

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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	8	8	16
1	12	7	19
2	10	9	19
3	8	12	20
4	8	8	16
5	12	5	17
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	58	49	107

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 27 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 69 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 17%

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

Ours is a rural, impoverished community and there is a good deal of transience with our population.

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	107
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 83 %
Total number students who qualify: 89

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %
2 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.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 16
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, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
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 18:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	95%	96%	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 2017.

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.

Kingsland Elementary adheres to the KE6 principle. Kingsland Elementary Educates, Equips, and Empowers Every child, Every day.

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

Kingsland, located in south central Arkansas, is a small (population approximately 420) rural town. While statistics show about one-third of our citizens living below the poverty line, the percentage of students at the school who qualify for free or reduced meals shows over 80% of our families face financial challenges on a daily basis. Thirty-nine percent of the students at Kingsland Elementary live in a single parent household; while 15% of our students are being raised by a guardian other than a parent. The primary industry in Kingsland is timber, with many of our residents working for loggers, or for a business associated with the logging industry.

Kingsland's one true claim to fame is that it is the birthplace of music icon Johnny Cash, whose son, John Carter Cash, returns to Kingsland annually to deer hunt.

While Kingsland school dates back to the early 1900s, it has undergone many changes. During the early years of the 20th century there were numerous community schools in our area. As roads and means of transportation improved, smaller schools were annexed by their neighbors to trim costs and offer students more opportunities. With its proximity to a main highway (now US 79) and a railroad, Kingsland School saw its numbers grow as smaller schools were dissolved. Integration in the late 1960s brought social challenges to the community, but ultimately made the school stronger. Once the recipient of smaller school annexations, as recent as 1985 with the annexation of the New Edinburg School District, Kingsland School District found itself forcefully consolidating with the Rison School District in 2004 to collectively become the Cleveland County School District. The early 2000s were a tumultuous time for Kingsland Schools. First, our school building, built in 1940 as one of FDR's WPA projects, burned to the ground in May of 2003. Then, the consolidation took place in 2004, and in 2005 our high school students began attending Rison High School, leaving a K-6 school on the Kingsland campus. In addition to our elementary students, Kingsland served all elementary special needs students for the district. In 2014, those special needs students and the 6th grade students were moved to Rison, leaving Kingsland as a K-5 campus. We are small in number but huge on commitment and heart.

Being such a small community, Kingsland has never had the student population to field a football team. Consequently, basketball was THE sport for the Greyhounds. Our old gymnasium, built around 1950 was the gathering spot on Tuesday and Friday nights for years. Rivalries were born and fueled in that old gym, and to the dismay of many, we watched as they became a part of history. In February of 2005 the last team to wear the red and white walked off of the court for the last time.

All of the staff at Kingsland Elementary know that the 100 or so kids we come in contact with every day are the future of our community. While student transience is an issue in our school, the core of our students and their families have deep ties to the community, many proud to be a part of their multi-generational heritage. The faculty and staff have close ties to parents, community members, and local leaders. Our small numbers allow us to know what is going on in each student's life at school and at home. Being so intimately involved in the lives of our students gives us insight into the needs of each, and allows us, at times to preemptively reach out to support groups and organizations as the need arises. Alcohol abuse and, all too often, illicit drug use are problematic in our community. The school's anti-drug/alcohol program, supported by our local State health unit, forms a unified front in the effort to combat the issue, instilling in our students the importance of making smart choices in all aspects of their daily lives.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Kingsland Elementary's curriculum is not one based on some "new idea." Our curriculum, for all disciplines, has been developed over years of instruction, adapting to "new" standards. It has been mandated by the Arkansas Department of Education that the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks must be revised every six years. As such, you can count on some newer, better way to teach, every six years. While wording may change, good, solid instruction is just that - Good, Solid, Instruction. It does not change. It is one of the few constants in the rapidly changing world of education.

During professional development sessions, usually performed over the summer break, teachers work in consort to insure both vertical and horizontal alignment of instruction. Kingsland Elementary is fortunate in that we have a veteran staff who have an in-depth familiarity of our curriculum standards as well as an intimate knowledge of our students' school and home lives. It is this very familiarity that allows "fine-tuned" instruction - instruction designed to introduce, ingrain, and reinforce unfamiliar concepts in a relatable manner.

Our ELA curriculum is based upon students being fluent readers. Kindergarten students are introduced to reading through the Direct Instruction (DI) model, with most becoming independent readers by the end of their first semester of instruction. For those who have not achieved fluency, DI is continued, through Kindergarten and the first semester of First grade if necessary. Once students have become independent readers we stress the accumulation of Accelerated Reader (AR) points, and have a reward program in place for those who either achieve a set number of points on a regularly scheduled basis, or who show acceptable levels of growth as reflected through STAR Reading Assessment, a Renaissance educational software product. Other concepts in the language arts are taught using a myriad of resources, one of which is the Reading Street curriculum by Pearson. Kingsland Elementary adopted Reading Street several years ago and we have been most pleased with it as a whole. However, none of the teachers at KES use any one text as "the" curriculum. It is used as a resource, coupled with other resources to achieve any given standard.

Mathematics instruction begins in Kindergarten and First grade with Go Math, a product of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. As with ELA, no one text is "the" curriculum, and resources are, for practical purposes, limitless. All teachers at KES have been trained in Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), and begin instruction on most days with an open ended CGI problem. In addition, teachers use problems found through digital searches (Google searches, Pinterest, YouTube, etc.), as well as Problem Based Learning activities. Our school's Math Coach performs peer observations, critiquing methods, and offering guidance and support.

I hate to sound like a broken record, but as with math and ELA, no particular text is followed as the curriculum. Again, teachers draw from a variety of resources, incorporating math, science, and ELA skills in many of the lessons. Standards require that a minimum of 20% of science instruction is in the form of hands-on experience. As a rule, teachers at KES exceed this benchmark. For example, our 4th and 5th grade students maintain a butterfly garden during the spring and fall, preparing the soil, planting, watering, and pruning as needed to provide a healthy habitat for butterfly and bird populations. Students also frequent our fully functional lab that was once part of our high school. While not up to high school standards, the lab does provide an enriched atmosphere for experimentation and observation. Lastly, while our social studies curriculum is identified by a separate grade on students' report cards, ELA, math, and science skills are brought into the instructional process on a regular basis.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Activity teachers at Kingsland Elementary do a fantastic job of reinforcing classroom instruction. Students at KES receive instruction from the art teacher, music teacher, and library media specialist one day a week for 40 minutes. Students receive instruction from the computer lab facilitator twice a week for 40 minutes. While it is true that the art teacher teaches art, the music teacher music, and the library media specialist sees

that kids understand up-to-date technology, they do so much more than that. All activity teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to include some of the concepts from the classroom into their instruction to help reinforce instruction and expand understanding. For example, the art teacher not only discusses the historical importance of certain pieces of art, as well as some of the events surrounding particular artists and their works, she even introduces our students to more advanced mathematical concepts such as tessellations, the golden ratio, the Fibonacci sequence, and fractals. When discussing famous artist such as Michelangelo, or da Vinci, or O'Keeffe she will tell students about when and where they lived and what world events were happening that may have influenced their art. In music the teacher uses fractions when teaching the kids about whole notes, half, quarter, etc. She utilizes work sheets to reinforce addition of fractions by means of pictures of various musical notes. When the music teacher introduces students to the recorder, she gives them a brief history lesson on the recorder. This usually leads to discussion about life in the 12th or 13th century. When she introduces hand bells to the students, the music teacher discusses octaves and how sizes and shapes can be calculated using mathematics. Even with our Kindergarten students, she reinforces counting using a variety of beats.

Our computer lab facilitator is tasked with helping our students become fluent at using the computer keyboard. She does this by utilizing a variety of learning games. Lower elementary students use games reinforcing number and letter recognition as well as sight words. Upper elementary students use programming that reinforces math skills with a variety of games involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. All grade levels practice their keyboarding skills by taking timed tests to track number of words typed per minute and number of mistakes.

Teachers are responsible for teaching their own students physical education and health for a minimum of 60 minutes each week. This allows them to use a variety of methods for reinforcing taught concepts. One of the activities the Kindergarten teacher uses is Letter Tag. Students are tagged and must contort their body into the shape of a given letter. The tagger must guess the correct letter to trade positions with the one being tagged. Another activity used by some of the teachers is one in which students throw a ball to each other and upon catching the ball the student must give some response such as a preposition, the capitol of a given state, etc. Some teachers use board races where students are assigned to a team and then members come to the board and solve a problem with a score being kept. One of our areas of concern in math is measurement, and teachers reinforce some concepts with activities such as Paper Airplane Flying. Students build a paper airplane, experimenting with shape and size. Then, they fly the plane and use a measuring device to measure distance flown. They collect their data and then present it by means of graphs and charts.

When teaching health, teachers cover an extensive list of topics ranging from hand washing to nutrition, and from fitness to substance abuse. ELA concepts are reinforced by having student read about numerous topics such as the dangers associated with alcohol and tobacco abuse. Students in grades 4 and 5 have to put their data collection and graphing skills to work when they are tasked with developing a meal plan utilizing the nutrition information found on labels, being sure to stay within USDA recommendations. Their project is typed on a word processor, printed and submitted to the teacher where it is assessed using a rubric for content, mathematical accuracy, and writing mechanics.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Being a smaller school allows the teachers at Kingsland Elementary to "customize" instruction for each of our students. Each of the six classroom teachers at KES communicate daily about students, sharing ideas about what works best and what they have found that simply did not work for a particular student. This does not mean that teachers are simply "flying by the seat of their pants" in their delivery of instruction. Tremendous effort is made during summer professional development sessions to ensure that the tiering of instruction necessitates introduction, reinforcement, and remediation as needed, and not duplication of effort. For example, the first grade teacher knows when students come to her they are able to tell time to the hour using either a digital or analog clock. The second grade teacher knows her entering students can tell time to the nearest half-hour and in order for the third grade teacher to have her students telling time to the nearest minute and solving word problems, they must come to her with an understanding of time to the nearest five minutes.

Likewise, in English Language Arts, third graders must be able to use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons whereas fourth grade students must link opinion and reasons using words and phrases such as, for instance, in order to, and in addition. By the fifth grade students must be able to link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses like consequently or specifically. As students age and complexity increases, conceptual understanding is reinforced and production and proper mechanics skills are expanded.

KES uses multiple digital assessment tools. Istation is a web-based program that utilizes an adaptive curriculum to screen students, monitor their progress, provide point-in-time assessments, and feedback to the teacher so instruction can be modified as needed. We also use a number of Renaissance products, such as STAR 360 which includes Reading Assessments, Math Assessments, and Early Reading Assessments. We also use their Accelerated Reader program. Each of these programs provide feedback we use to determine if students are "on-track" or in need of intervention. For those who need that little extra help, KES has a strong Response to Intervention (RTI) program in place. Students who have been recommended for RTI are pulled from class for 30 minute sessions with our RTI Specialist. Depending on need, students are placed in either a small group setting (two-four students) or in a one-on-one setting, from one to five days a week. Detailed reports of each session are maintained and students are reassessed every six weeks to determine if a continuation of RTI services is necessary. Students who have not been successful in the intense RTI setting may be recommended for more testing and possible alternate placement.

Some students at KES are not challenged by Tier 1 instruction (the school's core reading and math curriculum), and require an enriched curriculum. While students in grades 4 and 5 receive 150 minutes of instruction from our District GT Coordinator, the process is a little different for K-3 students. All teachers at KES have been trained in the "Talents Unlimited" program, and structure their curriculum to promote problem solving both on an individual and group basis. Teachers are required to deliver an enriched lesson at for at least 30-minutes, once a week. This is augmented with the delivery of an enriched lesson delivered by the GT Coordinator for at least 45-minutes once a month. In addition, differentiation on the part of the classroom teacher insures that all students are challenged at an appropriate level for their personal skill set.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

It has been the understanding at KES that small, simple rewards, honestly earned and genuinely celebrated help instill in our kids a desire to perform better on assignments and daily assessments, score higher on standardized assessments, and exhibit appropriate behavior even when tempted to act otherwise. Our acknowledgement and reward program is multi-faceted.

We celebrate accomplishments of students who perform well/better on daily assignments each quarter during an awards assembly. Students receive awards for earning "All Ss" (in Kindergarten), "All As", "All As & Bs", "Perfect Attendance", and being named the "Most Improved Student" in their grade. Students earn awards for achieving set levels of points through our Accelerated Reader Program. Awards are given for earning 10, 25, 50, 100, 150, 200, and 300 points. We realize that some students, no matter how hard they study will earn all As or all As and Bs. We still recognize their accomplishments with a BUG (Bringing Up Grades) Award. Students who bring a core class grade up one letter grade without allowing any others to fall a letter grade earn the BUG Award.

We celebrate the accomplishments of students who score at the Proficient or Advance levels on our standardized tests by awarding them a merit day. Students who score at the Proficient or Advanced level in Math earn a merit day as do students who score similarly in ELA. Dates are set when students who have earned 1 or 2 merit days are excused from school. Students who did not earn merit days use the days for remediation and review.

Students at KES can earn a "Caught Being Good" token from any adult on campus for any reason that the adult deems qualifies for the token. This can be anything from staying in your seat for at least 10 minutes to opening a door for a teacher or helping a student clean up a spilled tray in the cafeteria. Once students have earned 20 tokens they can purchase a seat at our quarterly "Pizza With the Principal" lunches. I set up tables in the school auditorium and feed those who have qualified all the pizza they can eat (during their 20 minute lunch that is).

We noticed that students were not reading as much as we thought they should, especially in grades 4 and 5. In an effort to address this we set challenging, but realistic Accelerated Reader point goals for classes and for students. Students who achieve these levels earn attendance to one of our quarterly AR rewards which include a picnic at a local park, a field trip to a bowling alley, a field trip to a local theater to view a movie, and lunch at our local Pizza Hut. In addition, I grill hamburgers for the class that has the highest number of AR points by a specified date towards the end of the school year. This year I have agreed to grill the burgers dressed as Captain Underpants if the school reaches 12,000 AR points.

We also recognize student behavior/accomplishment through our liberal use of PPRs (Positive Praise Referrals). Any adult can write any student a PPR for any reason. Students who have received a PPR for the week are called to the office on Friday afternoon and allowed to go through the Principal's Treasure Chest which contains a variety of toys.

The most important factor in student success in school is having good teachers. There is very little turn-over at Kingsland Elementary. Being a small school, teachers at KES must wear many hats and fill many shoes. While there are always "new and improved" ways to deliver instruction, good teaching is good teaching, no matter what label you pin on it. Allowing teachers the autonomy to deliver math, ELA, science, or social studies instruction as they see fit, with minimal guidance from administration has generated very positive results, both in academic success and teacher satisfaction. Let's face it, no one wants to change programs of instruction on a regular basis. appreciation is also shown in more extrinsic ways. For example, all teachers and classified employees receive "Welcome Back to School" goodies at the beginning of the year, tokens of appreciation at Christmas, and acknowledgement during Teacher Appreciation Week in the way of a cook-out and a gift. While students are the main recipients of PPRs, teachers receive them from time to time, from another teacher, para-professional, the principal, or even

from a parent. They are called to the office along with the students on Friday afternoons to "dig" through the treasure chest for a toy. This really puts a smile on students' faces when they see their teacher getting a whoopee cushion or princess hat out of the box. Occasionally I will give a teacher/staff member a hard copy of "The Little Engine That Could" with a personalized message from me expressing my thanks for their dedication to their job, students, and the school. I do not give these out very often as they are for situations where a staff member has really gone the extra mile. The presentation is discreet and to my knowledge, those receiving a copy, while appreciative, do not flaunt the acknowledgement. If what Andrew Carnegie said is true "There is little success where there is little laughter", then KES must be the contrapositive - we laugh all the time.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Being a small community, the parents and community members of Kingsland are an integral part of our school. All schools find it challenging to get parents proactively and constructively involved in their programming, and KES is no different. We have found that keeping parents informed of their child's progress and the goings on at the school have been the most beneficial. Through our electronic grade book, parents have 24 hour access to their child's grades. Staff email addresses are readily available through our school's website, teacher newsletters, and our student handbook to insure parents have an open line of communication with their child's teacher and administration. A school newspaper, the "Greyhound Gazette", is published monthly, filled with student art, stories, and witticisms. A colorful monthly calendar is sent home at the beginning of each month for parents to place on their refrigerators listing dates and events happening at the school as well as interesting bits of trivia. We also maintain a Facebook page to keep in contact with parents.

While all of these tools help keep parents informed, the one way we have found to keep parents involved, is direct communication. Most parents shudder when they receive a call from the school. They dread hearing what their child has done to get in trouble. At KES however, all teachers are required to make at least one positive phone call each semester to each one of their students' parents/guardians. These positive phone calls can be for any reason - "I just wanted to brag on how Johnny has been trying in Math." "Susie brought her D in Science up from a 61 to a 69, and I wanted to let you know she did wonderfully on her test." etc. What began as a directive has become common place with the teachers. All of the teachers go above and beyond on sharing positive comments with parents/guardians.

Even when news can be considered "not welcome", parents still appreciate being informed in a timely fashion. During the month of January, if we have students who are in fear of retention we call parents in for a face-to-face conference and discuss our concerns with them. The conference is attended by the parent/guardian, classroom teacher, and principal. Most students who fall in this category are receiving RTI services so the RTI Specialist attends also. We discuss the students strengths and areas of growth and give parents a list of skills that must be mastered in order for their child to advance at the end of the school year. Parents usually ask for additional resources such as workbooks, textbooks, and software. While we are not a clearinghouse for those items, we try to maintain a supply of resources to draw from to help parents help their child be successful. These students are monitored closely and communication with parents/guardians is frequent. If a decision is made for retention, it comes as no surprise to the parents/guardians, and they are, more often than not, in favor of the retention.

In short, what works for KES is:

Regular two-way communication;

Firm, fair, and consistent administration of rules;

Trust, trust, trust. Do what you say you are going to do and make sure parents understand your reasoning (even though they may not always agree); and

Above all, a genuine love for all our kids. Some kids don't want us to love them. We do it anyway.

3. Professional Development:

All certified staff at KES are contractually required to earn 60 hours of professional development each year. While teachers at KES receive some of their professional development hours as a group, approximately a

third of their hours are to be earned attending workshops, that have been approved by administration and which address one of the school's goals listed in the school's improvement plan. The improvement plan is discussed, critiqued, and revised during August professional development before the beginning of the school year. It is this plan that drives the school's professional development plan.

During a typical school year teachers earn their PD hours as follows:

- 6 hours at the District level (District Day);
- 12 hours on the school campus (PD designed and facilitated by administration);
- 18 hours off campus in a retreat style setting;
- 12 hours on designated "Curriculum Days" on the school campus; and
- 12 hours at a local educational cooperative (must be approved by administration and address goals in the improvement plan).

Where the 12 hours earned at the local educational coop are grade/content-specific, the hours earned on campus and at the retreat setting are designed to bring the staff closer together on both a professional and personal level. While the hours spent at these sessions help build a spirit of camaraderie, it is the honing of a collaborative focus on best instructional practices that is the true "pay-off." For example, during one of our skill session discussions, the faculty, which had split into lower and upper elementary groups, shared ideas on what we most needed to help improve scores in science. While many ideas were discussed, upon all members coming together, it was unanimously decided that we needed a science lab that could be shared among all classes. As our high school students were lost to consolidation, we already had the lab, we just needed to do a little cleaning and updating to make it suit our purpose. As a result we saw an uptick in our science scores. During our PD sessions in the summer of 2017, we rededicated our efforts to our school's reading program. That decision has led to our students earning more AR points than ever before, and becoming stronger readers as a direct consequence.

4. School Leadership:

KES being a small school requires that all staff wear many hats. We all do whatever it takes for the school to function and for kids to be kept safe and educated. The principal is not only the instructional leader in the school, he also handles all discipline issues, maintenance requests, and has been seen sweeping, mopping, performing plumbing repairs, and building playground structures. Since the principal is not on campus, due to teaching obligations at the high school, the school secretary shoulders an enormous burden. She is the first line of communication for early morning bus issues, forgotten lunch bags, distraught students, and upset parents. Since it is not uncommon for our school nurse to be off campus helping at our sister school, the secretary also mends boo-boos. The school nurse, while assigned to the Kingsland campus spends a good portion of her time at our sister campus helping with drug testing, vision and hearing screening, BMI measurements, etc. When on the Kingsland campus, in addition to performing her duties as a nurse, she also covers cafeteria duty, relieves classified staff when they take their breaks, and helps the cafeteria staff with serving lunch and breakfast. Para-professionals at KES fill many, many shoes. In addition to being classroom aides for part of their day, one of our para-pros serves as our computer lab facilitator while the other para-pro is our RTI Specialist and one of our regular route school bus drivers. These ladies also perform all playground duties overseeing students when they are at recess. On days when a teacher must leave early or when there is simply no substitute teacher available, our para-pros fill in for the teacher and no instruction time is missed. And of course, our teachers wear many hats too. With only a 40 minute break, other than their lunch break, they are kept busy with the instruction of students in their charge. When circumstances stipulate, they are quick to volunteer for extra duty or to cover another class during their activity time, and several have volunteered to lead professional development sessions from time to time.

The leadership philosophy found at KES is one of shared responsibility and accountability. We are all responsible for doing whatever it takes, using whatever we have in order for our school to be a safe harbor for our students, with a nonthreatening atmosphere of encouragement and support. We are all accountable to our parents for their children's success; to our tax payers for being good custodians of their tax dollars, and to each other for doing our part in educating each of our students.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one thing that has contributed to our success as a school is "caring." I realize it sound cliché, of course all schools care. In our case though the sense of caring extends from our bus drivers to the teachers, the maintenance men, cafeteria workers, nurse, janitor, para-professionals, and principal. It shows in everything we do, and it is a part of our every day lives. Being a small community, we know all the kids by name, their parents, siblings, and even some of their extended family members, and just as importantly, they know us. We can tell if a child entering our front door is going to have a good day or not. Knowing their history allows us to preemptively address their concerns before a bad morning can turn into a horrible day. We know when Susie's dad is released from prison and back in the house or when Johnny has spent the weekend with his noncustodial mother and the problems that these situations can bring. When a parent calls to ask if their baby is having a good day it is not unusual for the secretary, nurse, janitor, or principal to ask them to hold while we walk down the hall to look into the classroom window. When a student tells us she can't take a bath because their water has been turned off or they have no electricity due to a past due bill, we know who to call for help in alleviating the parent's embarrassment and stress in dealing with the situation. Regardless of a family's financial situation, we make sure students have what they need when going on field trips. We make sure all students receive a yearbook each year at no cost to the student. We will stay as late as necessary if a parent is running late to pick up their child or if a child has missed the bus and has to wait for a ride, or even if a parent can't make it to the school for a meeting until 5:00 or later.

No one stays in the field of education for the money. Those who enter the field for security or benefits soon find the physical, mental, and emotional strain is simply too much for them to handle. Those who do stay, do so for one reason, the kids. They stay because of the difference they can and do make in that one child's life. Believe me, there is no greater feeling.