with support staff and ongoing collaboration with the IEP team ensure that each child has the most appropriate education possible.

An example of intervention services meeting the needs of students is aligning lessons with the general education curriculum in math. Our general education teachers follow the same scope and sequence, teaching the same units simultaneously. This way, special education teachers can utilize lessons to pre-teach and re-teach using the same alignment as in the classroom. Our curriculum has intervention lessons that directly align, so the same vocabulary and procedures are used both in small groups and in class.

General Education Teachers follow the IEP as well, implementing program modifications and accommodations for their students. Our teachers scaffold instruction based on individual student needs and create opportunities for students with disabilities to receive instruction and access independent work at an appropriate level.

Testing is administered by creating the environment for each individual student as has been stated in the IEP. Special education teachers ensure that testing accommodations, including a small group setting, for his or her caseload are implemented. Students who need tests read aloud either have support in the classroom, small group, or technology that provides text-to-speech.

3d. English Language Learners:

Approximately 10 % of Keet Gooshi Heen (KGH) students are identified as eligible for English Language Learner services. These students are served by a certified instructor with training in ELL. Individualized education plans are designed for each ELL student. Students receive ELL services in groups of two or individually. In addition, students are served in their classrooms by the ELL instructor so they can receive support without missing core content instruction. ELL students at KGH are given the WIDA Access for ELL assessment annually. This assessment is administered by a certified instructor who has been trained by WIDA. Data provided by the WIDA screener is used to create individualized plans for each student and to determine their relative levels of need. KGH also offers translators for meetings, conferences, and needs within the community.

English language learners are supported by a specialist, with a particular focus on the needs of the increasing population of newcomers. As a result of KGH's commitment to a rich and varied curriculum, alongside specialist support, 100% of English learners have met growth targets toward fluency in the past two years, as measured by the state's Department of Education and Early Development.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

The Sitka Native Education Program (SNEP) is an after-school cultural program, focusing on teaching Kindergarteners through 12th graders the Lingít culture. The mission of SNEP is to perpetuate Lingít Yoo X'atángi and Haa Kusteeyí (Lingít language and way of life) by providing afterschool cultural instruction to our youth. Students in the Sitka School District, including students from Keet Gooshi Heen, can participate in the after-school culture class program to receive social, emotional, academic, and cultural support.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School, we know that our students thrive at school and build college and career readiness skills when we support their healthy academic and social-emotional development as a priority. Before the Covid19 Pandemic, our school invested significant professional development time into organizing our school around the concepts of Multi-Tier Support Systems, Positive Behavior Interventions Support, Social Emotional Learning, and Culturally Responsive Education. These concepts are integrated into the macro-level workings of our school including but not limited to how we welcome and release the student body every day, visual displays of our school rules and cultural beliefs, and how we manage recess. These concepts are also integrated into the daily micro-level workings of our school including but not limited to how our staff interact with students as individuals and in groups, how we create and present curriculum, and the positive and inclusive language we use with students. Our staff, from the Kitchen and janitorial staff to the administrators, to our teaching staff understand the importance of these concepts to student learning and strive every day to use these concepts in their work with students. Our staff and students understand and practice the school's cultural beliefs around kindness, empathy, and inclusion.

KGH uses a yearly School Climate and Connectedness Survey to determine how students feel about their school experience. We also collect more data through the Brief Externalizing and Internalizing Screener for Youth screener (BEISY) twice a year which allows teachers to see which students are displaying externalizing (disruptive, aggressive or oppositional behavior) or internalizing (withdrawn, negative self/school talk, or internalizing emotional problems) behaviors, or both. This data gives staff at KGH an opportunity to connect and engage with students who may not feel connected. The staff at KGH are intentional about making connections with students. Staff greet students in the hallway, engage in conversations, and find relatable opportunities to connect with students on a personal level.

KGH also offers intentional interventions and programs that support students' positive behavioral success, healthy social-emotional learning, and cultural tolerance. Our programs are integrated into the consistent methods that our staff use to create a sense of positive momentum and support for students. We offer a walk-to-reading program for each grade level that provides students with data-driven, best-practice reading interventions in small groups.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School (KGH), we understand that parental involvement and positive relationships with school have an important impact on student success. We understand some parents and community members may have experienced negative relationships with school in the past and that we must provide opportunities to build trust in our school. Because our community is small and isolated, positive experiences by parents and families are amplified. We invest in staff training around the importance of consistent communication with families annually, with an emphasis on positive communication. Staff communicate with parents regularly on the REMIND app, through emails, and phone calls. We invite families to visit our school prior to the beginning of school, at two parent-teacher conference events, and at a Family Night hosted by the school. We are proud that we receive almost full attendance at our parent-teacher conferences and school-wide events.

Our school social work program provides additional communication with families. Parents are regularly invited to participate in phone and in-person meetings working with school staff to develop plans to support student success. Families are contacted by the school social worker and office staff regarding attendance issues each day. Families who struggle with getting their children to school on time are provided additional support to improve their child's attendance.

KGH invests in working with our local cultural, mental health, arts, and academic nonprofit organizations to set students and families up for success at school. We offer cultural support to our student body with daily work with our federally funded Sitka Native Education Program. Our staff and social worker collaborate to

support families with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's social services program. We work with both of our community's children's mental health agencies to provide children with in-school mental health skills training when relevant. We work with volunteers at our local thrift shop to keep our free clothing and shoes program stocked. We work with a coalition of local nonprofits including the SAFV shelter, mental health agencies, and the Sitka Conservation Society to facilitate a Girls and Boys on the Run after-school program. We work closely with the Sitka Fine Arts Camp to offer excellent arts programming to our students. The Fine Arts Camp writes the grant for and facilitates our Artists in the School program as well as offering free professional artist performances to our student body. We work with the Sitka Science Center who provides high-quality push-in science lessons to our students. We work with the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association to provide our students with ocean safety lessons in the third and fifth grades. We work with the Sitkans Against Family Violence to provide lessons on personal safety.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Keet Gooshi Heen (KGH) creates an environment where teachers feel valued and supported through collaboration, professional development, and building staff morale. KGH has provided teachers and other staff additional supports such as grade-level collaboration days built into the weekly schedule. Time together to collaborate is sacred and staff rarely miss opportunities to collaborate. They respect their team and their time and use collaboration as a time to grow professionally and support each other with academic and behavioral supports as needed. KGH leadership values this collaborative time and protects it when incorporating professional development opportunities or scheduling meetings. Having this support from the administration cultivates partnerships with colleagues, and grade-level teams as well as develop a trusting relationship between our administrator and educators. This develops a sense of mutual respect when decisions that include trusted listening and decision-making from our administrator occur.

Our professional development approach focuses on providing high-quality professional development that is sustainable, relevant, and classroom focused. KGH leadership provides relevant professional development and training, with time to prep, especially whenever there are new initiatives. When professional learning is evidence-based it enhances the professional practice of educators, and at KGH we see the student growth that results because of it. KGH uses data to determine the professional learning needs of the faculty. Whether it is through surveys to teachers or using formative and summative assessments such as benchmark data to determine the math and language art needs of students. Teachers are encouraged to seek additional professional development opportunities that are tailored to their unique needs through a grant process using dedicated district funds through our professional development committee. Using the mini-grant rubric encourages disseminating learning upon return from the professional development event. This allows teachers to direct their own learning and bring back important tools and trends to share with colleagues. Working in tandem, the Sitka School District and the staff of KGH are using evidence-based professional learning to close achievement gaps and increase student success.

To build staff morale, our administrator honors staff in weekly announcements. Weekly staff meetings are held to ensure communication and transparency and to offer all staff a voice with input. This type of morale boost helps create a sense of buy-in when various initiatives occur. Our administrator also works hard to buffer staff from political and community stress so they can focus on teaching. This support creates a professional culture that promotes teamwork, accountability, and a shared commitment to excellence.

4. School Leadership:

Keet Gooshi Heen is a model of effective and shared leadership: the principal assumes responsibility for creating an effective, efficient learning environment, and provides educators the resources, including both materials and time, to develop and deliver engaging lessons for students. In keeping with Alaska Native traditions, KGH embraces the adage “in every chair a leader:” all voices are equal, and every voice is important. With this support the staff are able to focus on the success of students, including partnering effectively with families, colleagues and the community. Teachers serve on all districtwide committees, and they are invited and encouraged to provide input on decisions that impact the building, students and the school’s success.

Faculty and staff at Keet Gooshi Heen are directly engaged with the Sitka School Board goals of closing achievement gaps and increasing school connectedness, through the guidance of the school principal and the school-based Team-Initiated Problem-Solving (TIPS) team. The TIPS team is comprised of teacher leaders tasked with identifying and solving problems. TIPS is a districtwide practice for implementing data-based decision-making and is central in developing the school improvement plan, as well as in district professional development planning. The KGH TIPS team has been active for four years and continues to lead the district by modeling effective and efficient meeting protocols while collecting and using data to identify problems with precision, then creating solutions with integrity.

With representation from each grade level, this team takes on building-wide issues, participates in active discussions about the “why” behind necessary change, and creates precise statements to address issues and concerns. The grade-level representatives report back to their teams to ensure transparency and implementation of building-wide routines and procedures. Some topics the TIPS team has addressed include implementing Positive Behavior Intervention and Support matrices to guide hallway behavior and crafting a revised and current substitute handbook. The work of the TIPS team is essential to shaping policy and practices that support student success, both school- and districtwide.

What is unique about the leadership at KGH is that it is largely decentralized. Under the trusting guidance of the principal, staff has the liberty to make instructional and school climate decisions with the knowledge their decisions are supported. This climate of trust has resulted in a highly professional staff, from paraprofessionals to custodians to teachers, with the outcome that KGH is just plain a good place to be. This kind of professionalism and pride in the work being done cannot be replicated: it stems from really good people doing really good work to achieve really good outcomes for their students. It is why KGH is the little school that could, the school that is “a celebration of learning that inspires children to discover their full potential by providing a nurturing and challenging community.”

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

KGH faculty, staff, and leadership recognize the single greatest impact on a student’s success is their family, and the school cultivates positive partnerships with families. Families often extend student learning through after-school or summer programs, or through quality home practice provided by classroom teachers. Communicating effectively with our families is the link between school and home.

We utilize many communication strategies to reach any immigrating or our English Learning families. We provide a translator service, newcomers handbook, flyers, in-person events, emails, and text messages. Utilizing several methods of communication in alternative languages, this bridges communication gaps between school and home. It also provides a way for families to choose a method of communication that they are most comfortable with, establishing trust and a welcoming environment for all families and students.

Keet Gooshi Heen staff strives to meet the needs of all students, families, and staff members that make up our diverse backgrounds. In each classroom, you will find Southeast Alaska Tribal Values displayed in every classroom. Additionally, all Keet Gooshi Heen staff receive professional development in culturally responsive teaching practices and learning styles. It is common to see local experts and tribal members in our classrooms supporting teachers in bringing these values to life. In second grade students and families participate in a traditional local Lingít potluck. Partnering with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, students make traditional foods, and regalia, speak with and learn from elders as well as learn traditional dances. You will also see our students participating in programs such as Girls on the Run and Boys on the Run. Programs designed to build positive self-confidence and relationships. Programs like these are a hallmark in meeting the mission of our school district in strengthening the mind, body, and spirit: to inspire and prepare students to be compassionate, empowered, and equipped critical thinkers.

In short, Keet Gooshi Heen is an inviting place for every kind of student to learn, and our students and values reflect the community we serve. The many and varied volunteer programs and partnerships at KGH and throughout the district enrich students and provide for the well-rounded background that leads to well-rounded citizens. Striving to be intentionally culturally responsive in how we teach and how to support how

our students learn. From signage around the building that acknowledges and accepts all cultures, to how we communicate with our students. We are aware and accepting of all backgrounds and experiences.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The one practice that has contributed the most to our school's success is our staff's practice of using positive behavioral interventions to meet the whole child needs of our students. Every staff person, beginning with our school Principal and including our teaching and service staff, works under the primary goal of providing compassionate academic and social-emotional support to our students. You can see and hear that work through the positive language that staff use with students, through the fair, consistent, and kind boundary-setting that our systems put in place, and through the excitement for learning that students exhibit.

Building-wide we implement school-wide expectations at the beginning of the year and review them as needed to support students. We have students rotate through stations reviewing expectations at each location, such as on the playground, in the hallway, and lining up for buses at the end of the day. Staff use common language to reinforce appropriate behavior and utilize our positive behavior interventions of supports (PBIS). At KGH we use "Kind Keet Kid" awards to recognize students for being respectful, responsible, safe, or kind, which are our core values. Students receive a Kind Keet ticket and take it to the office. Then weekly, two students from each grade level are selected and announced over the intercom on Fridays. Students come to the office to receive their awards and take a group photo with our principal and school social worker. There is also one student weekly who is recognized and gets to house the stuffed orca, our school mascot, in their classroom.

Through PBIS our building principal addresses issues promptly and handles conflicts that arise in a constructive manner. He often utilizes our building MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports) team, which we refer to as our TIPS Team (Team-Initiated Problem-Solving Team) to address any building-wide concerns. For example, one hallway was extra noisy during transition time for the grade-level walk-to-read time. The TIPS Team came up with an incentive for a class swim party by using the PBIS strategy to reward the positive behavior of following school-wide expectations in the hallway. This approach helps to maintain a productive and positive culture, where students can be rewarded for appropriate and safe behavior. This type of action has had a large impact on teachers by making hallway and rotation transitions smoother. This has also assisted in minimizing the number of hallway incidents and referrals we have had to the office, which is helpful for administration.