

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Heath Horton

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

Official School Name Kensington Intermediate School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 20140 Lake Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Rocky River

State OH

Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 44116-1515

County Cuyahoga County

Telephone (440) 356-6770

Fax (440) 356-6050

Web site/URL

[https://www.rrcs.org/kensingtonelementary\\_home.aspx](https://www.rrcs.org/kensingtonelementary_home.aspx)

E-mail raiff.scott@rrcs.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\* Dr. Michael Shoaf Ed.D. E-mail shoaf.michael@rrcs.org

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rocky River City

Tel. (440) 356-6000

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. Jessica Wilson

(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**

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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

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**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  
1 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	0
3	203
4	198
5	193
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	594

\*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
  - 3 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87 % White
  - 5 % 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: 7%

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

N/A

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	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	25
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	39
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	559
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, Farsi/Turkish, Spanish, Tunisian/French, Pashto

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %  
26 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %

Total number students who qualify: 76

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %  
Total number of students served 73

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>8</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>42</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 4 %  
Total number of students served: 26

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 2

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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	20
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 25:1

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	95%	97%	98%	97%	97%
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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2011

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

Globally Competitive. Exceptional Opportunities. Caring Environment. Successful Students.

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

Policies 2260, 3122 and 4122

<https://go.boarddocs.com/oh/rrcsd/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies>

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

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Rocky River is a residential suburb located 10 miles west of downtown Cleveland. A picturesque city bordered by Lake Erie and the Cleveland Metroparks, residents can boat, fish, or take advantage of the numerous city parks for hiking, biking, picnics and countless other activities. Rocky River is well-known for its sense of community and the city continues to be one of the most desirable suburban locations in the Greater Cleveland area for a number of reasons. A city distinguished by its abundance of natural grace and stunning scenery, Rocky River is celebrated for its tradition of academic excellence and continually ranks as one of the top districts in the state of Ohio.

The Rocky River City School District (RRCSD) includes four schools with comprehensive educational programs, state-of-the-art technology and numerous extracurricular activities in the arts and athletics. All students are provided exceptional opportunities in and out of the classroom, allowing them the chance to grow academically, socially and emotionally. Curricula and assessments are aligned to Ohio Academic Content standards and Webb's Depth of Knowledge to ensure that all students will be able to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Kensington Intermediate School (KIS) serves students in third, fourth and fifth grades. Among the more than 3,300 schools in Ohio, KIS ranked 12th overall for highest Performance Index (PI) score on the latest Ohio School Report Card from the Ohio Department of Education. KIS staff collaborate with other professionals as well as family and community members to address the academic, social and emotional needs of all students, ensuring that students remain the heart of our purpose. Having an intermediate school in the community allows students a chance to begin developing the necessary skills needed to be successful, including responsibility, independence, study skills and building routines that prepare them for their future in middle school and high school.

KIS teachers and staff take great pride in getting to know students and building positive relationships with families. The staff, which includes a school counselor, School Resource Officer and nurse, genuinely care for students and go to incredible lengths to do what is best for students to ensure they receive a high-quality education in the safest manner possible.

The National PTA recognized KIS and Kensington PTA as a 2021-2023 School of Excellence for their accomplishments in building a strong, effective family-school partnership that is enriching the educational experience and overall well-being for all students. The RRCSD has consistently received the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) for its outstanding commitment to music education. A long-standing partnership with the local Rotary Club allows all KIS third grade students to receive a dictionary at the beginning of the school year. The 2022-2023 school year marked the 18th year that the Rotary Club honored its commitment to literacy in schools and presented each third grader with a dictionary.

To foster healthy lifestyles and assist students in growing socially and emotionally, KIS offers a number of different activities. All students are invited to attend Mindful Mondays at the start of each week and help facilitate a positive transition to the school week with mindfulness exercises. Students can also participate in extracurricular activities including Destination Imagination, Chess Club, Spanish Club, Student Council, Safety Patrol, or take part in the daily announcements on Kensington's Channel 10. The K-Kids club is another highly popular activity at the school. During the holiday season, the group spearheaded an effort for students to decorate more than 1,300 coffee sleeves with messages of kindness for the community. The sleeves were used on beverages that were purchased and featured original designs and hand-written messages to spread kindness.

Visual and performing arts are also popular with many students, participating in award-winning bands, choirs and drama. Youth athletics have a strong foundation in the community as many students dream of playing one of the 24 varsity sports offered at the high school level.

A National Blue Ribbon School award winner in 2011, KIS has continued to blossom and grow. Our

dedicated staff pursues new ways to become better by collaborating and using professional learning communities to make an impact on student learning. Where the waters of the Rocky River blend with Lake Erie, Kensington provides a rich educational experience and a myriad of opportunities, giving our community something of which to be proud.

We are caring. We are exceptional. We are competitive.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

Literacy is always at the core of instruction at Kensington as we develop readers, writers, listeners, and speakers, not only in the English Language Arts classrooms, but across all content areas. The teachers are committed to developing and refining the students' abilities to read, while seamlessly transitioning students into reading deeply to understand the information presented across content areas. Our meticulously developed courses of studies reflect the Ohio State Learning Standards and the Ohio Performance Level Descriptors for English Language Arts. Students are exposed to a variety of rich texts that require explicit teaching in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

Opportunities for written responses to text are woven into our daily lessons and students refine their practices by engaging in varied forms of writing throughout our units of study.

Teachers have developed daily lesson plans and unit assessments that center around Webb's Depth of Knowledge, in order to ensure a rigorous educational experience that focuses on the cognitive demands of the Ohio Academic Content Standards and future real world expectations of our learners.

The focus on stretching each learner, dependent on present levels, is essential when presenting daily content, weekly lesson plans, and units of study. Kensington's third grade teachers and intervention team work closely, implementing our defined courses of study. Engaging in the explicit and systematic teachings of phonemic awareness and phonics helps develop our reader's foundational skills. With an overall intentional focus on word recognition and language comprehension, we help ensure the development of skilled readers.

Throughout our units of study, Kensington teachers assess student knowledge using quick checks, observations, student conferences, and class conversations to determine the knowledge obtained by each student as the unit progresses. With the use of our standards-based report card, teachers are checking in regularly to monitor student progress based on mastery of a specific standard, understanding a standard with support, or needing more time to develop mastery. Opportunities for repeated practice for learners who need additional support is given regularly during classroom instruction, small group sessions, and throughout our intervention blocks. With a spiraling curriculum and standards-based measuring tools, students have the opportunity to take time throughout the year to fully master the grade level content.

All of Kensington's students participate in end of unit common assessments developed to reflect the knowledge taught in each unit of study using our secure testing portals. This data is closely analyzed by grade level teams to determine the quality of each assessment question, instruction across classrooms, and needs of students to move along the Ohio Performance Level Descriptors. After each assessment is administered, grade level teams collaborate, focusing on high level impressions, item analysis, comparative data, while drawing conclusions and developing necessary next steps to ensure the growth and remediation needed across each specific student group and heterogeneous classroom settings.

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

Kensington Intermediate School's math curriculum is developed using Ohio's Learning Standards for Mathematics, including both Standards for Mathematical Content and Standards for Mathematical Practice. Our diversified writing team designs the curriculum to ensure that each unit balances procedural skill and fluency, conceptual understanding, and application, all principles of mathematical instruction. The curriculum design includes unit descriptors, essential questions, learning targets, mathematical practices, critical areas of focus, rich math tasks, and technology integration.

Instruction at KIS emphasizes the mathematical behaviors and thinking skills of perseverance, reasoning, precision, finding patterns, modeling, using tools, and peer discourse. Teachers plan engaging lessons using research-based resources to promote creative thinking and problem solving. Students focus on essential

understandings and learning targets while participating in exploration, observation, productive struggle, error analysis, and eventual discovery. Learners cooperate with classmates to construct arguments and defend their conclusions. Explicit instruction includes direct teaching, teacher facilitation, guided learning, small group differentiation, collaborative learning, and independent practice. Students are provided with a variety of experiences using mathematical tools, technology integration, and immediate feedback. As learners approach a topic, they progress through the concrete, representational, and abstract stages of learning. Well-designed lessons encourage students to develop procedural skills and fluency. Applying content standards to relevant real-world situations are part of daily lessons. Logical coherence leads to connections between prior and subsequent knowledge. Extensive support staff provides students with reinforcement of concept mastery alongside learning acceleration. Teachers communicate frequently with families through home-school connection letters, special events, progress reports, and standard-based report cards.

Kensington teachers incorporate formative assessments continually throughout their instruction. Pretests, quick checks, student self-evaluations, anecdotal observations, and student work samples provide the focus for lesson planning. Student discourse during small group and whole group discussions calls attention to common misconceptions, and confirms levels of mathematical understanding. Results of formative assessments are utilized for flexible grouping within the classroom in order to guarantee student needs are being met. In addition to extra support by instructors inside the classroom, intervention specialists and tutors are able to help provide reteaching and reinforcement during designated intervention blocks.

District-developed common assessments are taken by all students at the end of each unit in mathematics. These exams are both traditional formats and technology-based. Test questions reflect all grade level standards at varying Depth of Knowledge levels. After administration, grade level teams meet to evaluate the results. This data protocol process requires teachers to analyze the summative assessments, looking for individual classroom and grade level patterns. After completion of data protocol, teachers identify instructional areas of both strength and improvement. This action enables grade levels to determine their next steps in refining lesson planning and enhancing instruction. Our assessment processes ultimately identify individualized needs for all students.

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

Aligned with Ohio's Learning Standards, Kensington's science curriculum is exemplary. The center of our effectiveness comes from the creation of lessons utilizing multiple resources, bridging active learning, and mastering process skills. Teachers create cutting-edge lessons based on current research and real world studies. Students analyze published data, build and refine theories, partake in simulations and virtual labs with Gizmos Explore Learning, meet with professionals in multiple fields of science, and explore the outdoors at Camp Nuhop, Cleveland Zoo, Rocky River Metroparks, or Lake Erie. Hands-on lessons are an integral part of our program.

Kensington teachers provide a student-centered learning environment. Our underlying framework is the 5Es: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate. In our classrooms, students do the work of scientists and engineers to develop those practices. Learners experience Science Technology Engineering Art Mathematics (STEAM) activities such as landing a lunar rover, building structures, monitoring decomposition, or cleaning up our waterways. Students get involved in issues that impact our local environment on a model scale. Kensington has science literature readily available in every classroom through MyON Digital Library and books that are utilized throughout all content areas. Kensington teachers boost curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and problem solving.

Identification of the cognitive demands and Depth of Knowledge guide common assessment writing. Assessments align with our learning targets, tap into thinking on all levels, and provide valuable data to guide our instruction. Our students benefit from the immediate feedback via electronic platforms.

Formative assessments include quick checks, self assessments, and project-based learning tasks. They provide teachers with actionable data that drives instruction and addresses misconceptions. Kensington's summative assessments include engaging performance tasks built on scientific and engineering practices.

Opportunities are afforded to students to display their mastery of science concepts through a variety of assessments that complement different modalities of learning. Kensington's comprehensive science program prepares students for their future.

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

Kensington's Social Studies curriculum is based on Ohio's Learning Standards. Third, fourth and fifth grade students engage in lessons that highlight history, geography, government, economics, and cultural diversity. Third grade focuses on the local community. Fourth grade expands to include early development of Ohio and the United States. Fifth grade focuses on the Western Hemisphere.

Throughout these grades, Kensington students develop critical thinking and analytical skills as they study events and concepts from the past and present, and learn about the relationships between geography, culture, and government within each lesson. Students are engaged in lessons with the use of a variety of technology tools. Students learn about important historical and current events, through articles, at their appropriate Lexile levels, with the use of Achieve 3000. Students are informally assessed with the use of quick checks. Students are formally assessed on their knowledge for each unit, at each grade level, through the use of districtwide common assessments.

At Kensington, we pride ourselves in celebrating important historical calendar holidays that promote cultural awareness, patriotism, historical education, empathy, and create positive memories. One yearly example occurs during the week of November 11th when we honor America's Veterans for their services by having an annual school assembly featuring a local veteran. Additionally, all students and staff take part in lining the front lawn of Kensington Intermediate with American flags. Our amazing PTA contributed a large banner that recognized our local heroes. Community members have expressed their appreciation. Students enjoy field trips that connect to units of study, such as the Cleveland History Center and Underground Railroad. Many additional important historical events are acknowledged throughout the year, with various activities, displays, and lessons throughout the building.

#### **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)**

Kensington visual art students construct and solve problems of personal relevance and interest when expressing themselves. They combine and apply artistic and reasoning skills to imagine, create, realize and refine artworks in conventional and innovative ways. As consumers, critics, and creators, students evaluate and understand artworks and other texts produced in the media forms of the day. Every student has artwork displayed in the annual district wide art show. Students can also participate in Kensington's Art Club. Visitors to Kensington quickly notice the student artwork that is displayed throughout the building. The art teacher and counselor work together in a specific lesson to blend artistic awareness of colors and connection to emotions.

Kensington students sing and play instruments, focusing on musical elements of rhythm. They also listen to, move, perform, interpret, and analyze music of varying time periods, cultures and styles. Students at all grade levels are able to showcase their talents through yearly concert performances. An interactive experience with Great Lakes Theater allows fifth grade students to be immersed in the expression of literature through performance. A significant number of our fifth graders explore their instrumental or choral

music talents through band and choir.

Third through fifth grade students attend weekly art and music specialty classes. Students extend their experiences in both the visual and performing arts by participating in trips to the Cleveland Orchestra and The Cleveland Art Museum.

## **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

Kensington students apply motor skills and movement through dance, gymnastics, jump rope, and add rhythm and patterns. They also apply basic tactics and principles of movement through tossing and striking of objects. They are introduced to health concepts and continue to be integrated into the fitness program and apply skills to maintain or improve one's level of fitness. Additional methods to recognize the value of physical activity and positive health decisions for optimum health are also taught. Kensington students apply knowledge of critical elements through various evaluations. Kensington students apply these skills to maintain a healthy level of physical activity and fitness. The physical education teacher and counselor work together to explore the physiological impact of strong emotions and mindful breathing during physical education classes. Kensington partners with community-based businesses to promote bike safety through our annual participation in Bike to School Week.

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

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

Kensington students become digital citizens by responsibly navigating and integrating technology to become 21st century learners. Students also focus on creative collaboration using a wide range of technology tools in their weekly classes. They create, edit, and present digital media, movies, podcasts, musical pieces as well as use block coding with multiple platforms. Kensington students learn to collaborate, organize, edit, manage, promote, and present a variety of digital projects. Original student works are published on Channel 10 morning announcements. Safe use of technology is explored with students in grade level classes as well as promoted in a connected parent evening presentation in collaboration with the school counselor and Rocky River Police Department.

Kensington's media center specialist works closely with the classroom teachers to support classroom goals and develop cross-curricular activities. Students treasure their ability to select books that encourage their love of reading. School counseling lessons are conducted in collaboration with Kensington's media specialist. Parents serve as guest readers, selecting books from our library and reading to students in the Kensington Media Center. Students learn to research topics through the exploration of physical and digital resources.

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

## **3. Academic Supports**

### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

To meet the needs of all students, Kensington uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This involves screening students during the fall, winter, and spring using the aimswebPlus online assessment. AimswebPlus data, teacher input, classroom data, and state test scores are compiled and analyzed to identify each student's strengths and weaknesses. The reading and math intervention teams identify student needs and create flexible groups with a focus on decoding/encoding, reading comprehension, or mathematics skills.

Kensington offers interventions focused on multisensory decoding and spelling. These interventions include

3rd Grade Foundations Double Dose, 4th and 5th grade Just Words Tier 2 intervention, and intensive Tier 3 Wilson Reading System. Literacy intervention supports readers struggling with comprehension and writing. The math intervention provides opportunities to practice skills from previous grade levels as well as reinforce grade-level lessons. Students also work to strengthen math fluency.

Kensington Intermediate provides six intervention blocks built into student schedules. Interventions are five days per week for thirty to forty-five minute sessions each. By providing two intervention blocks per grade level, intervention group sizes stay between one and six students, allowing for close teacher interaction and multisensory approaches. The reading and math specialists are also certified in the Wilson Reading Level 1 and Level 2 programs. The educator training focuses on advanced concepts of the structure of the English language and is accredited by the International Dyslexia Association.

Students are monitored every two weeks using the aimswebPlus progress monitoring probes. The intervention team meets every six weeks to review student performance and data trends. Student grouping is flexible and by reviewing data trends, students may exit, or move to more intensive intervention if needed, following the MTSS approach. Parents are provided with nine week progress reports to ensure there is consistent home-to-school communication for student performance.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

Kensington Gifted Services follow the Ohio Department of Education's guidelines for screening, assessing, and identifying students for gifted services twice between kindergarten and sixth grade. The whole grade screening and identification process occurs in second and fourth grades. Subject achievement scores of 95% or above on the standardized reading and math testing identify students as academically gifted. Cognitive identifications are derived from group or individual ability tests that are administered by teachers, gifted personnel, or school psychologists. Small group assessments occur at any time from kindergarten through fifth grades. Written Education Plans (WEPs) are written, implemented, and updated yearly. Students are assessed for creative thinking by completing the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking in second and fourth grades.

Of the 593 students enrolled at Kensington, 12.8% are identified as cognitively gifted, 19.1% of students are reading identified, 17.7% are math identified, and 4.6% are identified as creative thinkers. Kensington students with cognitive identification are clustered. They receive weekly services from gifted personnel. Students are provided with extension reading and math activities. Research based educational resources are incorporated into lessons and projects. Clusters of subject-identified students are found in all 24 homerooms. Teachers are able to differentiate instruction to meet students' needs. Students with the creative thinking identifications are serviced weekly in their technology classes.

All Kensington grade level teachers are considered gifted service providers by the state of Ohio because they have a master's degree in gifted education or have received or are working on completing 60 hours of gifted professional development from gifted personnel. After meeting the 60 hours, teachers must annually maintain two hours of gifted professional development. Topics for gifted professional development opportunities have included: social/emotional needs of gifted students, nature and needs of the gifted, creativity and twice exceptional. Additionally, teachers have had the opportunity to view online seminars from well respected organizations and researchers in the field. Gifted personnel are adjunct faculty members at local universities.

Kensington students participate in afterschool programs like Destination Imagination. This extracurricular activity fosters creativity, problem solving, and teamwork. Students meet weekly for months to solve these challenges that range from engineering to fine arts to service learning. Solutions to these challenges are presented at regional, state, and global tournaments. Kensington is fortunate to have families who foster a love of learning.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

Kensington Intermediate meets the needs of all learners through the Learning Resource Services (LRS) team. The team includes eight Intervention Specialists, an Occupational Therapist, a Speech and Language Pathologist, a School Psychologist, and a district wide Behavior Specialist. Each grade level is assigned two to three intervention specialists. The school uses models of direct instruction including support in the general education classroom, co-teaching in math and language arts classes, and small group instruction to ensure the needs of every student are being met.

Kensington uses a variety of technological resources to supplement instruction for our students. The Reflex math program is used with our students with individualized plans to help with fact mastery in a fun, game-based way. Students throughout Kensington also use Successmaker Math, an individualized, student-paced math skills program that works both to close gaps, as well as to enrich those who are ready. Our students in reading intervention also use digital tools to increase their fluency and comprehension at their own individualized level.

Kensington's intervention specialists and therapists work collaboratively to develop friendships and social interactions through our social skills groups. Each grade level group meets weekly to learn skills on how to interpret the thoughts, actions, and feelings of others. Zones of Regulation program provides a school-wide framework and common language of how we think and talk about our emotions.

Home and school connection is important. The team spotlights a specialist each month in the school newsletter to familiarize parents with the LRS staff. Our specialists also provide "Lunch and Learn" and "Coffee and Conversation" events to develop connections with parents throughout the year. Local speakers and Kensington staff present on current topics and strategies to support our families.

Kensington has two designated areas to support student sensory needs. The "Chill Zone" provides a calming environment with a soft cushion and low lighting. Sensory items such as clay, squeeze balls, sound machines, weighted pillows, and bubble lamps give students a place to regulate their emotions. The "Sensory Spot" provides an alternative area for students to use the crash pad, treadmill, bike, and swing as part of their sensory diet. A library of sensory equipment and alternative seating is also available for all staff to check out and use to meet student needs.

Intervention Specialists provide students with connections to the real world through field trip opportunities. Fourth and fifth-grade small-group math students visited a local ice cream company to explore the application of math concepts and social skills in local businesses. By partnering with our community, students are afforded an opportunity to gain independence and utilize math skills in real life.

Student transition into and out of Kensington is supported in several ways. A third grade Intervention Specialist attends all second grade meetings to support incoming families and answer questions. Additionally, a middle school representative is included in the fifth grade IEP meeting to prepare for this transition. At the end of the school year, second grade students with individualized plans visit and tour Kensington, and our own fifth grade students with individualized plans tour the middle school to meet staff and students.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

English Learner (EL) students at Kensington work on reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, based on the Ohio English Language Proficiency Standards. After being identified for services, students receive Language Development Plans (LDP) that share information with their teachers about skills and yearly language goals. Support is given to classroom teachers through various means to educate and inform about cultural norms and traditions, as well as scaffolding techniques to use in the classroom. Parents are provided with quarterly reports detailing student progress. Communication is ongoing and uniquely dependent on each family's specific needs.

Newcomer students receive additional services in the classroom or in small group language arts classes. During daily EL intervention time, students focus on reading a variety of texts, writing paragraphs using text evidence, parts of speech, creative writing, reading comprehension, class discussions, building vocabulary,

phonics for decoding, and phonemic awareness. Newcomer students are also provided an iPad to translate texts and assignments in their core content classes as needed. They also have access to Rosetta Stone to work on their basic English skills at school or at home. We progress monitor with aimswebPlus, as well as gather data from language proficiency assessments and the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA).

Teachers work with families to help them access their child's school, including a family night that we hold once a year. We currently have a partnership with the Rocky River Library to bring EL families programming in the community. We also offer an EL Summer Camp for students during summer months to practice their English skills and go on field trips, such as the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and Natural History Museum. After a student tests out of EL services, they continue to be monitored for the next two years to make sure they are still successful in the mainstream classroom.

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

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Kensington students are the heart of our purpose. Our success is a result of focusing on the whole child, meeting students where they are, and taking them to the next level. The staff uses many different learning modalities to ignite a passion for learning, inspire curiosity, and explore interests. Kensington staff teach students, not subjects, by developing a personal rapport and creating a safe environment for students to take risks as part of the learning process in and out of the classroom. Exciting, creative lessons that incorporate authentic, real life experiences, propel students to new heights.

Our students have a voice in their education. Students set attainable goals for learning and are afforded different learning opportunities to show mastery. Walking down the hallways of Kensington, you may see student scientists leading a digital presentation, dissecting owl pellets, or talking with a real-life scientist. Kensington readers and writers participate in Readers' Theater, novel studies, and room transformations to enhance literary themes. When entering a social studies classroom, you see Kensington historians creating historical models, analyzing primary or secondary resources, developing an awareness and acceptance of cultural differences, or simulating various governments. Student mathematicians partake in game-based learning, hands-on explorations, and the manipulation of math concepts using a variety of tools. Exposure to these countless diverse experiences helps serve as a foundation for future pathways to college and career readiness.

In addition to core academics, students with an affinity for the arts may demonstrate their individual gifts in a variety of ways. Kensington's music department celebrates dancing artistry at choir and band concerts. Students may have an opportunity to creatively express themselves through Kensington's Channel 10 daily news production where students get real world experiences as videographers, music composers, news anchors, newswriters, sports reporters and meteorologists. Budding visual artists display their works annually at our district art show and through technology, their creations can be shared virtually with loved ones. In fitness classes, students create original putt-putt courses, utilize official gymnastics equipment, and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Our extracurricular activities promote a variety of community service projects that expose them to the real world to become empathetic and productive citizens. Kensington students are excited, engaged and motivated learners!

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Kensington believes that families, communities, and civic organizations enhance the learning experiences of every student. Early in the year, a Kensington Family Picnic provides families the opportunity to create connections and establish community. Academic nights (i.e. Literacy, Math, & Science nights) highlight specific content areas connecting families to the curriculum where families take part in relevant, hands-on activities, while practicing instructional strategies. Take-home packets of materials help families further their exploration of the content. Kensington has partnered with the Cleveland Clinic and participated in the Dangerous Decibels Program, which has increased fifth grade students' awareness of appropriate sound levels and how to protect themselves from hearing loss. Classrooms welcome local community members affiliated with the Junior Achievement program. This student-centered learning experience centers around economics and financial responsibility and is taught by members of the community closely linked to these two topics. Members of the Rocky River Historical Society visit annually with third grade students to enlighten them of Rocky River's unique history through time.

Kensington is proud to be a 2021-2023 National PTA School of Excellence for its commitment to collaborating with all stakeholders to ensure student success. Kensington PTA members are welcomed as room parents and volunteer in many capacities. Through the fundraising efforts of the PTA, students are afforded opportunities to participate in a variety of field trips and other educational opportunities. Annually, the PTA provides students with a special popsicle social, where students can connect with their peers and watch a special concert featuring the Rocky River High School Marching Band. Kensington's PTA is renowned for its Spooky Saturday event that is held every October. Students, families, and community

members of all ages enjoy the festive event. The PTA also hosts the Scholastic Book Fair in the fall and spring to encourage students and families to develop a lifelong love of reading.

Kensington often draws from community resources to support families and provide education and information to parents. Learning Resource Services (LRS) and the Counseling Department partner to provide Lunch and Learn, a workshop for parents that provides information and strategies on Emotional Control and Self-Regulation. The Counseling Department also provides Coffee Talks on topics, such as executive functioning and parenting, with speakers ranging from our own school psychologist to counselors and psychologists from community mental health practices. Partnering with the Rocky River Police Department, Kensington provides information on safe use of technology to parents. Parents and students also participate in a Teddy Bear Yoga night, exploring mindful breathing, mindful movement and relaxation strategies together with a school counselor and a parent helper. All students in attendance receive a teddy bear. In keeping with the adage It Takes a Village to Raise a Child, we welcome the opportunity to partner with community members and stakeholders to make our students' experiences more vibrant.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Due to the belief that teaching is learning and the generous support of our community, as well as Title II-A funding, district faculty are afforded the opportunity to participate in numerous, high-quality professional development (PD) opportunities. After PD, Kensington's faculty return to their classrooms implementing these newly learned best practices, but also share those practices and experiences with their colleagues through PLC and department meetings.

Rocky River LPDC designs, contracts with presenters, and hosts the majority of PD offerings. Graduate credit is available for many of these opportunities. This is done to ensure PD is easily accessible and thus maximize the participation of district employees. Staff organization plays a crucial role to disseminate learned information. Each grade level has a coordinator, and each core subject has a coordinator. Every grade level has eight teachers, and two teachers per grade are assigned as a liaison to each core subject area of language arts, math, science, and social studies. Our staff meets weekly either in grade level or subject teams. This structure facilitates the sharing of valuable instructional strategies.

The PD topics are determined by many factors: our strategic plan, assessment data, Ohio Department of Education requirements, climate surveys, and staff evaluations and requests. Due to the pandemic, professional development opportunities were provided to help staff, students, and community transition to online learning. Other examples of recent district-offered PD opportunities include topics such as Dyslexia; Educating Gifted Students Series; aimswebPlus training; Canvas learning management system; Foundations Recalibration; Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and the Academic Content Standards; Wilson Reading Level I and II Certification; Executive Functioning; Depth of Knowledge Training; Goalbook training, and Kristen Race Mindfulness Training among others. Resources, opportunities for guided practice, and reflection allow staff to be supported as they incorporate the training into their daily instruction. In addition to professional development, opportunities for personal growth for staff are encouraged through wellness and exercise classes, counseling opportunities, and financial literacy workshops.

### **4. School Leadership:**

Kensington's leadership team is focused on ensuring every student and staff member at Kensington feels welcomed in a fun and engaging learning environment.. The building leadership team (BLT) consists of the principal, four core subject coordinators, four grade-level coordinators, a learning resource services coordinator, an English Learner coordinator, a gifted services coordinator, and a school counselor to support communication between the principal and staff. Members of the BLT meet monthly to discuss strategic plan alignment, curriculum coordination and collaboration, and organizational items. These coordinators work collaboratively within and between grade-level teams to promote effective instructional and assessment strategies. Grade-level coordinators meet weekly with grade-level colleagues to facilitate the sharing of best practices, coordinate instruction and assessment, engage in data protocol, identify interventions, and discuss student concerns and success stories.

Kensington's learning resource coordinator works directly with our tutors, teachers, and parents to facilitate and improve student learning. She assists in coordinating special education services, tiered interventions, and our intervention assistance process. Additionally, she shares instructional and assessment strategies with all faculty and staff. She helps with the planning of the annual Lunch and Learn event the district hosts for parents and interested stakeholders to learn more about the services provided by the district for students with disabilities.

The English Learner (EL) coordinator is instrumental in helping English learners access the curriculum at Kensington. She works closely with the principal and staff at Kensington to ensure appropriate placement and support for our English learners. Due to the district's belief in inclusion, EL students learn with their peers while also receiving additional support during intervention which is built into Kensington's master schedule. The English Learner coordinator also assists with ensuring students have appropriate accommodations for testing and that EL trained proctors are scheduled for EL students for testing purposes.

The Gifted Coordinator at Kensington collaborates with colleagues to provide enrichment strategies and opportunities for students who have been identified as cognitively gifted or specific academic ability (i.e., subject-area giftedness). Besides working with Kensington's gifted students weekly, the coordinator provides professional development for the district's staff regarding gifted education and serves as the advisor for the district's Destination Imagination program in which many of Kensington's students participate that promotes creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork.

Kensington's school counselor takes pride in building relationships with every student at Kensington and sharing social emotional best practices with all stakeholders. The counselor facilitates the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team which promotes a positive school culture and climate. Kensington's school counselor also teaches grade level Social Emotional (SEL) and character development class lessons, addressing such topics as honesty, leadership, responsibility and respect. Working with the school's resource officer and technology teacher, the team presents Kensington's annual Internet Safety meeting for parents along with classroom lessons for students. Mindful Mondays, Lunch Bunch and Homework Helpers are some of the other activities Kensington's school counselor is instrumental in providing to our students, staff, and families.

Kensington's principal believes in collaborative leadership to ensure that all students reach their full potential. He believes the question "Is this what is best for students?" must be at the heart of all decisions in regard to instruction, assessment, and communication with all stakeholders. He empowers his staff to use research-based best practices and data to meet the needs of all students at Kensington. The voices of parents, community members, and other stakeholders are welcome at Kensington because we are dedicated to ensuring our students are successful lifelong learners.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Culturally responsive teaching engages students and facilitates academic growth by creating genuine relationships with students and families, valuing diverse backgrounds and experiences, and pulling this experiential knowledge into the classroom as a vehicle to help students truly connect to learning. Kensington Intermediate School works diligently to address the needs and backgrounds of students, families and staff. Respect, cultural awareness and dignity are an integral part of each and every school day. Current events impacting our students, families and communities are interwoven into classrooms. Positive Student Intervention and Support (PBIS) is the framework/backbone of our daily school functioning.

Our school culture and climate is shaped by our PBIS guiding principles, Respectful, Responsible, Caring and Safe (RRCS). Students are aware of our high expectations and boundaries and are truly supported. The Pirate Pride program recognizes students by publicly announcing students, citing specific behavior recognized, and reinforcing the behavior with prizes. This program is also a vehicle for supporting our monthly character trait words that focus on desirable values that we want all students to develop (e.g., leadership, honesty).

healthy boundaries and solid academic expectations early in the year as well as cultivating genuine relationships with students. Teachers work to connect to students in classrooms, greeting them by name and connecting personally with families during evening activities, understanding that solid relationships create safety and foster trust. Teachers, aware that economic disparity may impact our students' experience in the classroom, work to quietly secure needed materials and supplies for students in need. Third grade classrooms celebrate "student of the week", offering students an opportunity to share individual experiences, cultures and backgrounds. Celebrations of culture and diversity are also evident in our social studies curriculum, as 5th grade students explore countries, share their traditions and culture by creating and proudly displaying maps and works of art in the hallway. Our art and music departments explore and celebrate the works of various cultures.

KIS works to create a teaching and learning environment that provides high expectations, honors and respects individuality, values relationships, collaborates and communicates with families and attends to academic needs. Teachers and staff work hard to connect with students, creating genuine connections and developing a safe and supportive learning environment. KIS students are provided with high school role models who assist with after school homework assistance. KIS celebrates culture and welcomes families. Students are truly "the heart of our purpose" at KIS.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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Kensington is more than school, it is a learning community. Like all successful learning communities, KIS holds its stakeholders accountable for enacting particular behaviors and reaching certain goals. The Respectful, Responsible, Caring, and Safe model (RRCS) is a strategy that we have embedded in the daily lives of all members of the Kensington community that has ultimately caused us to be successful in the areas of academics and social-emotional learning. At Kensington, the diverse group of students, staff, and administration work together to implement this unique framework designed to target the needs of each individual person involved in the educational process. Weekly and monthly, students are recognized and rewarded school-wide for exemplifying these four tenets. On a daily basis, each member of the Kensington community demonstrates these behaviors within the RRCS model.

Respect at Kensington is highly valued. At the student level, we provide models of how we expect students to behave. Student involvement in original videos allow students the opportunity to clearly understand expectations, which follow them throughout their career at Kensington. The Kensington staff believes in developing the whole-child, focusing on the unique needs and backgrounds of our learners. Our administration respects staff members as professionals by giving them a voice to make building decisions for the common good.

Responsibility is an integral part of Kensington's success. Students, staff, and administration are aware of their responsibility in the learning process. Kensington students are empowered to learn. Knowing that it is important to be globally competitive, the staff participates in professional development, curriculum reviews, and research to further ensure the students' success.

Caring acts are the heart of Kensington. Students are involved in school wide projects to spread kindness. The Kensington team is collaborative, observant, and unites to take action. Upon noticing students in need, staff members acknowledge concerns and work with families to find appropriate community resources and provide assistance. Kensington students are invited to lunch bunch sessions, friendship, and specifically designed support groups. Kensington staff is supported by the administration through our wellness program, strengthening both mental and physical well-being. We believe that healthy staff is essential when providing a caring environment for all.

Safety is ensured for all at Kensington. Staff provides a safe environment by reinforcing routines and establishing procedures. A myriad of support staff including a school resource officer, a full-time school nurse, guidance counselor, and part-time social worker, school psychologist, and behavior specialist secure safety. Students participate in safety patrol, D.A.R.E., digital citizenship training, monthly safety drills, and have access to a de-escalation room, The Chill Zone. Staff participates in a variety of medical, behavioral, and safety training. All stakeholders of Kensington Intermediate School are committed to uphold the values of our RRCS model.