

U.S. Department of Education
2015 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Jeffrey P Kulik

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

Official School Name G. Kerkstra Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 14950 S. Laramie Avenue

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

City Oak Forest State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60452-1323

County Cook County State School Code Number* 14-016-1420-02-2004

Telephone 708-687-2860 Fax 708-687-0571

Web site/URL http://www.d142.org E-mail jkulik@d142.org

Twitter Handle N/A Facebook Page N/A Google+ N/A

Blog Other Social Media Link

YouTube/URL N/A http://www.d142.org/site/epage/155022_547.htm N/A

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Paul McDermott, N/A

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

E-mail: pmcdermott@d142.org

Other)

District Name Forest Ridge Elementary School District 142 Tel. 708-687-3334

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Judy Schramm, N/A

(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 that it is accurate.

Date _____

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

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. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2014-2015 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2009 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2014.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

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

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 1 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	34	26	60
2	35	33	68
3	53	46	99
4	49	49	98
5	34	34	68
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total Students	205	188	393

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 17 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % White
 - 1 % 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2013 - 2014 year: 12%

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, 2013 until the end of the school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2013 until the end of the school year	37
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	48
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	406
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.118
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6 %
28 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 5
 Specify non-English languages: Spanish, Arabic, Polish, Malayalam, Albanian
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %
 Total number students who qualify: 164

Information for Public Schools Only - Data Provided by the State

The state has reported that 40 % of the students enrolled in this school are from low income or disadvantaged families based on the following subgroup(s): Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals

9. Students receiving special education services: 15 %
55 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>17</u> Developmentally Delayed |

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	17
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals	3
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

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

Required Information	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2014

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

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

Yes No

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

15. Please summarize your school mission in 25 words or less: Our mission is to create and maintain an environment that ensures a high level of academic achievement as determined by state and national standards.

PART III – SUMMARY

Forest Ridge Elementary School District serves sections of Midlothian, Crestwood, and Oak Forest, all of which are southern suburbs of Chicago. While Kerkstra's enrollment has remained stable, the district's demographics have shown a trending up over time. The Low-Income Rate has risen from 25.5 percent in 2010 to 39.1 percent in 2014. The Hispanic population has grown 11 percent in the previous 11 years representing 17 percent of the student population in 2014. We currently serve 406 students, of which 75 percent are white, 17 percent are Hispanic, 4 percent are African American, 3 percent are Asian, and 1 percent is Two or More Races.

Kerkstra Elementary School opened in August 2004 upon the redrawing of district boundaries and the completion of a renovation project. The original building was constructed in 1961 and was eventually named after longstanding teacher and principal Geraldine Kerkstra. The Southwest Cook County Association for Special Education holds five programs on site.

Students understand that the work we do at school is important and that we will provide the supports necessary for them to succeed. On-going conversations amongst parents, students and staff revolve around this fundamental premise. Kerkstra's curriculum is tightly aligned to the New Illinois Learning Standards. Curriculum maps have been developed through a rigorous process of collaboration involving entire grade level teams of teachers. Teachers use high yield methodologies and deliver bell-to-bell instruction. A data matrix is created for each grade level in reading, mathematics, and behavior. The matrix triangulates data in order to determine which students are in need of support or enrichment beyond the core curriculum. An after school "Success Club" extends the school day for struggling learners.

The mission, vision and value statements guide our work. They were developed collaboratively with input from all stakeholders. Each year we revisit, revise and connect personally to these guiding principles.

The mission of G. Kerkstra Elementary School is to create and maintain an environment that ensures that every member of the school community reaches a high level of academic achievement as determined by state and national standards. We ensure that each and every child grows as a learner, a person and a citizen. Kerkstra endorses a whole child approach which emphasizes the shared responsibility of parents/guardians, school, and community for the academic achievement, emotional well being, health, and safety of its students. Employing best practices and committing to a comprehensive system of support will accomplish this mission.

Our vision defines what we hope to achieve. As you enter G. Kerkstra Elementary School the level of pride and accomplishment is evident. The school is well maintained and is a safe environment. Appropriate technology supports a wide range of curricular and extracurricular activities. The learning atmosphere, which is exciting, stimulating and success oriented, affords students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. The learning atmosphere is also flexible and is based on student need. The school climate engenders respect; students feel free to accept and express ideas without fear or prejudice. Adults are compassionate, competent, committed, consistent, considerate, and enabled. Students and teachers at Kerkstra accept their roles in education. This is evident by the way students and teachers accept responsibility for their learning, possess positive attitudes, and maintain well-balanced participation in academics, extracurriculars, and community activities. Their communication is open, friendly, and caring. This exists because of respect among students and the adults in their lives. The students and teachers are self-motivated and excited about learning. Students and teachers have a true sense of direction, with goals clearly established. Students and teachers possess a high sense of responsibility. Through modeling good values, positive behavior, and high moral conscience, we hold ourselves accountable for our actions. We accept the consequences of the choices we make. Students come to school prepared, eager to participate, and devoted to learning. They complete learning projects and assignments without hesitation and are successful because they believe in who they are. Finally, all students work to become productive adults and contributing members of society. They aspire to be lifelong learners as they prepare and plan for the future. The entire community embraces involvement in the educational development of all students. The parents and other members of the community demonstrate respect for education through their availability to and

support for all members of the school population. Parents and staff work together in a mutually respectful and cooperative way with the vision of helping students achieve success.

Our values illuminate guiding principles that make our vision a reality. We give students multiple opportunities to learn and to demonstrate their accomplishments. We support the learning community of educators and monitor our own individual professional development. Data is utilized to create a support system that ensures all students have access to opportunity and academic growth. We use scientifically proven, research - based strategies and programs in our classrooms to support student growth. Student progress is assessed both formally and informally through observations, interactions and by using evaluative measures. We model respect, work ethic and open communication.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The curriculum at Kerkstra Elementary School is standards based. As the Common Core State Standards were adopted and transitioned into the new Illinois Learning Standards, teachers worked as grade level teams, using a backwards design method, to create curriculum maps that were developed around the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model. The Gradual Release Model is a research-based approach that ensures optimal learning and supports college and career readiness. All teachers and specialists participate in the process and have developed formative and summative assessments, identified relevant and rigorous resources, and created student friendly rubrics for each standard. The curriculum review process is ongoing and is a district initiative which has become the framework of our professional development. By ensuring that each teacher is involved in the development process, it becomes value added.

The development of Individualized Learning Plans for students has been critical to ensuring gains for all children in Reading/ELA and Mathematics and has helped to close the achievement gaps identified during the school improvement process for low income and EL students. Individualized Learning Plans document the specific Reading or Math interventions that will be provided to the student during the school day or after school, the staff member responsible for the intervention, and the progress monitoring method. Data is also used to identify students who have already mastered the core curriculum in order to develop Learning Plans that provide enrichment opportunities.

A strong focus on homework that is aligned to research based grade level policies, an after school Success Club, a home - school reading program, and a curriculum night designed to provide families with the knowledge and materials to support learning after school hours, extend the school day.

Reading/ELA

Kerkstra Elementary School is a literacy rich environment with a strong focus on the development of language; reading, writing, and speaking. This focus is cross curricular and transcends all content areas. Considerable professional development around a balanced approach to literacy, which includes whole group instruction, guided and independent reading and writing, and literacy stations has allowed for a high level of differentiation. The guided reading level of each student is assessed frequently using the Fountas and Pinnell system which facilitates the creation of a narrow band of instruction during guided reading. Groups are seen several times a week and running records and anecdotal notes drive instruction. Each time that a group is seen, teachers listen to individual students “whisper read” and provide specific individualized feedback regarding reading strategies (decoding and comprehension) and fluency. The development of a Guided Reading Library was a School Improvement Goal and had a significant impact on the ability of teachers to meet students where they are in terms of literacy and move them forward. All texts were leveled and moved to a central location to ensure that planning was seamless. Critical academic vocabulary is identified and explicitly taught at each grade level.

Results from tri-annual MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) and AIMsweb Curriculum Based Measurements drive instruction and personalize instruction. These school wide assessments allow grade level data teams to not only compare their students’ overall reading ability to national norms, but to allocate building resources according to need.

Science and social studies standards are embedded thematically in literacy instruction, especially during guided reading, with an intentional selection of text, read alouds or close readings. Multidisciplinary efforts maximize instructional time with these science and social science content rich texts used to explicitly teach literacy skills.

Mathematics

Curriculum maps have also been developed in the area of Mathematics. Using the Illinois State Board of

Education Scope and Sequence, teachers no longer rely on a text, but instead design lessons with a thoughtful selection of materials and methodologies. The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model allows for the identification of alternate processes that are student driven. As students move into the “we-do” and “we do it together” phases of learning, teachers take on a coaching role and facilitate learning through specific corrective feedback and formative assessment.

Once again, the use of tri-annual benchmark assessments ensures that individualized instructional support can be provided to students, with building level resources being effectively allocated.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Kerkstra Elementary School provides all students with the opportunity to experience supplemental, non-core curricular subjects. These courses are provided by certified, highly-qualified staff members and take place during normal school hours.

Physical Education classes take place for all students in 1st through 5th grade. Homeroom classes are scheduled for three PE sessions per week, for thirty minutes each. Students are introduced to the skills required to play sports such as volleyball, flag football, baseball, basketball, and hockey. A physical fitness unit also promotes students to live and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Kerkstra School’s social worker provides character education lessons in all classrooms. These lessons take place once per month, for a thirty minute session. Each month the character trait being discussed changes. The social worker seeks feedback from each classroom teacher to ensure that the lessons presented align with the needs of the class. If needed, small group “skillstreaming” lessons are presented to students who need further reinforcement of positive behaviors. Students are identified for additional support by their teachers, families, or by an analysis of behavior referrals by the PBIS Tier 2 Team.

The fine arts are highly valued at Kerkstra Elementary School. Each year, students in 1st through 5th grades have the opportunity to unleash their creativity by composing music and creating pieces of artwork. For the first half of the school year, all Kerkstra classes are scheduled to attend two thirty-minute sessions of music per week. During these music lessons, students study musical terminology and are shown how to play a diverse collection of musical instruments. At the halfway mark in the year, the music teacher leaves in order to provide her services to another school in the district and the art teacher comes to Kerkstra. Similarly, art classes take place for two thirty-minute sessions per week. In art class, students study and explore multiple mediums for creating masterpieces and have the freedom to create, without fear of criticism. Students create an annual, schoolwide dramatic or musical production which allows them the opportunity to combine their talents from multiple areas of the arts.

4th and 5th grade students are also offered extra-curricular opportunities through the band and choir programs. In preparation for performances throughout the school year, band and choir students participate in weekly whole group practices and additional thirty-minute sectional lessons. These lessons allow for students to receive further individualized instruction and guidance to help them prepare for success in future middle school fine arts programming.

Technology is used to enhance and advance the curriculum, provide enrichment opportunities, and facilitate computer-based interventions for students in all grades. A technology integration specialist works with grade level teams to redefine how technology is used in the classroom. Using the SAMR model, teachers teach “above the line” and transform classroom tasks and content. A computer lab and a laptop lab with SmartBoard accessibility are dedicated to student use and are continually booked. A mobile laptop cart is also available for technology to be infused in the classroom.

Students visit the school’s Library weekly with their class. The school’s librarian works with classroom teachers to select a read aloud and display books that align to current curricular concepts. Teachers remain with their class and assist students in finding appropriate books that are geared toward their independent level. Students have also been taught The Five Finger Method that allows them to find a “just right” book independently. After choosing a book, they read one paragraph and raise a finger for each unknown word.

If they finish the paragraph with fewer than five fingers up, the book is a good fit.

The academic achievement of Kerkstra's EL students is a high priority and to that effect a significant effort has been made to devote staff and resources to this goal. An ESL/Bilingual resource teacher co-teaches in general education classrooms and also sees students in small groups. Another ESL staff member is responsible for teaching a section of third grade which provides a sheltered instruction environment for a cluster of EL students. A significant number of Kerkstra general education teachers and support staff have participated in SIOP training, a model which helps educators teach content and vocabulary in ways that have proven more effective with EL students. ACCESS test results, MAP and AIMSweb scores, state achievement test data, and classroom performance is systematically analyzed to determine the type and level of EL programming needed as required by state guidelines and best practice. Individual Learning Plans, which outline a comprehensive system of support and progress monitoring guidelines are developed for each student and reviewed at least three times per year. An After School Tutoring Program for EL students is provided two days per week by an ESL teacher.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Pedagogy is defined as the art and science of teaching. Teachers at Kerkstra Elementary School are dedicated to using high yield methodologies. By studying the current body of literature as it relates to effect size, lessons are designed to intentionally maximize gains in student achievement. As research shows that teachers have a greater impact on student achievement than any other factor combined, a special emphasis has been placed on the planning process as it relates to delivery of instruction.

Most recently, the staff participated in a Book Study using *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College*. This book uses disaggregated student achievement data to identify microtechniques that make the biggest difference in student learning. Each technique was studied individually by grade level teams and then explored at weekly grade level meetings. Time during bi-monthly faculty meetings was dedicated to these techniques as teachers watched videos of our leaders in the field demonstrating their implementation. As a result, grade level notes reflected a shift in agenda topics leading to a focus on teaching and learning.

The Gradual Release of Responsibility was studied as part of the Curriculum Development process. Teachers were given professional development around this methodology (I Do - We Do It Together - You Do It Together - You Do It Alone) which is structured around a process devolving responsibility within the learning process from the teacher to the eventual independence of the learner. This instructional model requires that the teacher, by design, transitions from assuming all the responsibility for performing a task to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility for performing the task. During the "You Do" phase of instruction, students share their ideas regarding the concept and provide examples of how they feel most comfortable applying it. The ideal result is a confident learner who is able to connect their own learning style and previous knowledge to new material. This methodology links concept learning to cognitive processes and encourages metacognition, as students walk their peers through their individual thought process. By practicing this process we have found that students are able to grapple with and manipulate information as it relates to their learning with a high level of independence. Teachers eventually assume the role of mentor as students are given choice regarding processes and strategies as they assume responsibility around tasks.

PART V – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results Narrative Summary:

In 2006, Kerkstra was recognized as an Illinois Honor Roll School for Academic Improvement. This designation requires that schools sustain an upward trend in test scores for at least three years and show an overall increase in test scores by fifteen points. In addition, Kerkstra has made Adequate Yearly Progress for the past three years as other schools in Illinois were unable to do so.

Kerkstra Elementary School has historically been a high-performing school on the Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT). This standardized test was given annually in March to 3rd-5th grade students at Kerkstra in the areas of Reading and Math. Students in 4th grade were also assessed in Science. Kerkstra showed consistent gains from the 2009-2010 school year, 87.6 percent meeting and exceeding, to the 2011-2012 school year, 91.1 percent meeting and exceeding.

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, Illinois restructured its ISAT cut scores which resulted in a dramatic statewide downward shift in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding on ISAT. The state average of 78 percent of students meeting or exceeding in 2011-2012 dropped 21.8 percent to 58.2 percent in 2012-2013. This downward trend was not as pronounced at Kerkstra Elementary School. 80 percent of 3rd - 5th grade students at Kerkstra met or exceeded in 2012-2013 after the more rigorous cut scores were implemented, 21.8 percent higher than the state average.

Kerkstra teachers and staff continue to close achievement gaps by closely analyzing discrepancies within subgroups. Recent cross grade-level trends have shown a decrease in subgroup discrepancies. This can be attributed to Kerkstra's rigorous student data analysis process. Implementation of research based RTI interventions in the areas of reading and math are recommended at tri-annual data meetings. These meetings bring regular education teachers, special education teachers, interventionists, and administrators together to analyze AIMSWEB, MAP, and Fountas & Pinnell data to ensure all students receive necessary interventions to address deficit areas. The collaborative efforts from all Kerkstra staff, and the high expectations set for Kerkstra's student body, are what help close our achievement gaps.

2. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Assessment data results drive the teaching and learning process at Kerkstra Elementary School. The aforementioned tri-annual data meetings provide teachers across all grade levels the opportunity to review reading and math data matrices. These data matrices showcase longitudinal student growth data of NWEA MAP scores, Fountas and Pinnell guided reading levels, Aimsweb oral reading fluency scores, Aimsweb math computation scores, and Aimsweb math concepts and applications scores. Through staff collaboration at these meetings, students are then identified for interventions such as Success Club, Heggerty, Wilson, Repeated Reading, Reading Plus, V-Math, Connecting Math Concepts, or Math IXL. All progress monitoring data is made available to parents and is discussed at problem solving meetings, parent/teacher conferences, and IEP meetings. If a student makes progress in his or her respective intervention, he or she may graduate out. Students not making adequate progress will be recommended for an alternative or more rigorous intervention to ensure academic growth. A comprehensive system of special education support is in place for our students with disabilities with an emphasis on providing individualized educational plans in the least restrictive environment.

Kerkstra teachers have also worked collaboratively in order to create common classroom assessments in the areas of ELA and math. As we redefined our curriculum maps to best address the rigor of the Common Core State Standards, rigorous new assessment options were created and implemented with fidelity. Teachers now drive their instruction by way of pre- and post tests that allow a teacher to assess a student's background knowledge and his or her growth as it pertains to a specific Common Core Standard. Teaching strategies, student activities, and instructional and technology resources are revised to best address students' needs. Post assessments are copied, sent home to parents, and filed in students' temporary files for next

year's teacher to review. Rubrics for each assessment are made available to help students and staff determine the level of mastery a student has achieved.

Part VI School Support

1. School Climate/Culture

The school culture at Kerkstra Elementary School revolves around high expectations for both students and for staff. The research of Dr. Ferguson at Harvard University as it relates to work ethic and perseverance became a guiding principle. His findings indicated that how “smart” you are depends on how hard you work and how long you work hard and this opened the door of academic success for all students.

Teachers created a “Culture of Candor” and began to coach one another through focused grade level work, the use of data to drive instructional practices and the completion of monthly colleague observations. Shared leadership and the use of a transformational model connected our feelings about our work to our ability to do our work well.

The Southwest Cook County Association for Special Education holds five programs on site. The Communication Development and Destiny program serves 35 students. They service children who have multiple disabilities that include Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Physical Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injury and Speech and Language Disorders. These students are integrated to the greatest extent possible in our general education programs. We work as a team and share resources and special talents. This diversifies Kerkstra’s student population and promotes acceptance. As a result of their seamless integration, the student culture of the building is one that honors all students as individuals. In the eyes of the students, disabilities become irrelevant, they see only a friend, a classmate, a peer.

An analysis of referral data identifies times for classroom and school wide movement breaks which are implemented to increase student engagement and optimal brain functioning. This data also leads to the organization of Skillstreaming groups that explicitly teach prosocial skills, such as asking for help, joining a group, and initiating a conversation appropriately.

Year long building initiatives help to create a clear focus for improvement. Bell-to-Bell teaching, the use of specific corrective feedback and the delivery of tightly aligned curriculum using high yield methodologies has become the cornerstone of our work. Administrative walkthroughs and colleague observations are instrumental in implementing these initiatives. These themes become the lens through which we view our work resulting in a steady upward trend in student achievement.

Each day, students are reminded during the morning announcements that the work they do is important, that they will be successful, and that they will be given the support they need to accomplish their goals. Students have internalized this philosophy, value learning and see themselves as scholars.

2. Engaging Families and Community

Kerkstra Elementary prides itself on creating positive, engaging relationships with families and organizations within the local community. Prior to the school year beginning, the school administrator attends the “National Night Out” event. This community sponsored event encourages community members to engage with local school leaders and discuss school related topics. At the beginning of the school year, all stakeholders are welcome to attend Open House and meet the teachers and principal. ‘Coffee with the Principal’ opportunities are offered quarterly. All parents are invited to attend Parent/Teacher conferences in the fall in order to discuss student progress. Kerkstra families and community members are also welcomed into the school for festivities during American Education Week. Activities include Family Reading Night, Grandparents’ Day, and Parent Visitation Day. These events show first hand what makes Kerkstra special.

Kerkstra School has created positive, lasting relationships with external, non-profit organizations. The Kerkstra Early Act student club organizes a “Pennies for Patients” fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, a “Dimes for Downs” fundraiser for the National Down Syndrome Society, and a “Relay for Life” fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. As a school community project in 2015,

Kerkstra will host a Kid's Walk and fundraiser for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. During the holiday season, toys are collected from students and staff for the Pediatric Oncology Toy Drive. These partnerships and fundraisers promote selflessness and consideration of those less fortunate within Kerkstra's community. The outcomes of these fundraisers are shared with the local community by way of the Kerkstra website and local newspaper.

The PTA at Kerkstra is heavily involved in creating a positive bond between the community and school. PTA movie nights are scheduled five nights annually in which all community stakeholders can come to the school and enjoy a film and network with each other. A special needs movie night is also scheduled to encourage families with special needs students to attend and enjoy a film in a relaxed, stress-free environment. The PTA also schedules a Santa's Secret Shop and Scholastic Book Fair in which all students may participate.

To further keep parents abreast of important school information, EL parent meetings and Common Core parent meetings are scheduled, and Friday Principal letters highlight the week at Kerkstra. In addition, each teacher has a Weebly page that lists specific details regarding student learning so that parents can easily access important information.

3. Professional Development

Kerkstra Elementary School participated in the Federal Initiative, An Adventure of the American Mind (now referred to as TPS - Teaching with Primary Sources). Partnering with Loyola University Chicago, specific on-site professional development was offered that was designed to link educators to the Library of Congress. The goal of these workshops was to promote the effective use of the extensive digitized resources housed at the Library of Congress to engage students, develop critical thinking skills and construct knowledge. The study of the incorporation of primary sources during lesson development began the process of moving away from text driven instruction. We have found these materials to be especially effective during close reading activities. Fourth grade students recently analyzed a letter that Rosa Parks had hand-written to the city of Montgomery during the Civil Rights Era. They were able to read, in her own words, of the struggles she faced and learned of her long history of pushing back against oppression. This primary source gave them an understanding of the courage necessary for her actions and gave a more complete picture of the woman she was. A biography or simple recount of events of the era would not have had the same effect. This event in history came alive as students read Rosa's thoughts, in her handwriting, and analyzed the text in order to draw conclusions regarding the climate of race relations at that time in history.

Over the past ten years, book studies revolving around the development of a Professional Learning Community (Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement and later Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work) and collaboration (The Collaborative Teacher) have regularly taken place. These professional development activities reflect our commitment to continued growth and are designed to promote conversation amongst teachers in order to enhance professional practice.

As a staff, we scan the horizon for best practice in our field by regularly reviewing scholarly research and peer reviewed journals. The development of curriculum and the study of effective instructional practices that impact student achievement is the sole purpose of professional development efforts. As a staff, we feel that teaching children is a privilege and we must continually strive to improve the quality of instruction.

We believe that the investment in human capital is worthwhile. Teachers new to the district participate in a differentiated two-year induction program that serves to not only acclimate new teachers to the profession, but experienced teachers in a new position to the district.

4. School Leadership

Kerkstra Elementary School employs transformational leaders that ensure students academic, emotional, and social needs are met. At Kerkstra Elementary, the Principal plays an integral role on the district's Administrative Council. Once per month, principals from all schools, all district-level directors, and the superintendent meet to discuss district policies, procedures, and best practices. This helps ensure the continued success of all teachers and students within the district. Service leadership defines this Administrative Council team and results in the creation of supportive, professional relationships with all district and Kerkstra stakeholders.

The Rising Star School Improvement Team serves as the driving force behind creating a positive and productive Professional Learning Community at Kerkstra School. Rising Star school improvement meetings take place bi-monthly. At these meetings, indicators of progress are assessed, monitored, and action plans are collaboratively created. The Principal ensures that all action plans support the mission and vision statements for the school. The Rising Star team disseminates information and action plans to their colleagues at grade-level team meetings.

Each grade level has an appointed grade level coordinator that leads his or her colleagues. These coordinators regularly meet with the Principal to discuss school events, professional development opportunities, student discipline, and curriculum and instruction practices. Grade level meetings take place on a weekly basis before school and result in professional discussions about committee meetings, student academic and behavioral growth, and successful instructional strategies.

As teachers identify students within their classrooms that could benefit from instructional interventions, the student is recommended to the school's Problem Solving Team. This team consists of the Principal, school psychologist, classroom teacher, and any other applicable student support personnel. At these meetings, an Individual Learning Plan is created for the student that identifies the intervention needed for continued success, necessary materials, the staff member providing the support, and when the intervention will be administered. Subsequent follow up meetings are also scheduled to ensure adequate gains are being seen. Alternative, more intensive supports are then administered for those students who need them.

Kerkstra school uses Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as it's model for student behavior. Two PBIS leadership teams meet bi-weekly. The PBIS Tier 1 team meets to discuss general student behavioral trends and PBIS celebrations & rewards. The PBIS Tier 2 team meets to discuss individual student behavioral data, recommends students for interventions, and monitors the success of the interventions. Kerkstra has been identified as a PBIS Gold Level Recipient because of the collective efforts of all staff.

PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Illinois Standards Achievement Test</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>Illinois State Board of Education / Pearson</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standard and above	84	96	93	95	94
Exceeds Standard	20	64	64	56	56
Number of students tested	61	73	74	79	71
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	2	3	0	3	4
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard and above	64	91	88	100	100
Exceeds Standard	27	55	50	46	43
Number of students tested	22	22	24	10	14
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard and above	73	85		73	92
Exceeds Standard	27	48		36	31
Number of students tested	10	13		18	7
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standard and above	87	100	97	98	93
Exceeds Standard	20	72	69	57	63
Number of students tested	46	53	62	63	57
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: According to the Illinois State Board of Education, in order to protect students' identities, test data for groups of fewer than ten students are not reported.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Illinois Standards Achievement Test</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>4</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>Illinois State Board of Education / Pearson</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standard and above	87	95	93	92	89
Exceeds Standard	11	39	41	38	26
Number of students tested	75	76	84	71	83
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	3	0	1	4	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard and above	88	92	91	89	94
Exceeds Standard	13	23	24	28	11
Number of students tested	24	26	21	18	18
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standard and above		69	75		55
Exceeds Standard		15	8		9
Number of students tested		13	12		11
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard and above	70		88		93
Exceeds Standard	10		41		20
Number of students tested	12		17		18
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standard and above	90	97	98	91	89
Exceeds Standard	12	40	42	45	30
Number of students tested	58	62	58	57	57
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: According to the Illinois State Board of Education, in order to protect students' identities, test data for groups of fewer than ten students are not reported.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Illinois Standards Achievement Test</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>5</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>Illinois State Board of Education / Pearson</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standard and above	75	96	92	81	89
Exceeds Standard	7	21	16	11	14
Number of students tested	70	81	73	81	88
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	3	2	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard and above	65	100	86	67	60
Exceeds Standard	8	10	5	10	0
Number of students tested	26	21	22	31	10
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standard and above	18	70		33	
Exceeds Standard	0	0		8	
Number of students tested	11	10		14	
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard and above		94		80	77
Exceeds Standard		6		7	0
Number of students tested		17		21	18
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standard and above	78	97	93	86	87
Exceeds Standard	7	28	21	11	21
Number of students tested	62	57	59	68	63
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: According to the Illinois State Board of Education, in order to protect students' identities, test data for groups of fewer than ten students are not reported.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Illinois Standards Achievement Test</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>Illinois State Board of Education / Pearson</u> <u>Illinois State Board of Education / Pearson</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standard and above	87	89	87	85	79
Exceeds Standard	38	44	42	32	31
Number of students tested	61	73	74	79	71
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	2	3	0	3	4
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard and above	77	87	79	82	79
Exceeds Standard	32	30	21	36	21
Number of students tested	22	23	24	10	14
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standard and above			58		50
Exceeds Standard			8		0
Number of students tested			12		10
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard and above	73	80		73	69
Exceeds Standard	36	20		9	15
Number of students tested	10	14		18	7
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Meets Standard and above					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standard and above	89	91	92	86	82
Exceeds Standard	40	51	46	35	36
Number of students tested	46	53	67	63	57
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: According to the Illinois State Board of Education, in order to protect students' identities, test data for groups of fewer than ten students are not reported.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Illinois Standards Achievement Test</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>4</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>Illinois State Board of Education / Pearson</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standard and above	77	84	85	90	78
Exceeds Standard	23	38	37	37	27
Number of students tested	75	76	84	71	83
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	3	0	1	4	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard and above	54	82	76	89	72
Exceeds Standard	21	15	38	22	11
Number of students tested	24	27	21	18	18
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standard and above		43	50		27
Exceeds Standard		0	8		0
Number of students tested		14	12		11
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard and above	70		82		67
Exceeds Standard	20		29		20
Number of students tested	12		17		18
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standard and above	79	85	88	91	86
Exceeds Standard	24	40	42	41	31
Number of students tested	58	62	58	57	57
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: According to the Illinois State Board of Education, in order to protect students' identities, test data for groups of fewer than ten students are not reported.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Illinois Standards Achievement Test</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>5</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>Illinois State Board of Education / Pearson</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standard and above	74	90	89	83	89
Exceeds Standard	30	38	40	36	29
Number of students tested	70	81	73	81	88
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	3	2	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard and above	58	86	77	76	80
Exceeds Standard	19	36	23	14	20
Number of students tested	26	22	22	31	10
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standard and above	10	40		25	
Exceeds Standard	0	10		17	
Number of students tested	11	10		14	
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard and above		94		80	77
Exceeds Standard		25		20	12
Number of students tested		17		21	18
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standard and above	74	90	91	86	88
Exceeds Standard	31	44	44	44	29
Number of students tested	62	58	59	68	63
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standard and above					
Exceeds Standard					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: According to the Illinois State Board of Education, in order to protect students' identities, test data for groups of fewer than ten students are not reported.