

U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Nancy Kochmann

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

Official School Name Kindred Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 55 1st Avenue South

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

City Kindred State ND Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 58051-4027

County Cass County

Telephone (701) 428-3388 Fax (701) 428-3736

Web site/URL https://www.kindred.k12.nd.us E-mail nancy.kochmann@k12.nd.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Steve Hall E-mail steve.hall@k12.nd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Kindred School District #2 Tel. (701) 428-3177

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Mike Saewert
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	11	14	25
K	41	17	58
1	30	29	59
2	41	36	77
3	34	22	56
4	31	23	54
5	38	40	78
6	24	23	47
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	250	204	454

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 96 % White
 - 0 % 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: 3%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	403
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.035
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
3 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16 %
Total number students who qualify: 72
8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
72 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.

- 4 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 13 Other Health Impaired
- 14 Specific Learning Disability
- 28 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 12 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
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 19:1
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%	98%	98%	97%
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.
15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.
Our mission is to inspire and empower all learners as we prepare them to meet the challenges of a diverse global community.
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

“Improving Tomorrow by Learning Together Today” is the Kindred Public School District 2 (KPSD2) motto and way of life. Serving the communities of Davenport, Hickson, Kindred, Leonard, Oxbow, Walcott and surrounding rural areas, KPSD2 spans three counties and 400 square miles. There is a strong agricultural influence as many families farm or ranch for a living. Other families work locally or commute 30-45 minutes to work in the larger tri-cities of Fargo, West Fargo, and Moorhead, MN. While each community within the district has its own, unique identity and history, the school district unites all our students and families into one strong, supportive and proud family known as the "Kindred Vikings". Collectively, our families display a strong work ethic and commitment to excellence. There is a multigenerational connection to the school which brings with it, rich traditions and history including high academic achievement, successful athletic, music, fine arts, agricultural, and leadership programs.

In 1954, a log cabin, which for years had served as a museum in the Sons of Norway Park near the Sheyenne River, was dismantled and sent to Oslo, Norway, at the request of the Norwegian Government. That same building had served as a schoolhouse for the children of our pioneers in 1873. Kindred Public School District No. 2 was organized in 1875, the second in Cass County. The next school was held in a granary. The first "city school" was in a remodeled City Hall, which was built in 1882. It was located where the current City Hall now stands. In 1896, a two-story school building was constructed. That school gave way to a more modern three-story building, which was built in 1922, on the location where the present elementary school stands. The 1922 structure was destroyed by fire February 14, 1970. Following the disastrous fire, the district voters approved a \$450,000 bond issue and along with \$166,248 of insurance money began reconstruction. On February 24, 1988, the school district was saved from another disaster when school district communities' fire departments controlled and stopped a fire from destroying the school. The fire, which was discovered at 2:30 a.m., was contained, but the smoke and fire damage amounted to \$425,000. In 1992, the school district patrons approved a \$2,500,000 school project for expansion and remodeling.

In the 1960's two school district annexations were completed. Walcott School District joined the district in 1966 and Davenport School District in 1968. The last annexation was with the Leonard School District in 1994. The school district's enrollment has continued to climb. On May 20, 2010, the voters of the district approved a 14.7 million dollar interest free bond issue to build a new school facility for grades 7-12 and remodel the current Kindred facility to become Kindred Elementary School for Pre-Kindergarten – 6th grade students. In 2012 the new Kindred High School opened with a total district enrollment of 673 students. There were 360 students at Kindred Elementary School (KES) and 313 students in the high school (7-12). In 2014 the school district's enrollment was at 683 students in (K-12). There were 390 students at KES and 293 in the high school. The enrollment in 2016-17 includes 457 students in Pre-K through 6th grade and 306 in grades 7-12 for a total of 763 students. Our rapid growth is projected to continue, yet the School Board remains committed to small class sizes. Our average grade size is 65 students and our student teacher ratio is 18.7 to 1.

Our school district thrives because of the strong relationship between students, their families, community members and the school district staff. At Kindred Elementary School (KES), the common goal is high expectations for developing student potential. This is accomplished through collaboration and commitment. We hire and retain highly effective teachers that operate using professional learning communities (PLCs). Grade level teams meet weekly for collective inquiry, reviewing of student data, and instructional planning. Daily, ongoing collaboration is vital to our students' success. Kindred Elementary School as a whole operates as a professional learning community. Being a PLC is a significant and enduring way of doing business at KES that insures a shared vision for continuous improvement and high student outcomes. To achieve results, we provide strong classroom instruction that includes varied teaching strategies and activities that foster engagement and active learning. We integrate technology into our curriculum, provide inquiry-based and project based opportunities, and incorporate enrichment opportunities in the form of lyceums, field trips, and guest presenters and performers. We strive to meet the individual needs of each student through our use of data collection and analysis, differentiated instruction, strategic resources, and purposeful student grouping. KES uses a multi-tiered approach called Response-To-Intervention (RtI) that offers timely support to students' academic and behavioral needs. Our RtI team consisted of classroom

teachers, special education teachers, speech and occupational therapy staff, our Title I teacher, our student performance strategist, our counselor, and our principal. This dedicated group meets at least weekly to review student data and progress, and to determine the collective school supports needed for individual student success. The principal's philosophy of empowering teacher leadership translates to the teacher and support staff philosophy of empowering and cultivating student leadership.

"Improving Tomorrow by Learning Together Today" is more than our motto; it is the authentic way we operate at Kindred Elementary School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Kindred Elementary School (KES) strives to align and enhance our core curriculum based on our North Dakota Academic Content Standards and our student performance outcomes. We use a continuous growth mindset in persistently assessing, reviewing and improving our core curriculum resources and instructional strategies. KES students consistently score high on state assessments in reading, language arts, math, and science.

Kindred Elementary School is passionate and dedicated to promoting life long readers and learners. As the North Dakota Academic Content Standards moved to Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Kindred Elementary adopted Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s Journeys CCSS Edition in the 2014-15 school year. Like all our curriculum adoptions, a committee consisting of teachers along with the principal researched available resources, narrowed the choices, invited presenters from various companies, and made an informed selection based on alignment with state standards, engagement criteria, and overall rigor. To insure its success, we proactively provided professional development in the form of purchased company training. In addition, per feedback from the teachers, the principal provided a PLC, one-graduate credit, independent study course voluntarily completed by all grade level teams over the summer prior to implementation. Our PLC mindset and commitment provides a viable, guaranteed curriculum at each grade level.

In addition to our basal, our teachers use a variety of resources and strategies to increase student achievement in ELA. In the primary grades we incorporate guided reading and Daily 5 as a means to individualize instruction. Our guided reading library provides Fountas & Pinnell and Rigby leveled reading materials for small group instruction as well as individualized learning. Leveled Readers are sent home on a weekly basis to promote repeated reading and family support. KES is committed to increasing rigor in classroom reading materials utilizing Lexile scores for authentic literature, novels, trade books, and non-fiction materials. We also provide students with personalized digital libraries accessed with their iPads and laptops and monitored by classroom teachers.

To bring student writing to another level, again from teacher feedback, the principal provided a PLC, one-graduate credit course completed by grade level teams in the summer prior to the 2016-17 school year. Teachers planned scope and sequence, detailed instruction, assessment, and standards alignment for grade level writing instruction. Writing is celebrated and presented throughout KES. Our KES passion for ELA is perhaps most evident during our annual Reading Month. This activity-rich, themed month provides students with motivating reading incentives such as individual, grade level, and whole school games, awards, and prizes. This year’s top goal was to collectively read 200,000 minutes. The prize for this achievement was putting the principal’s office on the roof of the school for a day. As always, the students achieved their goal. Reading month also provides community involvement in the form of North Dakota State University football player reading buddies, the Fargo-Moorhead Red Hawk’s baseball team reading incentive program, family and community member Mystery Readers. as well as our Kindred High School reading buddies.

Kindred Elementary School students continue to thrive in mathematics. Our curriculum is aligned to our North Dakota Academic Content Standards. KES has been using Saxon Math as our primary resource since 2008. Our students’ state math assessment scores are consistently among the best in North Dakota. The key to our success is based on our deliberate dedication of time given to math instruction. The morning math meeting is a routine established in the primary grades which evolves at each grade level. Direct instruction, guided practice, small group instruction, individualized re-teaching, and independent work time are vital components of our overall student success. Deliberate use of classroom visuals and hands-on math manipulatives, help propel students from concrete learning to abstract reasoning. In addition, we provide enrichment opportunities through differentiated groupings. Intermediate grades have utilized cross-grade groupings with advanced project-based activities such as a student operated store. We also utilize a “flipped classroom” pedagogical format for 6th grade math that reverses lecture and homework components. Students view pre-recorded lessons at home and use class time to complete assignments. This allows a greater capacity for teacher support, differentiation and individualized pacing. In addition to the math

curriculum, our elementary students have successfully competed in the Math Olympics, a regional competition. The competition takes place at the North Dakota State College of Science. Kindred Elementary is the host school for the 2016-17 event.

Our KES science curriculum aligns with the North Dakota State Content Standards. The goal of our science curriculum is to empower our students with an understanding of key scientific concepts and processes. We also seek to develop 21st century skills including collaboration, communication, critical thinking and problem solving. Our curriculum includes Life Science, Physical Science and Earth & Space Science. Our curriculum also employs inquiry-based learning, hands-on experiments and real world field trips including class ventures to a planetarium, bee apiary, and Prairie Waters Education and Research Center. A growing emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) education is also increasingly evident within our science curriculum.

Social Studies at Kindred Elementary School aligns to the North Dakota State Content Standards. Our teachers provide engaging instruction and activities that teach students how to navigate utilizing social studies skills and resources such as maps and timelines. Students also delve into important historical events, economic concepts, geography and human development and behavior. KES social studies curriculum also focuses on government and the role of citizenship within political institutions and in communities. Our curriculum also places an emphasis on the importance of culture as well as individual and group identity. One of the many project-based activities is our yearly cultural fair, complete with research-rich presentations and cultural food samples. Current events are incorporated into the curriculum as are numerous field trips. Our 4th grade social studies curriculum includes yearlong North Dakota Studies. The year is bookmarked with meaningful field trips beginning with a trip to the Western Minnesota Steam Thresher's Reunion, an event that brings the region's past to life with hundreds of demonstrations and exhibits. This trip gives students important background information that is enhanced with every additional lesson, activity, and field trip. Students also make trips to Fort Abercrombie, Bonanzaville Pioneer Village and Cass County Museum, as well as historic Bagg Bonanzaville Farm. The culminating activity in May is a trip to the state Capital in Bismarck, North Dakota. This trip includes visits to the Heritage Center, Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center, and Fort Mandan.

Preschool

At Kindred Elementary School, the preschool program is in place to provide students ages 3-4 identified as having an educational disability with the special services they need. Our preschool utilizes a Peer Model approach in which students identified for services are grouped with same aged peers. Students grow, develop, and learn together. All students identified are included in the program while peer models are limited to insure small teacher to student ratios. Every year we have a waiting list of peer models as the program fills quickly because of its earned community reputation for success. The KES preschool program provides instruction in the following areas: Social Studies, Science and Problem Solving, Mathematics and Logical Thinking, Language and Literacy, Expressive Arts and Creative Thinking, Physical Development, Health, Approaches to Play and Learning, and Social and Emotional Development. These areas directly align with North Dakota Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards which correspond with North Dakota K-12 standards. Our preschool teacher is a highly effective, licensed classroom and special education teacher. She works in conjunction with our Speech/Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist to provide embedded intervention and enrichment, individualized to each student's needs and strengths. Students that attend our preschool program collectively outscore our district kindergarten screener mean score by 4 points. This is particularly impressive given the majority of the students in our preschool program have been identified with an educational disability.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Visual Arts are incorporated across the curriculum and also taught individually at all grade levels. Art contests are provided throughout the year by community organizations and welcomed within the school. Music has a rich history at KES. All students in grades K-6 receive 90 minutes of general music instruction per week. Performances are stellar and include a Veteran's Day Program, Holiday Program, Grandparents Day Program, Spring Program, 6th grade Musical, 4th grade Recorders Program and individual class and

grade level performances. Our music curriculum follows the North Dakota Content Standards for Music. Students in grades 5-6 are offered band instruction as an elective. While this curriculum is optional, we have a strong enrollment in band at the elementary school level. Students perform twice a year for the community. The band instructor has an after school 6th grade jazz band and provides all band students with opportunities to compete at the Young Musicians Festival.

Physical Education curriculum at KES aligns with North Dakota Content Standards. Students in grades K-6 receive 90 minutes of instruction weekly. Our teachers provide exercises, skill building, and engaging games that promote a lifetime of physical activity. At KES, we believe strongly in the research supported link between physical activity and academic performance. Therefore, in addition to physical education instruction, we provide Walk-the-Walk before school, midday recess, and an afternoon recess for grades K-3. Jump Rope for Heart is an annual student event that promotes heart health awareness. We have been one of the top performing Jump Rope for Heart schools in North Dakota for several years running. Health and nutrition instruction are incorporated at all grade levels in isolation and in connection with our science curriculum. Our school lunch director also promotes healthy lifestyles with cafeteria visuals and nutrition color contests. Teachers require and reinforce healthy snacks by communicating with parents and reinforcing positive student choices.

We are in year three of a district 1:1 technology initiative. The aim of this ongoing project is promoting student engagement and enthusiasm for learning; encouraging collaboration among students, teachers, parents and community members; and by providing greater opportunities for personalized learning. Currently, all students in grades 6-12 are equipped with laptop computers. All students in grades K-2 are equipped with iPads. Each grade level in grades 3-5 utilizes laptops from portable carts. Desktop computers are also available for entire class use in each of two computer labs as well as the library (24 computers in each setting). Additional iPads provide dual device opportunities. Our teachers have accomplished admirable effectiveness in their integration of technology into the curriculum.

Our librarian/media specialist provides 30 minutes of library and media instruction per week for all students in grades K-6. She also supports classroom research projects and perpetuates a school-wide passion for reading. Our Guidance Counselor at Kindred Elementary School provides a North Dakota State standards-based, counseling curriculum to students in grades K-6. The main domains of this curriculum include study skills/goal setting, career awareness and exploration, self-esteem, and conflict resolution/problem solving. Students participate in 30-45 minutes per week of counseling curriculum. Our counselor also facilitates individualized and small group social skill development and assists students with conflict resolution and problem solving. In addition, students participate in the National Red Ribbon Campaign, a drug prevention program and curriculum provided by our Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

Enrichment opportunities are a valued part of our curriculum at KES. Every year we provide quality lyceums in an effort to broaden our students' horizons and to inspire them. From a blue grass 7-sibling band (Red Head Express) to the University of North Dakota drum-line to an environmental educator/entertainer (Tom Gibson), to name a few, KES provides students with amazing talent and educational experiences. Strong leadership programs at our high school directly impact and enhance our elementary curriculum at KES. Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) are two high school organizations that bring agricultural education and family consumer science curriculum, respectively, to our students. High school students partner with elementary students in the form of activities, presentations, and community events (i.e., PALS program with 3rd grade, Farming Around, Fill the Dome food drive, 2nd grade Autobiography project, etc.) At Kindred Elementary School, our aim is to help students develop essential skills and knowledge through our strong core curriculum, other curriculum areas, and from a broad range of enrichment opportunities.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Our teachers at Kindred Elementary School are dedicated to finding and using a variety of research-based teaching methods and strategies that increase student engagement and learning. The determinants for selecting effective methods include getting to know our students individually and deliberately providing an array of research-based options to build on the strengths and needs of our diverse learners. Teachers work in

professional learning communities to make data-driven decisions regarding the best classroom strategies and methods for effective student outcomes.

At KES we use a multi-tiered Response-to-Intervention (RtI) model to assess and support student progress and success. The foundation of this tiered approach begins with exemplary classroom instruction. To maximize the potential of all students, teachers differentiate by student interest and learning style as well as by academic level and readiness. Utilizing diverse methods throughout the day increases engagement and appeals to multiple intelligences. While teachers at KES use explicit instruction, they do so incrementally in order to keep student motivation and engagement elevated. Subsequently, teachers integrate cooperative learning, hands-on activities, inquiry based discovery, brain breaks and project based learning throughout their instruction. Other effective teaching strategies at KES include modeling, guided practice, guided reading, centers, small group and individualized instruction. We are also committed to the teaching of reading and writing across all subject areas. Teachers at KES strategically use an array of instructional methods to keep the learning fresh and inviting. In addition, teachers purposefully arrange the physical environment in their classrooms to enhance learning. Meaningful visuals are purposefully displayed to reinforce learning. Math meeting walls, word walls, reference charts, exemplars, and published student work adorn classroom walls. Many classrooms provide flexible seating options that provide student centered control of the learning environment.

In addition to solid classroom instruction, our teachers utilize formative and summative assessments to gauge student learning. Teachers use a plethora of methods for formative assessment according to subject area and grade level. Running records, common formative assessments, effective questioning, and observation are among the methods used at KES. Teachers also use digital applications as a tool for formative and summative assessments. Quizizz and Kahoot! provide students with a fun format for review while giving teachers formative assessment insights. Socrative is used for summative assessments. All of these assessment applications provide teachers with timely access to student data which informs instruction and supports personalized learning goals. Moreover, and not surprisingly, our students report preferring the use of their iPads and laptops for assessment over traditional paper-pencil tests.

Kindred Elementary School collects school-wide benchmarking data through the use of tri-yearly AimsWeb reading and early literacy assessments. Similarly, students participate in NWEA reading, language arts, and math testing in the fall and spring. The data collected from these assessments drives instruction, longitudinally monitors student progress, and provides valuable information for intervention and enrichment. This data is also shared with parents at fall and spring conferences. When data suggests below target performance and/or students are not reaching their learning targets in the classroom, our Response-to-Intervention team serves as a timely safeguard. Our RtI team consists of classroom teachers, special education teachers, speech and occupational therapy staff, our Title I teacher, our student performance strategist, our counselor, and our principal. This dedicated group meets at least weekly to review student data and progress, and to determine the collective school supports needed for individual student success.

Students may receive academic, emotional, social, or behavioral support and intervention from our Special Education Teachers, Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Title I Reading Interventionist, K-3 Student Performance Strategist, Guidance Counselor, and/or our paraprofessional support staff. Students identified for Tier II and Tier III services are progress monitored and the data is reviewed by the interventionist or case manager as well as the RtI team. Changes and adjustments to interventions are made accordingly and in a timely manner. KES is a targeted Title I school. Kindred Elementary School uses interventions tailored to student need. Leveled Literacy Intervention, Read Naturally, Words Your Way, Reading Mastery, Keyboarding Without Tears, and Zones of Regulation are among the specific interventions used. We also provide push-in classroom therapy supports, re-teaching, modifications and adaptations as needed. Students receiving interventions may do so in small groups or individually. The group size and weekly time dedicated to intervention is based on student need.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

When entering the town of Kindred, visitors are greeted by a sign that reads: Welcome to Kindred where kindness is a way of life. Throughout our district there are yard signs and graphics posted in both schools with the phrases: Viking Nation, The Viking Way, Home of the Vikings, Viking Pride. Students, parents, staff and community members sport blue Kindred Viking logo sportswear... often and proudly. Fridays at Kindred Elementary School are frequently designated as Kindred Spirit Days and the result is a sea of blue throughout every classroom. When one of our students accomplishes something, we all accomplish something. When one of our teachers is honored for an award, we are all honored. We build each other up and stand on the shoulders of those who helped make Kindred Public School what it is today. We are part of something bigger than any one of us. It makes us proud and humbles us.

The climate and culture at Kindred Elementary School reflect the values of our community and the rich traditions of our school district. Students feel safe, connected, and supported. High expectations and a strong work ethic are the norm. Every child and adult is expected to grow and learn and contribute and they do so, but not by working alone. The strong sense of belonging motivates students and adults to actively learn, to be engaged, and to strive to do their best. Collaborative relationships abound! There are positive teacher-student interactions. The relationship between the principal and faculty, as well as between faculty members, is positive, collegial, and collaborative. Parental and community involvement is extraordinary and it is valued, nurtured, and deliberately perpetuated.

Celebration and recognition are commonplace at KES. Morning announcements recognize student birthdays as well as student accomplishments in and out of school. Every birthday child comes down to the principal's office for a special birthday prize. Monthly, the staff at KES celebrate Tasty Treats, a special themed lunch provided for the entire staff prepared by a team of staff members. Responsibility rotates among four teams throughout the year. Our PTO supplies staff meals for Parent-Teacher Conferences and it is commonplace for staff members and parents to bring staff lounge treats as a symbol of gratitude for one another. There is a strong connection between our elementary school and high school. Whether it is a joint academic activity, community service project, musical performance or athletic team assembly that brings our two district schools together, the result is the same: our KES students observe and interact with role models while the older students feel the love and enthusiasm of their younger counterparts. Kindred Elementary School and the Kindred School District as a whole are committed to providing an inviting, positive school culture in which students and adults are collectively inspired to excel. That is the Viking Way.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parental involvement is of paramount importance at Kindred Elementary School. We continually strive to foster a strong home-school connection through volunteer opportunities and scheduled events that invite parents and community members into our school. Our annual Back-to-School night provides a fun and productive way for our staff, students, and families to connect just prior to the school year. Similarly, for our incoming kindergartners we provide individual scheduled 30 minute student-teacher visits before students begin the year. This provides teachers with the opportunity to collect data in a fun atmosphere and to make a personal connection with each child. Parents report that their children leave feeling special and excited for the school year. We also host Parent-Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring as well as an annual Title I Parent Meeting and Pizza Party. School and teacher newsletters as well as the Kindred School District website are used as communication tools and provide educational links. PowerSchool enables parents to monitor their child's grades. Three of our favorite digital applications that foster home-school communication are Schoology, Seesaw, and Remind.

KES has a phenomenal Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Its leadership and ongoing presence perpetuates community involvement. Beginning with registration in August, our PTO is onsite welcoming new families and encouraging all families to get involved. Their display showcases the many activities and

opportunities throughout the year for parents and students to partner with KES. Our PTO's efforts are responsible for yearly Fitness Carnivals, Family Movie Nights, Teacher Appreciation Celebrations, and organizing classroom and school-wide volunteers. These volunteers organize classroom parties and help with events such as vision screenings and school picture day. Our PTO also fundraises and uses their earnings to supplement field trips, clothing, winter wear, and other student needs in the building.

There is a strong sense of community pride in our district which translates into powerful school support. Attendance at music and sporting events is often to capacity with multigenerational family members, friends, and alumni all present. Area businesses and families take active ownership as stakeholders in the success of KES and the district as a whole. We are blessed with financial and volunteer support for many of our enrichment activities, such as the Math Olympics, Lego League Robotics team competitions, athletics and music programs. KES also partners with the Kindred Area Ministerial Association and Great Plains Food Pantry in providing students in need with extra food for the weekend. Our Backpack program is in its fourth year.

Teachers and school staff try to maximize the effectiveness of our parental and community support by gathering feedback from our patrons. AdvancED Stakeholder Surveys and yearly parent surveys of our K-6 Title I reading program provide us with ongoing suggestions and insights. It takes a village to raise a child and at KES we feel privileged to be in such a dedicated village.

3. Professional Development:

Kindred Elementary School utilizes our AdvancED leadership team and state accreditation process to ensure that our professional development (PD) aligns with our overall school goals for continuous growth and improvement. The AdvancED leadership team consists of four teachers; two from the high school and two from the elementary school, as well as both principals and the superintendent. Working collaboratively as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) began as a districtwide goal and through continued, dedicated PD time, it has become authentically embedded into our daily operation. Teams of teachers have attended Professional Learning Communities at Work Institute training. The KES principal continues to attend the Summit on Professional Learning Communities every two years. Curriculum goals established by our leadership team also inform our professional development. One example is our AdvancED goal of improving student achievement in the area of reading. The establishment of that goal led to a new reading curriculum adoption and purchased, professional training of the curriculum. In addition, and in response to teachers' feedback, the KES principal offered all teachers a one-graduate credit course revolving around the new curriculum titled PLC Reading Curriculum Design and Alignment during the summer before the new curriculum's implementation. All grade level PLC teams completed the course. This prepared teams to hit the ground running in the fall with the new reading curriculum, which in turn, translated into successful implementation and positive student outcomes. Additional PD geared toward our reading goal includes Daily 5 training, Guided Reading training, and two additional one-graduate credit courses facilitated by the KES principal titled Teaching Students to Read Like Detectives and PLC Writing Curriculum Design.

Other school goals have also been addressed at Kindred Elementary School through effective professional development. Data Days are professional development opportunities dedicated to the review of student data. We have brought in data specialists through our South East Education Cooperative and NWEA to facilitate meaningful analysis of our data at the student level, classroom level, grade level and school-wide. When our district decided to proceed with a 1:1 technology initiative, professional development in the area of technology integration became an ongoing commitment. The KES principal provided a course titled, PLC Technology Integration and Design that allowed grade level teams to plan detailed, cross-curriculum technology integration which they have since implemented. Among the many other technology training opportunities provided for our staff are teacher-led Tech Slams in which individual teachers or teacher teams present to their colleagues. Many teachers annually attend a regional Technology Camp and then 'train the trainer' as they share out their newly acquired knowledge. Our technology director and integration specialist regularly attend conferences and share out with staff.

Additional professional development results from North Dakota requirements. The most recent state required PD has included Bullying Prevention training, Mental Health training, and state-approved Teacher

and Principal Evaluation training. And lastly, morale and team building activities are purposefully incorporated into our professional development plan. Most recently, the KES principal facilitated an all staff book study on the Jon Gordon book, *The Energy Bus: 10 Rules to Fuel Your Life, Work, and Team with Positive Energy*.

Professional development is highly valued by our district stakeholders. Our teacher contracts specify that each teacher is entitled to district reimbursement of up to \$300 a year for approved, education related courses. In addition, the school district sends teachers and principals to professional development conferences such as AdvancED, Title I, North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders, and additional North Dakota Department of Instruction trainings and workshops.

4. School Leadership:

At Kindred Public Schools, we have a broadened concept of school leadership that involves the superintendent, principals, teachers, support staff, School Board members, parents, and community patrons. All stakeholders that understand the vision and mission of our school and participate in the necessary work of achieving it, are integral to our overall success. At Kindred Elementary School, school leadership begins and ends with every one of us. We have a shared focus on learning and high expectations for student achievement. We have a shared responsibility in accomplishing our goals. This work involves a continuous process of reflection, inquiry, dialogue, and action research. The premise of school leadership within KES is that we learn together. We construct meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively. We are a Professional Learning Community. This is evident during staff meetings, grade level team planning, Response-to-Intervention meetings, the work of our AdvancED leadership team, and with our many teacher-led committees.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Kindred Public School District uses its Title II funding to reduce class size. Our historical data demonstrates that our district’s commitment to small class sizes has consistently resulted in high proficiency levels among our students. Our research-based decision to reduce class sizes, allows students to build strong foundational skills in the elementary grades. With our district’s commitment to a smaller student-teacher ratio, our students receive more individualized instruction. Teachers at Kindred Elementary School get to know each of their students as learners and are able to forge strong relationships. This maximizes teacher effectiveness in terms of differentiation, intervention and enrichment. Strategies such as Daily 5, guided reading, small group and individualized instruction are far more manageable and successful in classrooms with small class sizes. Although our school enrollment continues to grow, our administrators and School Board have remained committed to small class sizes even though the fiscal responsibility has expanded beyond our Title II funding. Our current student-teacher ratio is 18.7 to 1 in grades K-6. We are particularly attentive to ensuring a low student-to-teacher ratio in the primary grades where students are building important academic and behavioral skills that will contribute to their continued success at school. By maintaining small class sizes, we can better meet the needs and strengths of all students.

Another strategy we employ for the purpose of personalizing instruction is data-driven decision making. Multiple sources of data including both formative and summative assessments are used to inform our instruction and to monitor student learning. Data is collected in the classroom and through school-wide benchmarking assessments. Through our Response-to-Intervention process, we respond in a timely and systematic manner when students are not meeting learning goals. In addition, we utilize data to determine when students are surpassing learning targets and need more challenging curriculum. We hire and retain highly qualified teachers and support staff. There is a very low teacher turnover rate at Kindred Elementary School. We place a high value on relationships and positive interactions. We function as a professional learning community where collaboration, innovation and action research are encouraged. We actively seek parental and community participation in the shared responsibility of student and school success.

Kindred Elementary School is a great place to work, play, and learn. The positive climate cultivates a commitment to the shared belief in continuous learning and collective leadership. Everything we do places student and adult learning at the forefront. We set and maintain high expectations and standards for the academic and social-emotional development of all students and the performance of all adults. At KES, we provide rigorous standards-based content and instruction to insure high student achievement. We utilize an ever-growing array of student-centered strategies that elevate student engagement and motivation. We integrate technology into our curriculum and provide students with enriching opportunities to develop 21st century skills.

Our commitment to excellence at Kindred Elementary School is built on tradition, yet is a continuous work in progress. “Improving Tomorrow by Learning Together Today” is our motto, mantra, and the authentic way we approach academic success.