

U.S. Department of Education
2017 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 Dr. Julie Turner

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

Official School Name Kedron Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 200 Kedron Drive

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

City Peachtree City State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30269-3920

County Fayette County

Telephone (770) 486-2700 Fax (770) 486-2707

Web site/URL http://www.fcboe.org/kes E-mail turner.julie@mail.fcboe.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. Joseph Barrow E-mail barrow.joseph@mail.fcboe.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Fayette County Board of Education Tel. (770) 460-3535

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 Dr. Barry Marchman
(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, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. 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. 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 and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 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.
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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
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.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 24 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. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	12	10	22
K	57	33	90
1	49	51	100
2	50	50	100
3	37	54	91
4	46	54	100
5	56	41	97
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	307	293	600

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 19 % Asian
 - 15 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 50 % White
 - 6 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 21%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	66
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	55
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	121
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	572
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.212
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	21

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
58 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Portugese, Other Indian, Other Asian, Hindi, Other European, Chinese, Gujarati, Turkish, Thai, Russian, French.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18 %
Total number students who qualify: 107
8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
58 Total number of students served

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

- 5 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 1 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 6 Other Health Impaired
- 20 Specific Learning Disability
- 11 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 15 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	17
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	97%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

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. 2006

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.
At Kedron Elementary School, we strive for excellence in all things while fostering the academic/social/emotional development of all students.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Kedron Elementary school is an accredited public school located in Peachtree City, Georgia, south of the metro-Atlanta area. The school is one of 14 elementary schools in the Fayette County school system, currently serving 600 students in preK through grade 5. Families served by Kedron Elementary School live in single family dwellings in numerous subdivisions or in one of three large apartment complexes. Our students come from a variety of family structures - two parent households with one parent working, households with two working parents, single parent households, and households that are multi-generational. Culturally, Kedron families are very diverse - American, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Australian, Asian Indian, Pakistani, Filipino, Mexican, African, European and others, speaking many languages. Students come from every socioeconomic level, ranging from affluence to poverty.

While Peachtree City has many amenities for families to enjoy, its most unique feature is its 90+ miles of multi-use paths for pedestrians, cyclists, or golf carts. Many businesses thrive in Peachtree City. National corporations have offices and plants located in the industrial zones. Parents work in Fayette County and surrounding counties, or they commute to the metro-Atlanta area. Parents indicate that they choose to reside in Kedron's attendance zone in order to provide their children with a high quality educational experience. They also welcome the opportunity to have their children educated in such a diverse setting as Kedron Elementary School.

Kedron opened its doors in 1995. Its school motto has always been "Excellence in all things." Kedron students are the Kedron Knights. There is a medieval theme with suits of armor scattered throughout, a mural of a castle in the front lobby, a castle in the media center, and a commons area known as the Great Hall. There is a tradition of high levels of parent engagement as seen through our Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO), the School Council, and the number of volunteers.

The school has a history of high achievement, receiving various recognitions. In 2006 Kedron was named a National Blue Ribbon School and a Georgia School of Excellence. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement awarded the school with Gold Level status for two years and Platinum Level status for 8 years as "Highest Performing" school. AYP targets were met for 11 years. In 2011, Georgia's accountability system for public schools changed to the College and Career Ready Performance Index. Since that time, Kedron received high overall scores ranging from 93.4 to 100.8 derived from a variety of benchmark indicators. High achievement has been maintained despite attendance redistricting, significant changes in ethnic/racial/religious diversity, an increase in the number of English Learner students, and an increase in the percentage of students receiving Free/Reduced Lunch.

Throughout the school, there is a laser-like focus on standards-based instruction. Teachers effectively implement "assessment for learning" strategies, leading to better understanding of student mastery and the students' increased ownership of their own learning. Instructional planning is driven by formal and informal data that indicates a need for remediation or acceleration. Lesson plans are developed through the backwards design process. Teachers design rigorous, well aligned summative assessments.

The school is currently in the second year of a two-year Project Lead the Way grant, aimed at supporting project-based learning. Other instructional approaches include differentiated instruction, small group instruction, balanced literacy, and STEM activities. Instructional technology integration is integral to providing students opportunities for personalized learning, collaboration and creation, remediation, and acceleration.

Through a partnership with the Marcus Autism Center, teachers have a better understanding of social emotional engagement. Teachers promote the social emotional engagement of all students by providing interactive opportunities and visual supports.

We believe that playtime is important for children. Students receive Physical Education instruction twice a week. Recess is provided daily for all students. Students spend the last 5 minutes of their lunch time walking and socializing on the bus loop. Enhancement of the playground has been an important initiative

for the PTO in which they have provided a sandbox, new equipment, shade structures, a buddy bench, and a new blacktop area for basketball.

Students attend music and art classes weekly. They are also exposed to the arts through our chorus program, student art exhibitions, Origami Club, and extracurricular opportunities in art and drama. PTO provides funds for cultural arts assemblies featuring professional storytellers and musicians. Kedron collaborates with the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta to provide experiences in music, drama, and art.

2006 was a milestone year for the school in that it was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School, a Georgia School of Excellence, and a Platinum award winner for Highest Performing. The staff proudly referred to the school as a “triple crown winner”. These recognitions reinforced their commitment to the motto of “Excellence in all things.” High expectations became even more embedded into our school culture. Redistricting occurred shortly thereafter, resulting in an increase in the enrollment of students receiving free/reduced lunch and in racial diversity. The staff’s commitment to excellence led them to adopt a “whatever it takes” mentality. As our free/reduced lunch numbers and diversity continue to increase, high student achievement has been maintained with few gaps among subgroups.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The school's core curriculum is based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence and the Georgia Performance Standards. The school district provides a scope and sequence for each content area. Teachers follow the scope and sequence when planning for instruction. Although textbooks are provided for all subjects, teachers utilize resources beyond the textbook to make learning more engaging and relevant.

Reading and language arts are taught in all grade levels with a balanced literacy approach that incorporates the necessary components of literacy: oral language development, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teachers present literacy strategies in whole group mini-lessons, after which students move to small group instruction and independent reading and writing. Many teachers have adopted the Daily 5 framework where Cafe strategies are implemented. There is a strong emphasis on close reading and citing evidence from text to support opinions and claims. Writing takes place every day in every grade level. Exemplars are used to help students conceptualize what good writing looks like. Rubrics and checklists are in place for students to assess their own writing and their peers' writing. The RACES strategy is often used in upper grades to help students organize their writing.

The media specialist plays an integral part in supporting literacy. She collaborates with teachers to plan media lessons that relate to concepts being taught in all content areas. Reading skills and research skills are emphasized. Students are supported as they seek "good fit" books and books that pertain to specific student interests. Accelerated Reader is used as a reading motivational program.

Mathematics instruction focuses on grade specific standards as well as the standards for mathematical practice. As students progress through the grade levels, concepts are introduced developmentally. The lower grades focus on counting, number sense, algebraic operations, base ten, and place value. The upper grades take the aforementioned foundational skills to tackle addition/subtraction, multiplication/division, and fractions. Geometry and data usage are addressed at all grade levels. In the classroom, concepts are introduced whole group with targeted skill instruction delivered in small groups. Independent math practice includes math games and software programs such as TenMarks, IXL, and Dreambox. Students learn a variety of strategies for problem solving including use of manipulatives, open-ended number lines, and drawing a picture. When discussing math problems, students are asked to explain their mathematical thinking orally and in writing. Math vocabulary is heavily emphasized. Spiral review is also included in order to reinforce previously learned concepts.

The science curriculum teaches students to value and use science as a process for obtaining knowledge, based upon observable evidence. The science standards fall into the domains of earth/space science, physical science, and life science, with the content of the standards becoming more complex from kindergarten to grade 5. Students learn science concepts, then experience those concepts through hands-on explorations that apply the scientific method. Upper grade students use chromebooks and probeware for data collection during labs. In 2015, Kedron was awarded a two-year grant for the Project Lead the Way Launch initiative. Students in grades K-5 participate in interdisciplinary modules in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. PLTW pedagogy is activity-, project-, problem-based. The modules are aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards for science.

The social studies curriculum revolves around the domains of history, civics, geography, and economics. In kindergarten, students are introduced to American symbols. Grade 1 students study historical figures in American history. Georgia history is the focus in grade 2. Students in grade 3 learn about the roots of democracy and how American historical figures influenced the expansion of freedom and civil rights. American history is studied in grades 4 and 5. Through social studies, students strive to understand their past and how that past influences the present day and the future. Teachers support this by bridging the past to contemporary events. Students are taught to understand the nature of historical inquiry and the role of primary and secondary sources. There is consideration of multiple perspectives on events. Teachers encourage students to speculate on the motives and actions of historical figures. Social studies skills as

identified on the skills matrix provided by the Georgia Department of Education are integrated into the content.

Literacy is heavily intertwined with science and social studies instruction in order to build knowledge through reading content-rich nonfiction. This approach also allows students to read, write, and discuss topics using evidence from text as well as allowing them to have regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary. Students explore topics through research of nonfiction texts and internet resources. They then write about their topic or develop presentations to share information with others. Historical fiction anchor texts used in language arts often center around science or social studies topics.

Kedron's preschool class is offered as part of Georgia's lottery funded pre-K program. The curriculum is based on five domains of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards. The physical development domain addresses health, the senses, and motor skills.

The social/emotional development domain focuses on a sense of self, self-regulation, and a sense of others. Approaches to play looks at a child's initiative, attentiveness, persistence, and play. The domain of communication, language, and literacy addresses receptive/expressive language and early reading/writing skills. In the domain of cognitive development, students explore math, science, social studies, creativity, and critical thinking. Assessment is ongoing to insure that students are progressing in these areas. We find that the students in our pre-K program exhibit better school readiness skills when they return for kindergarten. They have a solid foundation in beginning literacy. Social emotional skills such as cooperation, compromise, and self-regulation are better developed.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Kedron, other curricular areas are referred to as "specials" classes, attended by students in grades pre-K through grade 5. Specials include art, music, technology, and physical education. Students attend art and music classes at least one time each week. They participate in P.E. at least twice a week. In grades 3-5, students attend technology classes once per week with students in grades K-2 attending one time per week for a 9-week period. Standards-based instruction is prevalent in all specials courses with teachers implementing the Georgia Performance Standards for their specific area.

The arts benefit children by cultivating the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication. In art, students are exposed to art history, art genres, and the works of great artists. They have the opportunity to explore different media and techniques. Changing exhibitions of student artwork are displayed throughout the school. In music, students study music theory and composition. They focus on listening, rhythm, note recognition, and tempo. Students have the opportunity to experiment with maracas, drums, ukuleles, and a variety of Orff instruments. Movement and dance are integrated into music instruction.

Physical education is differentiated to allow students to participate at their physical ability while being challenged to build coordination, agility, strength, and stamina. PE lessons begin with warm-ups. Then, with high energy music playing, students engage in games that combine skills, strategy, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Students participate in the Fitnessgram assessment to evaluate five components of health-related fitness: Aerobic capacity, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition.

Instruction in technology is ever-evolving as technology itself evolves. In the last four years, Kedron's technology has grown from two stand alone computer labs to a Bring Your Own Technology approach to the most recent Connected Classroom initiative. Instructional technology integration is present in every instructional setting. The technology specials class supports this integration by teaching digital safety, digital citizenship, internet research skills, use of Google Apps for Education, and code writing. The technology teacher collaborates with the media specialist and classroom teachers to develop projects that allow students to showcase their creative integration of technology skills with content knowledge. Students also participate in the computer programming module of the Project Lead the Way Launch initiative.

Students in grades K through 5 participate in monthly classroom guidance lessons delivered by the school counselor. The lessons cover a range of topics such as personal safety, goal setting, listening skills, social skills, test-taking strategies, regulating emotions, conflict resolution, and bullying. The counselor also provides instruction on the seventeen Georgia Career Clusters culminating in a career portfolio for students in grade 5.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Kedron teachers plan for standards based instruction utilizing the backwards design model. Teachers utilize both formative and summative data to inform their instruction. Based on data, explicit instruction is provided to students using a variety of strategies in whole group and small group settings. Technology is integral in instruction with devices being used in many ways: reading and responding with text evidence, researching topics, creating presentations, practicing skills and concepts, listening to stories, practicing reading fluency, etc.

Differentiated instruction is evident in all classrooms. Teachers use the data that is gathered daily to develop instructional plans that meet individual student needs. Different levels of questioning are prevalent in classrooms. Students may be working on projects suited to their interest level and skill level, reading different “good fit” books, working in collaborative groups to solve logic problems, etc. Teachers use flexible groupings to meet the needs of students. Resources such as personnel and instructional time are maximized. For example, support teachers remediate and accelerate during zero period. Paraprofessionals provide instructional support throughout the school. Through the PLTW grant, teachers are implementing more project-based learning opportunities.

Interventions are part of the instructional thought process and academic conversation at Kedron. Teachers use research based interventions. Reading, math, writing, speech/language, and behavior interventions are integral to student success. Students may participate in Early Intervention Reading and/or Math classes, ESOL classes, gifted support, Lexia, Dreambox, and behavior supports such as check in/check out and positive reinforcement. Explicit instruction is also provided for those students who need support with social skills, work completion, peer interactions, etc.

Assessment for learning strategies are evident in classrooms at Kedron. Learning targets are emphasized, and both formative and summative assessment opportunities exist. Benchmark assessments are given three times per year in reading and math. This data is reviewed and used to determine which students are meeting benchmarks, which students require additional support, and which students are exceeding the bar, requiring acceleration. Data team meetings are held monthly to review benchmark data and progress monitoring data. Data teams are made up of grade level teachers, early intervention teachers, special education teachers, ELL teachers, speech/language pathologist, counselor and the assistant principal. This is a true collaboration to problem solve in order to best meet the needs of students. Progress monitoring data is graphed with a trend line and is used to guide instructional decisions. Teachers use DIBELS, STAR Math, and additional progress monitoring tools to monitor students’ skill acquisition. Current interventions are discussed and changes made as appropriate in regards to frequency, duration and intensity of the intervention.

Approximately 25% of Kedron’s student population is identified as gifted. Our gifted students are served by the gifted teachers through a resource model. One of the gifted teachers supports small group instruction at a higher level for students needing additional acceleration.

For accountability purposes, student achievement in grades 3-5 is measured by performance on the Georgia Milestones Assessment. Achievement gaps are revealed when Milestones data is compared between all students and the subgroups of Black students, English Learners, and Students with Disabilities. For students in these categories, data from a variety of sources is monitored. Interventions and specialized instruction are delivered through the Early Intervention Program, the ESOL program, or through special education. The interventions may be delivered digitally from resources such as Read180, Reading Horizons, Lexia, and Dreambox or through direct instruction. Targeted skill-based instruction is provided during small group instruction in the general education classroom.

Kedron is a high performing school with high standards for teaching and learning. Collaborative planning time allows teachers to dig deep into the standards. Continuous professional learning ensures that teachers are increasing their effectiveness. Students are taught in a safe, caring environment by highly effective teachers who build strong relationships, resulting in consistently high student achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Kedron, student engagement begins before they arrive for the first day of school. Towards the end of summer, each student receives a postcard signed by his/her new teacher, inviting the student to attend our Meet the Teacher event, which is held the week prior to the start of school. When students arrive for Meet the Teacher, they enter bright, clean, well organized classrooms. Adults are smiling and welcoming. As the school year progresses, student work is displayed in the hallways. Art exhibits adorn the hallways, changing throughout the year as new art projects are completed. Kedron teachers are very adept at establishing routines, procedures, and behavior expectations, which are reviewed throughout the year. Students know what is expected of them.

Because of our focus on assessment for learning strategies, students are aware of their progress toward mastery of learning targets. Teachers share data with students. Feedback is ongoing so that students understand what to do next to improve. The student has a greater sense of control over his/her learning with the teacher as the facilitator of learning. The integration of technology into instruction also supports engagement and motivation as students are eager to use educational software, to research topics on the internet, and to create digital projects to show what they know.

Kedron teachers are also very adept at building relationships with children. Students are treated with the same level of respect that teachers expect from the students. As inevitable conflicts arise among students, teachers help the children navigate the situation in order to help students understand the other child's perspective and to reach resolution. Teachers, administrators, and support staff use a Love and Logic approach to reinforce that children need to make good choices, with time taken to explain the consequences of those choices. When a poor choice is made, children are often asked to reflect upon what would have been a better choice and why. The counselor hosts friendship and social skills groups.

Teachers are valued as the most influential factor in a child's educational experience. Administrators respond quickly to their needs. Teachers have a voice in school decisions through participation on the leadership team, school council, data review teams, and various committees. Innovative solution seeking is encouraged. Time for collaborative planning is provided each month, allowing the teachers time to focus intensely on instructional planning and assessment.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Kedron Elementary School embraces all members of its family - students, parents, staff, and community members. Volunteerism is high, with parents and community members volunteering in the classroom, the media center, and the front office. Parents participate in school leadership and school improvement through participation on our school council. Kedron's relationship with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is particularly strong. The PTO has two priorities - fundraising and giving back to the school community. Fundraising efforts generate approximately \$90,000 annually, most of which is spent in support of the school and our families. The Heart-to-Heart 5K fun run is a fundraiser that casts a wider net of engagement through the community with over 200 participants and many corporate and business sponsors. This event is a partnership between the Kedron PTO and the Peachtree City Running Club.

PTO donations are made to the art program, the music program, the media center, physical education, the school clinic, the custodial department, and teacher reimbursements for classroom supplies. PTO also sponsors many family engagement activities such as Fall Festival, Spring Fling, Skate Night, and Family Fun Nights. These events provide old fashioned family fun, often times at little to no cost for parents.

After state-mandated testing is completed in the spring, PTO organizes and runs the Academic Fair. The Academic Fair gives students an opportunity for experiential learning centered around an academic theme such as the environment, celebrating diversity, international fine arts and culture, and STEM. All students participate in the day-long event, rotating through a variety of stations. Community experts, parents, and

middle and high school students help to man the different stations.

Teachers are frequently awarded funding from the Fayette Education Foundation and the Bright Ideas grant program, sponsored by the Coweta-Fayette EMC. The Panasonic Corporation has made several donations in support of technology integration. We participate in food drives and the Angel Tree Project, which provides holiday gifts to needy families. Our school is often selected by Georgia State University and University of West Georgia to host practicum students majoring in education.

Information is shared through our school website and a weekly digital newsletter that is emailed to parents. If something needs to be shared quickly such as severe weather concerns or a school evacuation, we send email blasts through our student information system. We are implementing Blackboard, a learning management system accessed by students and parents.

3. Professional Development:

Kedron's professional learning focuses on equipping teachers to be highly effective. The biggest priority for professional learning is assessment, with a particular focus on formative assessment. We constantly review assessment for learning strategies. Our Curriculum Teacher Leaders design and deliver this content. Teachers who successfully implement these strategies are in the spotlight, sharing how the strategies are embedded into their pedagogy. All certified staff have completed the Formative Instructional Practices modules, made available through the Georgia Department of Education. Staff participated in a book study on Fair Isn't Always Equal, which looks at standards-based learning, assessment, differentiation, and grading. With an improved understanding of assessment, teachers have become more data-driven in their instructional planning. The assessment for learning approach allows the students to have more ownership of their learning experience. Summative assessments are better aligned to standards. Grading practices are changing toward a more standards-based approach.

Teachers participate in monthly collaborative planning sessions. These sessions allow teachers to work together in grade level professional learning communities to look intensely at learning standards, evidence of learning, and instructional planning. This has been impactful on teachers' understanding of what the standards are demanding, how to assess the standards, and how to design rigorous and relevant instruction.

In 2014, we implemented the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) for teacher evaluation. To support this, teachers formed personalized professional learning communities to focus on the TKES standards where they felt they needed the most development.

When the school system overhauled its procedures for implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) in 2015, teachers felt overwhelmed with implementation. The assistant principal and the RTI Teacher Leader developed professional learning to inform and support teachers in becoming more knowledgeable about the tiers process, interventions, and progress monitoring. This has led to better identification of students in need of interventions and data-driven decision making when data reviews reveal the effectiveness of interventions. There is greater emphasis on interventions to address social/emotional concerns.

Our partnership with the Marcus Autism Center led to a greater awareness of social emotional engagement. Teachers gained an understanding that negative student behaviors were often the result of frustration and inability to engage in the learning process. Teachers implemented strategies to help students predict why they were invited to engage in a task, what the sequence and steps of that task would be, and how to interact with peers and adults during the task.

4. School Leadership:

Kedron Elementary School is very child-centered, and all decisions are based on what is best for the academic, social, and emotional growth of our students. Leadership is collaborative, inviting input from students, parents, certified staff, and support staff. We pull together to surmount the challenges of providing an excellent educational experience to all students.

The administrative team consists of the principal and the assistant principal. Their primary focus is on instructional leadership, although they support all other areas of educational leadership. Both leaders strive to be accessible to all and highly visible. Neither one hesitates to do whatever is needed in the moment as they both approach their work with a servant leader's heart. The administration works closely with PTO and school council.

Teachers have numerous opportunities to serve in leadership. There is a grade chair for each grade level who serves on the leadership team. Other members of the leadership team include the assistant principal, the media specialist, the technology specialist, the counselor, the special education lead teacher, and a representative for support teachers (ESOL, early intervention, gifted). Leadership team members act as liaisons between the groups they represent and the administration, giving input on school-based decisions. During the summer, leadership team members participate in a day-long retreat during which they set the course for the instructional focus and professional learning for the upcoming school year.

There are five Curriculum Teacher Leaders (CTLs) for the areas of English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Technology. They are considered to be content experts within the building. The CTLs serve as liaisons between the school and the Fayette County curriculum department. CTLs also design and deliver professional learning.

The RTI Teacher Leader works closely with the assistant principal to support the RTI initiative. This person supports teachers with documentation of the tiers process, selection of interventions, and analysis of progress monitoring data. Together, the assistant principal and the RTI Teacher Leader host monthly data review meetings so teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The special education lead teacher serves as chairperson for the special education department. She oversees the management of students' IEPs. She collaborates with the school psychologist, the assistant principal, the principal, and the school system consultant when students are in the referral process. She also serves as a liaison between the special education department and the rest of the staff.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There are two practices that have had the biggest impact on Kedron's success. First is our persistent focus on assessment. Student learning is a combination of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The curriculum centers around the Georgia Standards of Excellence and the Georgia Performance Standards. The Kedron staff has always been strong in implementing effective instructional strategies. Our focus on assessment acts as the linchpin between standards and instruction. Implementing assessment for learning strategies forces teachers to look closer at student mastery of standards. Learning targets clarify the learning destination for students and teachers. Teachers collect data as learning takes place, allowing them to alter instruction before misconceptions gain a stronghold in student thinking. Data is shared with students along with feedback regarding the next steps for improvement. Peer- and self-assessment further informs students as to their progress toward mastery. Students are much more involved in their own learning, resulting in a greater sense of efficacy. Teachers now design summative assessments that are more rigorously aligned with standards. An improved understanding of assessment is leading to an emerging change in grading practices that more accurately report learning.

The second impactful practice is the consistent use of collaborative planning. Monthly, substitute teachers are provided so that classroom teachers can work in grade level teams on instructional planning and assessment. The expectations are very clear as to how this time is used. Teachers are expected to deconstruct standards, gaining a common understanding of what the standards are demanding of students. Next, they are to determine what evidence of learning should look like, then learning targets are developed. Finally, teachers begin planning instructional activities that support mastery of standards. Teachers also use this time to develop their formative and summative assessments that serve as evidence of learning. Discussion of assessment data takes place to evaluate which instructional strategies are most effective.

This level of collaboration evolved over time. Five years ago, teachers had 90 minutes for collaborative planning and focused on planning the instructional activities. Currently, teachers get a full day of collaborative planning using the backwards design approach described above. This practice would not be possible without the support of PTO, who initially provided funding for the substitute teachers. This year, the school system funds our collaborative planning.