

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Laura S. Neely

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

Official School Name Kittredge Magnet School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1663 East Nancy Creek Drive N.E.

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

Brookhaven City      GA State      30319-1763 Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Dekalb County

Telephone (678) 874-6602

Fax (678) 874-6610

Web site/URL http://www.kittredgemagnet.com

E-mail LAURA\_NEELY@dekalbschoolsga.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. R. Stephen Green

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail rsgreen@dekalbschoolsga.org

District Name Dekalb County School District Tel. (678) 676-1200

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. Michael Erwin

(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**

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

1. 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

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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):
- 85 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 19 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 23 High schools
  - 4 K-12 schools
- 131 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
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	0	0	0
<b>1</b>	0	0	0
<b>2</b>	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	83	75	158
<b>5</b>	81	77	158
<b>6</b>	82	77	159
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	246	229	475

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 16 % Asian
  - 11 % Black or African American
  - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 60 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: <01%

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

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	3
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	481
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<01

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):  
Chinese, Urdu, Turkish, Telegu, Spanish, Somalian, Russian, Portuguese, Marathi, Mandarin, Korean, Kannada, Japanese, Hindi, Hebrew, French, Burmese, Bulgarian, Bengali, Bangla, Amharic

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7 %  
Total number students who qualify: 32

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %  
8 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>2</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>3</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: 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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	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 2017.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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. 2012

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Nurture and empower our diverse population of students to become independent thinkers by fostering student growth through an innovative and rigorous instructional approach.

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

Current 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade applicants must have all of the following to be considered eligible for the Kittredge lottery:

-75th percentile or higher MAP Reading & Math score, Fall 2017

-3.0 GPA or higher from 2017 fall semester report card

-DeKalb County residency/zoned to a DeKalb County school

Students are then selected through a random lottery drawing from all eligible applicants for 160 open seats at 4th grade and for the number of openings that become available at 5th and 6th grade.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Kittredge Magnet School (KMS) for High Achievers, part of the DeKalb County School District is located in Brookhaven, Georgia, a new city on the north side of metro-Atlanta. We serve students in grades four through six from a wide variety of schools throughout the district. Our students participate in an enriched and accelerated academic experience. In addition to the core content areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science, students receive instruction in German, Art, Instrumental or Choral Music, Physical Education, and Health. Technology integration and gifted education are offered in every class by a fully gifted certified staff. Student participation in subject acceleration, differentiation, project-based learning, self-directed projects and cross-curricular instruction are the norm.

When students choose to accept placement at Kittredge, they are initially anxious about making new friends and learning the culture of a new school. However, our staff and instructional approach provide the nurturing and support needed for students to blossom into KMS High Achievers. After the first semester, students and families express satisfaction with the learning and friendship opportunities they have found at our school. Students become involved in a variety of additional academic activities offered outside of the regular school day through our wide variety of teams and clubs. From the day students are taking their first day of school tour and scavenger hunt to the day they leave us as we celebrate their transition to middle school, Kittredge students become a part of a 32-year tradition of excellence.

The mission of Kittredge Magnet School for High Achievers is to nurture and empower our diverse population of students to become independent thinkers by fostering student growth through an innovative and rigorous instructional approach. Our vision states that the passionate educators of Kittredge Magnet School for High Achievers will set the standard for educational excellence through collaboration, communication and student engagement. The content of the curriculum is reflected in the mission of the school and clearly supports the desired performance standards as the content is flexible and appropriate for the development of students to become autonomous learners. Our instructional framework provides students with multiple opportunities to problem solve, make independent decisions and set personal and academic goals. Purposeful homework enriches and supports academic achievement. There is clear intentionality for methodologies used in planning and instruction.

Our culturally and economically diverse student population creates opportunities for students to learn from one another and gain the insight necessary to function in today's global society. The variety of schools that students come from, however, creates an academic challenge for the staff. In order to address learning gaps and provide challenge and enrichment, Kittredge is organized in a departmentalized format with low pupil teacher ratio using the advanced content model for gifted instruction. Our schedule is flexible and can change based on student needs. Through this set-up, we address individual differences and experienced gaps very effectively. Student learn to plan effectively through the use of the weekly planner. Before and after-school tutorials are available weekly for any student who needs it. Our website and social media channels provide up-to-date information about student activities, homework and school events allowing parents to stay connected and engaged.

In our efforts to provide an enriching experience to the gifted and high-achieving students we serve, students participate in three overnight field trips while at KMS. In fourth grade they take a forest and lake ecology trip at the 4H Center at Rock Eagle in Eatonton, GA. In fifth grade they go to Jekyll Island, GA for an ocean and beach ecology trip. In sixth grade, they spend three days at Space Camp at the US Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, AL. In addition, we have six “Club Days” each year. The goal of club day is to provide students with enrichment and exposure to activities and content that are not part of the standard curriculum. Students are able to choose their own courses that are taught by all Kittredge staff. Through club days, students expand their social circle and socialize with children who share a common interest rather than a common age/grade. In early 2013, a new principal was named at Kittredge. This came very soon after being named a National Blue Ribbon School in the fall of 2012. She took this opportunity to leverage the excitement and motivation from earning this award. Teachers were encouraged to take on more pronounced leadership roles, curriculum design and content changes were implemented, schedule and staffing changes were made to decrease the student/teacher ratio, and 21st century learning became a school-wide focus. This

combined effort of leadership and staff resulted in multi-year improvements in the Georgia CCRPI (College & Career Readiness Performance Index) scores as a direct result of year over year increases in student achievement and growth.



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

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

In English/Language Arts, fourth and fifth grade students are focused on developing comprehension strategies that will enable them to manipulate grade-level texts of increasing complexity, and communicate effectively in their written work and through oral presentations. Students learn to anchor their questions and responses to literary and informational texts, and to use specific evidence to support their claims and inferences. Students begin to apply analytical skills in order to identify main idea/theme, understand character and plot development, and evaluate the impact of word choice. Additionally, students learn to identify text structure such as scenes and chapters, distinguish narrative voice, understand the impact of aesthetic elements, and make logical connections. In sixth grade, students begin to comprehend more challenging books and articles and learn to base their analyses, inferences, and claims on explicit and relevant evidence from the texts. Students will learn to identify central ideas by analyzing how themes are developed through particular details. These skills are incorporated into narrative and expository writing. Students begin to understand author's bias as well as the use of complex rhetorical devices in order to incorporate those into their own writing. Literary and non-fiction reading selections will include foundational materials from mythology, cultural histories, and religious traditions.

In Mathematics, fourth graders develop fluency with multi-digit multiplication and division with multi-digit dividends. In the unit on fractions, they study fraction equivalence, add and subtract fractions with like denominators and multiplication of fractions by whole numbers. In geometry, they analyze and classify shapes based on their properties, such as having parallel sides, perpendicular sides, particular angle measures, and symmetry. Fifth graders focus on three critical areas: (1) developing fluency with addition and subtraction of fractions, and developing understanding of the multiplication of fractions and of division of fractions in limited cases (unit fractions divided by whole numbers and whole numbers divided by unit fractions); (2) extending division to 2-digit divisors, integrating decimal fractions into the place value system and developing understanding of operations with decimals to hundredths, and developing fluency with whole number and decimal operations; and (3) developing understanding of volume. Sixth graders participate in four areas of study: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.

The Georgia Standards of Excellence for Science engage all students in constructing meaningful models and in investigations of scientific concepts that allow them to gain understanding of the natural world. In fourth grade, students compare and contrast the physical attributes of stars and planets, model the motion of the Earth and moon around the sun, predict weather events, conduct investigations about the water cycle, communicate information about the nature of light and sound, study the effects of balanced and unbalanced forces on an object, and describe the flow of energy in an ecosystem and the roles organisms play in a community. In fifth grade, students identify the causes of Earth's surface features, explain the difference between physical and chemical change, investigate electricity and magnetism, use scientific procedures to classify organisms, understand the difference between behaviors and traits, contrast the parts of animal and plant cells, and argue from evidence on how microorganisms can be beneficial or harmful to other organisms. Sixth graders study weather patterns and systems by observing and explaining how an aspect of weather can affect a weather system. They explain the role of water in Earth processes, recognize how the presence of land and water in combination with the energy from the sun affect the climate and weather of a region. They model systems such as the solar system and the sun/moon/Earth system. They study uses and conservation of Earth's natural resources and use what they observe about the Earth's materials to infer the processes and timelines that formed them.

In fourth and fifth grade, students complete year two and three of a study of United States history in which history, geography, civics/government, and economics are integrated. Four graders learn about the French and Indian War and end with the Reconstruction period. The geography strand emphasizes the influence of

geography on U.S. history during these same time periods. In the civics/government strand, students learn about concepts and rights contained within our founding documents. The economic strand uses material from the history strand to deepen understanding of economic concepts. Fifth graders learn about the growth of 19th century industry and innovation and culminate the study with the events and impact of September 11, 2001. The geography strand emphasizes the influence of geography on U.S. history during these same time periods. In the civics/government strand, students learn about the rights of citizens contained within the Constitution, and how changes have been made to protect the rights of citizens. In the economic strand, students explore the ways consumers and producers have interacted in the American economy. Sixth grade is the first year of a two-year World Area Studies course. Sixth grade students study Latin America, Canada, Europe, and Australia. Both physical and human geography are integrated. The government/civics domain focuses on selected types of government found in the various areas so that students begin to understand the variety of governments in the world. The economics domain focus shifts from the United States to how other countries answer the basic questions of economics. The history domain focuses on major events in each region during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Kittredge uses the above state curriculum as a starting point for creating in-depth units of study. Because our student population consists of fast and curious learners, our staff is able to cover "the basics" quickly and then spend a considerable amount of time building cross-curricular connections and applying real-life situations to the content being studied.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

At Kittredge Magnet School, we firmly believe in the inclusion of Fine Arts, World Language, Physical Education and Health in order to provide enriching experiences that enhance instruction in all academic areas. All 4th, 5th and 6th grade students attend art class with a certified visual arts specialist on a six-day rotation. The path for creativity is taught along with criteria for development, discipline needed for creation, and the acquisition for self-assessment. As students are guided through visual, tactile, and manipulative art experiences, they build important mental constructs. The skills and techniques learned in the art class transfer directly by giving students the skills and abilities to enrich their lives on both practical and esthetical levels. Many of our students have been recognized through contests at the local and state levels for their creative expressions. After school art is offered as a continuum to enrich art projects and allow expanded creative thinking.

Our Fine Arts program also includes band, orchestra, and chorus instruction. Each student participates in a music course on a daily basis. The majority of students play a musical instrument and the standards taught in these courses affirm that discipline and rigor are critical to high academic achievement. The students delve into music theory, history and learn about dynamics of music. Opportunities are given for performances each year as well. Students participate in regional events or large group evaluations. Our groups are often recognized for performing well beyond the level expected for their age. We consistently have sixth graders who participate in middle school level district and state honor bands, which is a rare accomplishment for the age group. This year, the chorus instructor launched a silent auction within the school community to provide students with an international music experience in Ireland and Scotland.

German is offered to all students on a two-day rotation and is conducted entirely in the target language. We are an internationally recognized PASCH (Schulen: Partner für die Zukunft) school by the German Federal Foreign Office as a global community of learners. Language learning supports the acquisition of essential skills by helping develop cognitive abilities, supporting reading mastery, increasing linguistic awareness, ability to hypothesize in science and overall increased standardized test scores. After taking three years of German at KMS, most students successfully continue their studies in Middle and High School. Many of them land scholarships, receive college credit, study abroad, complete internships at German companies, and experience success in today's global economy.

Physical Education and Health is taught to all students daily for 30 minutes. Physical fitness is an important component to leading a healthy lifestyle. The inclusion of regular fitness activity helps students maintain fitness, develop muscular strength and improve cardiovascular health. As a school, we understand the fact that Physical Education provides children the opportunity to set and strive for personal, achievable goals. It

also helps with the essential skill of socializing with others successfully and provides opportunities to learn positive people skills. It reinforces knowledge learned across the curriculum. It also serves as a lab for application of content in science, math, social studies and other disciplines.

Our continued commitment to Fine Arts, World Language, and Physical Education/Health supports our school's mission to develop creative life-long learners who excel to their individual potential and take responsibility for learning.

Our experience in working with gifted learners; supported by outside research on standardized test scores, shows that students who regularly participate in these courses score higher than those who do not. These curriculum areas also increase cognitive development, higher test scores, better analytical skills, and improved overall health.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

Kittredge Magnet School strives to design and implement a rigorous curriculum that challenges students to develop in-depth learning, critical thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level. This level of rigor encourages students to learn more content information at a faster pace and to learn it more deeply. Differentiation, a fundamental teaching strategy in gifted instruction in which the teacher modifies both the instructional methods and the student output, allows students to express their knowledge in a variety of formats and to take ownership of their own learning. Kittredge Magnet School uses a wide variety of digital media to enhance the learning environment, including class sets of Chromebooks and iPads with curriculum supporting software and a 3D printer.

Teachers are consistent and deliberate in planning and using instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills. As a magnet school with a diverse population that draws from a wide variety of socio-economic levels across the district, we actively plan and implement strategies to identify learning gaps and bring all students to an accelerated level of learning. This is evident in the use of flexible grouping within the classroom and across the grade level to focus on specific skills acquisition and content acceleration.

Teachers continually inform students of their learning expectations and provide specific and immediate feedback about their learning. Our teachers work in collaborative teams, using multiple assessments of students learning, in order to ensure both a vertically and horizontally articulated curriculum that meets the needs of the students. School administrators deliberately provide time in the scheduling for this collaboration to occur, and consistently monitor the implementation of appropriate and challenging instructional practices through both supervision and formal evaluation procedures. Teachers are organized into departmentalized teams; this allows teachers to deepen their own content knowledge and to strengthen the expected rigor of the entire program.

Our lower class size (18:1 ratio) helps teachers give individualized attention to students. Tutorials are offered before and after school, as well as during lunch, to students who want more help in specific curriculum areas. While Kittredge Magnet School does not have an achievement gap of 10 or more percentage points on district test scores, we do use multiple assessments to identify students with learning weaknesses. These students are given extra support and targeted intervention. In addition, if a teacher feels that a student is not making the progress expected or if that student has a grade point average that falls below 82 in a core curriculum area, that teacher will set up a family conference where strategies for improved success and a timeline for achievement will be set.

All teachers at Kittredge Magnet School consistently use common grading and reporting policies, processes and procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. Kittredge Magnet School maintains an expectation for professional growth in order to meet the demands of developing an articulated and rigorous academic program for its students. School personnel stay current on research related to unique characteristics of learning (such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, personality type indicators) and provide or coordinate related individualized learning support services to all students.



## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Students selected to attend our school must leave friends in their neighborhood schools to attend an unfamiliar environment. Many of our students spend 1 - 2 hours daily traveling on buses to attend Kittredge. However, after spending even a short time here, the students and parents overwhelmingly comment on their satisfaction with the learning opportunities and staff support they find at Kittredge. This enthusiasm is demonstrated in the students' level of motivation and dedication to their academic studies. Along with their daily academic pursuits, many students choose to engage in additional academic and non-academic activities outside of the school day. Parents trust our experienced, knowledgeable and creative staff to make the students' long bus rides worthwhile each and every day. Both teachers and students find their intellectual peer group here at Kittredge. They no longer feel like they have to hide their “gifted lights” under an academic bushel, but feel free to be themselves and find their contributions are valued. From the day students are initiated into the Kittredge family through a welcoming social at the beginning of their entering year to the day they leave us, we celebrate their transition to the next school level and our new Kittredge students become a part of a 31-year tradition of excellence.

We believe in providing leadership opportunities for our students through Beta Club, Kittredge Leadership Academy and in everyday activities in band, orchestra, PE and the classroom. Students have opportunities for after school activities that enrich the curriculum such as math team, art club, LEGO-Robotics, Science Olympiad, academic bowl, reading club, jazz band, black history bowl and reading bowl. These activities and more provide extra-curricular opportunities for learning, social interaction and growth.

As a suburb of Atlanta, DeKalb County encompasses a very culturally and economically diverse area. This diversity creates wonderful opportunities for our students to grow personally. It also creates an academic challenge for the staff as students come from a variety of school experiences and backgrounds. Kittredge is a school where respect for all is the expectation for anyone who enters the building, adult or child. As a staff initiative, we created a positive behavior system for all students four years ago. Students learn about our ROA+R program during a beginning-of-school assembly. ROA+R stands for Respect, Order, A+ Attitude and Responsibility. Students and staff alike recognize each other through the distribution of ROA+R cards that are then entered into a prize drawing every week. The drawing is the highlight of our Friday morning announcements when our Assistant Principal proclaims, “Good morning KMS Cougars! Let me hear you roar!”

In addition, teachers are given incredible Professional Learning opportunities to attend state and national conferences to network with other educators and to hone their craft. These teachers happily return from their conferences eager, refreshed and ready to share their knowledge with colleagues. Collaborative planning time is incorporated into teachers' daily schedule so they can sit with their subject pair partner to share ideas. This shared time is cherished by our teaching staff and serves as the cornerstone for developing rigorous and enriching lesson content.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Kittredge Magnet School is committed to the success of our students. We know that in order to achieve that success, we must build strong, trusting partnerships with our parents. We embrace and routinely recognize parents' importance in their children's success. This partnership begins even before a student is accepted to our school. In January and February, Kittredge hosts a number of school tours for prospective parents. The administration and student leaders meet with parents and take them on guided tours. Once students are selected for our school through a district-wide lottery process, Kittredge reaches out to them and invites the families to a new student welcome party in May and an orientation and popsicle party in August. Shortly after school year begins, parents are encouraged to attend both the Curriculum night and KMS 101, a follow-up program for new families. All of these events highlight the parent involvement that is expected of all Kittredge families, and help to foster a partnership between the school and parents to support student success.

We ask that parents volunteer 16 hours per year to the school. This volunteer time can be earned in many ways. Parents can assist with organizing weekly communication envelopes, make copies for teachers, supervise the semi-annual book fair, volunteer at social events such as Donuts for Dads or Muffins for Moms, chaperone a wide variety of field trips, and help with special events days like Pi Day, "Dezemberfest," Career Day, frog dissections, and seasonal class parties. Parents come into our building as volunteers to help and leave as vocal advocates for the wonderful learning opportunities they watched their children experience.

We have a very active PTA and School Council. The PTA provides opportunities for social events to support parent interaction and help to build a sense of community for a school that serves 84 elementary schools across the district. Our school council serves as an advisory group for school governance and a sounding board for ways we can increase parent participation and support for our school and students. Both parent groups serve as advisors as we go through our annual school improvement process and planning. We believe in encouraging parents to participate in our school activities and visit as often as possible. The more that parents are actively engaged in the Kittredge community, the more opportunities we have to build strong partnerships together for the success of our students.

### **3. Professional Development:**

As the Kittredge faculty, we understand that education is a never-ending learning process. It does not stop after earning a degree and starting a professional career. Teachers are encouraged to pursue professional development, not only to ensure the best learning outcomes for their students, but also to be more effective and satisfied in various other aspects of their work. We understand that teachers also need to be able to prepare their students to succeed in a changing world — they need to be able to teach students how to use emerging technologies, how to navigate evolving workplaces, how to communicate effectively, and how to think critically and solve problems. The more professional development teachers get, the more likely students are to succeed. At our school, the choice of professional learning activities is driven by our analysis of data and development of student needs profiles. Along with survey information, areas of need and interest of the staff are identified. Plans are made with the goal of improving student achievement, more effective delivery of the curriculum and expansion of student experiences.

Professional learning for the staff at KMS happens both locally and off-site. Local sessions are planned according to the need of a department or the entire staff. Many times, these sessions are provided by the school district and focus on student data analysis, curriculum changes and updates, and assessment. Our staff also participates in state and national conferences. The conferences that our staff attended so far have focused on best practice strategies, the use of advanced technology, teaching gifted children, co-teaching, developing a rigorous curriculum, higher-order thinking skills, reading and writing across the curriculum, best practices in the use of assessment, curriculum compacting, and various book studies. In the past year, funds were made available for all subject area teachers to attend national conferences. For instance, the increased use of technology encouraged some of our staff members to attend the International Society for Technology in Education that taught our teachers even better use of more advanced technology. Upon the teachers return, they provided the entire staff with a re-delivery of the most important content and an opportunity for a Google classroom study group with ten participants at a time. English Language Arts teachers attended the Teacher's College Conference for reading and writing skill development across the curriculum. The organization has developed state-of-the-art tools and methods for teaching reading and writing, for using performance assessments and learning progressions to accelerate progress, and for literacy-rich content-area instruction.

Our World Language educators attend the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Convention, which has the reputation for being a top educational and networking event for language educators. The educational sessions and the networking opportunities with colleagues from around the world have an outstanding track record for bringing long-term professional benefits, including sharing ideas and best practices throughout the language education field. Our Science team has attended numerous conferences such as Stem Expo, Georgia Gifted Conferences, and the National Science Teacher Association Conference. Having the opportunity and funds to attend these important conferences has

provided our educators with direct observation of best practice strategies use in classrooms as well as acknowledgement of the use of many other areas of growth which have all resulted in classroom success for our students and an overall school improvement.

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

The administration of Kittredge Magnet School has a philosophy of leadership that includes shared decision making; a focus on developing teacher leadership capacity; and providing support for teachers to become autonomous professionals. We believe that a valued and supportive staff working in a positive and high-performance work culture creates a team of professionals that are motivated to work diligently towards student achievement and success. KMS has a staff that is comprised of outstanding educators who are committed to life-long learning, professionalism and improvement. The teachers in the classroom feel respected and valued which has an important impact on the success of our school. Staff input and participation takes place through a variety of forums including Building Leadership Team, After-school Extended Day Program, Instructional Technology Committee, Continuous Improvement Planning Team, Calendar Committee, School Climate and Discipline Team, PTA Board, and Principal's Advisory Council. Through these working groups and more, teachers and staff are able to make recommendations and decisions through a collaborative process that allows open brainstorming and builds consensus. The shared decision-making process at KMS creates a situation in which all staff become personally and professionally invested in the work it will take to achieve identified goals.

Our parent community also has an important role in our shared decision-making framework. Parents are represented in the decision-making process through PTA Board and special committees as well as the Principal's Advisory Council. Our philosophy regarding the importance of parent leadership and engagement falls closely in line with the mission of the National PTA. The partnership we hold with our parent community values diversity, strengthens our ability to serve all of our students, and strategically aligns our work towards the goals of the school. The Principal's Advisory Committee consists of four elected parent representatives and two elected staff members. The purpose of this council is to bring parents, school employees, students, and community members together to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's perspectives and share ideas for increasing student achievement and performance. The council holds five open meetings every school year and works to maintain a school-wide perspective on issues; act as a link between the school and the community; encourage the engagement of parents and other stakeholders within the school community; and work to increase student achievement and performance through transparent operations and shared best practices. The Principal's Advisory Council provides advice and recommendations to the school principal, the local board of education, and local school superintendent on matters related to school climate/culture, student achievement, and community partnerships.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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We believe our unique ability to nurture the autonomous learner in our students has been most influential in the success of Kittredge Magnet School for High Achievers. We pride ourselves in equipping students with the tools needed to foster student growth and create lifelong learners who excel to their individual potential. Our ultimate goal is to guide students into becoming successful, contributing members of society.

Teachers work to develop problem solving techniques that challenge students to self-reflect, evaluate, and analyze information which leads them to rely on their own abilities. Lessons are carefully crafted with questions as the driving force and silence at the heart of the dialogue. These questions are constructed with “wait time” between questions and responses, and silence between one question and another question. This productive silence is significant because it represents growth and helps students to find their voice.

Students are guided to evaluate their work and effort using the criteria of rubrics, conferencing, portfolio assessments, and “Kittredge Quality.” Kittredge Quality is determined when a student has done his best work and put his best foot forward.

Along this road to autonomy, students are taught self-advocacy skills that travel with them throughout their lives. Students are encouraged to speak up for themselves and to positively defend their ideas, thoughts, and opinions.

In keeping with taking students to the next level, our students are motivated not to just stop at self-advocacy but to also advocate for their peers. Students graduate from being the questioned to becoming the questioners. They become more and more curious about the world around them creating “aha” moments of discovery.

As a result of this autonomous environment our students are confident and assertive. Our students are poised, self-assured, and well spoken. They eagerly take to the forefront in matters that are meaningful to them including spearheading community service projects that benefit the school and surrounding community, organizing and facilitating rallies to exercise their Constitutional rights, as well as approaching a teacher to discuss concerns regarding their academic progress.