

**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 [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Gregory W. Florence

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

Official School Name Kitty Hawk Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 16 S. Dogwood Trail

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

Kitty Hawk NC 27949-3838  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Dare County

Telephone (252) 261-2313

Fax (252) 261-3400

Web site/URL http://khe.daretolearn.org/

E-mail florencegr@daretolearn.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. John Farrelly

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

District Name Dare County Schools Tel. (252) 480-8888

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 Mrs. Bea Basnight

(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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 10 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>	50	27	77
<b>1</b>	31	29	60
<b>2</b>	43	38	81
<b>3</b>	27	35	62
<b>4</b>	46	41	87
<b>5</b>	50	32	82
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<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>	247	202	449

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 89 % White
  - 4 % 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: 7%

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	27
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	34
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	462
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%  
7 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Danish, Russian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16%  
Total number students who qualify: 71

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
66 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>3</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>8</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>34</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>2</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: 11
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.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	97%	99%	97%	97%	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.

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

At KHES, we ensure all students become innovative, creative, problem solvers by providing a safe, supportive, and kind school environment that focuses on teaching and learning.

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**

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Kitty Hawk Elementary School (KHES) is the northernmost school in the Dare County School District, located in northeast North Carolina. The school district stretches about 70 miles from the town of Duck in the north, Hatteras Village in the south, and Roanoke Island and Mainland Dare to the west. These geographic areas include many small barrier island and mainland communities. Classified as a rural school district, there are just over 35,000 year-round residents in Dare County, with summer month population swelling to more than 300,000. This close-knit coastal community is comprised of working class and business people dependent on tourism and service industries.

Dare County Schools benefit greatly from tourism revenue generated during the summer months. While the area is known for its beaches, commercial and charter fishing fleets, and summer fun, we also are known for two historically significant events. Roanoke Island is the site of an English settlement where Virginia Dare in 1585 was the first English child born in the New World. Later, in 1903, Kill Devil Hill near Kitty Hawk became the birthplace of modern aviation when the Wright Brothers achieved the first sustained flight of a heavier-than-air machine.

Decades following the Wright Brothers success, the original Kitty Hawk School was located in Old Kitty Hawk Village and served students in grades K-12. The school was relocated in 1959 to its current site, serving students in grades K-8. KHES became K-5 in 1983 when grades 6-8 were moved to Manteo Middle School on Roanoke Island. A new school was built in Nags Head during 2005-2006 to relieve overcrowding at KHES. At that time, a portion of the "old" Kitty Hawk School was razed and a modern two-story wing was built. Since then, KHES has settled into its current numbers.

KHES is one of five elementary schools that feeds into two middle schools and three high schools across the district. Our school has averaged 450 students in grades K-5 during the past 10 years. The student population is not very culturally or racially diverse; however, there is moderate diversity in the socio-economic status among our families, with nearly 20% receiving free or reduced price lunch.

Our long and rich history, coupled with our small, close-knit rural community, makes KHES and our surrounding community a very desirable place to live, work, and go to school. Over the years, our school has benefitted from traditions and conditions that make our community unique. The KHES mascot is the Falcon, providing a visual theme used throughout our school. Our school motto is "By Reaching High, We Fly" and is read at the beginning of morning announcements each day. Our school wide expectations for student behavior are based on the Falcon's preferred method of travel: soaring. Ask any student at KHES and they will be happy to share with you what it means to SOAR - Stay safe, Offer help, Act responsibly, and Respect yourself and others.

Because the surrounding community is a very desirable place for families to live, KHES has never struggled to find highly qualified candidates for employment. Our school's teacher turnover rate is remarkably low. Teachers rarely leave for reasons other than retirement. During the past 20 years, the surrounding community also has become a great place for people to retire. An abundance of retirees and KHES parents with flexible work schedules (especially during the winter months) provide our school with a steady stream of volunteers who all work to support our mission of teaching and learning.

For more than fifty years, the KHES PTA has partnered with the community and sponsored a successful carnival that is second to none. Revenues from this annual event fund the PTA's annual initiatives. Their budget is developed with staff input and supports teaching and learning, such as cultural arts events, classroom instructional materials, campus beautification projects, playground equipment, and innovative teaching and learning projects.

Like the innovative and creative thinking of the Wright Brothers more than one hundred years ago, our teachers and staff help students soar with innovative teaching practices and creative instructional methods. We work hard to soar, paying attention to each student's academic and social emotional needs. Our Positive Behavior and Intervention Support (PBIS) program blends with our Multi-Tiered System of Support

(MTSS) program to ensure the majority of our students are successful with our core curriculum and programming. These programs also help us identify, support, and monitor those students who need additional help to achieve success. From our distance learning “Windows to the World” Classroom, farm-to-classroom greenhouse, enrichment clubs that meet before, during, and after school, math-science labs, non-traditional work spaces, and curriculum nights, our school consistently reaches higher to fly further. We help students achieve success and develop in all aspects of their lives.



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

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

With a strong focus on teaching and learning, teachers at KHES provide purposeful instruction that follows the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCoS) for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Developed from national standards in each content area and in line with current research, the curriculum content standards are challenging and focus on developing both academic and 21st century skills in each area. Mastery of these skills helps students be prepared for the next level and become globally aware, technologically capable, and college and career ready.

Prior to the beginning of each school year, teachers work in teams and develop curriculum pacing guides and identify the “power standards” to be emphasized throughout the year. These pacing guides provide a cumulative and sequential road map of the NCSCoS, helping students build on previously learned content and develop foundational skills for the next grade. As the year progresses, grade level teams consistently review the standards that have been taught to ensure mastery of the identified power standards. They also review upcoming standards and identify how they can be incorporated with prior learning and other content areas. By doing so, students can make additional connections and develop a deeper understanding of what they have learned.

The ELA curriculum includes content standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. With a focus on technical and non-fictional text, these standards prepare students with 21st Century literacy skills. In the primary grades, students receive instruction in phonics, decoding, fluency, accuracy, comprehension and vocabulary. Decoding skills are taught with our district’s phonics program, Letterland. Students apply acquired spelling and reading strategies to deepen their understanding of words to make connections and strengthen their comprehension and writing skills. As students master these skills, the instructional focus begins to shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

Instructional frameworks such as Daily 5 and CAFE allow students to develop and apply strategies to communicate, collaborate, think critically and learn content in a positive learning environment. Daily team tasks and class meetings are such examples. The modeling and practice of respectful communication and active listening in the classroom is important in our school culture. Teachers and students frequently exchange roles between facilitator and participant. Incorporating 21st century life skills into lessons also encourages our students to regularly practice their communication skills and reflect on their ability to show responsibility, leadership, accountability and adaptability in the classroom setting.

At KHES, being a good citizen and displaying SOAR behavior is emphasized throughout the day. Our students learn through an integrated study of the social sciences and humanities, learning civic duty and personal responsibility. Teachers guide students to make informed decisions as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. The Social Studies curriculum includes content standards for history, geography, environmental literacy, economic and financial literacy, civics, government and culture. Informational text reading strategies are incorporated consistently into lessons while teaching students important social studies concepts.

Our Math curriculum embraces a philosophy of conceptual understanding and mastery of basic skills that help students soar and be successful at the next level. Recent revisions to the math content standards have created a layered, spiraling sequence of skills that are narrowly focused, deep in conceptual understanding, and build sequentially from grade to grade. The standards target the key areas of operations and algebraic thinking, number and operations in base ten and fractions, measurement and data and geometry. Beginning in Kindergarten, students are guided to think critically, reason abstractly and persevere in problem solving. By implementing lessons that emphasize reasoning, our students read problems, ask questions, identify key vocabulary, and analyze information to construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

The Science curriculum is comprised of content standards for life, physical and earth sciences. Teachers emphasize hands-on, inquiry-based instruction that integrates science, technology, engineering and math

(S.T.E.M.) concepts. With a goal of achieving scientific literacy and success for every student, the standards focus on acquiring knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for scientific decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity.

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

Students at KHES receive weekly instruction in Art, Music, Information Technology, and Health and Physical Education (HPE). Each curricular area includes standards that help students acquire the essential skills needed to be well-rounded, productive, and successful. Using content standards specific to each discipline, our Art and Music Teachers plan lessons that develop creativity, perseverance, communication, and respect for diversity. Our Health and PE Teacher provides lessons that are more than a physical education experience. His lessons teach students the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle and improved quality of life. Our Library-Media Coordinator and Instructional Technology Facilitator collaborate and teach the information and technology essential standards (ITES) that students need to successfully navigate an ever changing, information rich, technology driven world.

Our Visual Arts program promotes visual literacy through knowledge and understanding of the different styles of art and visual communication. Using the five elements of art (color, line, shape, form, texture), students are exposed to various styles and artists, teach the skills needed to apply these elements to their own work, and integrate their thinking and skill acquisition with other content areas. Visual Art lessons are designed to achieve individual student success and build self-esteem. Student work is displayed in our Art Hall and the Main Office. Art displays such as fifth grade Northern Lights drawings in pastels, fourth grade state bird paintings that connect to social studies standards, third grade interpretations of Picasso portraits, or second grade symmetry collages connecting to math standards build student pride and are a visual smorgasbord for all.

Developing the skills and knowledge needed to create, perform, and understand music are the primary goals of the music program. Students develop music literacy through lessons that apply the elements of music to sing and play with accuracy and expression. Music lessons build musical response skills by listening to, analyzing, and describing a wide variety of musical genres and performances. The learning objectives of each lesson are placed in context and their relevance to history, culture, and core content standards are studied. As students listen, create, perform, and study different music styles, they develop problem solving and creative decision-making skills while at the same time gaining a deeper understanding of different cultures and respect for diversity. Recorder concerts, ukulele jam sessions, simple rhythmic patterns composed on keyboards, original musicals based on social studies content standards, and after-school drama club performances keep our music room alive with creativity.

Today's ITES are taught throughout the school and across all content areas. Lessons rich in STEM content are built around four areas: informational text; technology as a tool; research processes; and safety and ethical issues. Students frequently take virtual field trips in our Windows to the World classroom or with Google Goggles. Partnerships with N.E.S.T., a local turtle rescue organization, the Dolphin Research Center in Florida, and scientists around the world allow our students to take their learning far beyond the walls of KHES. Hour of Code lessons, designing 3D printed creatures, or breaking codes to open a mystery lock box, our students learn to think in diverse and creative ways. Our students collaborate with grade level peers as they discuss, analyze and evaluate many genres of literature in Literacy Cafes. Likewise, they collaborate across grade levels as intermediate students help primary students learn how to research, collect, analyze and report information.

The NC Healthful Living Essential Standards include content from the areas of Health (HE) and Physical Education (PE). PE classes at KHES focus on skill development and understanding across a variety of sport, recreational, and leisure activities in four domains: motor skill development; movement concepts; health related fitness; and personal and social responsibility. Content from the HE curriculum is woven into each PE lesson and is consistently incorporated into science, social studies, and Drug Abuse Resistance Education lessons throughout the school. The KHES PE program sponsors and organizes numerous events throughout the year, including Jump Rope For Heart, Walk/Bike to School Days, and the Get Your Head in a Helmet Challenge. Whether it's Kindergarten students learning to hop/jump/skip, or fourth and fifth

graders participating in coaching model lessons where they each play the role of athlete/coach/referee/trainer/scorekeeper/statistician, our gym always is full of healthy and active students.

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

KHES teachers stay on the cutting edge of instructional innovation. Our staff consistently reflects on their work, asking the question, “how can we help and/or do it better?” Grade level teams continuously discuss instructional methods and evaluate them for rigor, critical thinking, collaboration, and student engagement. As part of the MTSS philosophy, we first look at instruction when a student begins to struggle instead of asking, "what's wrong with the student?"

A variety of methods are used to differentiate instruction and ensure all students master core academic standards. Students are taught to set goals and measure progress using growth mindset strategies. Project-based learning, hands-on experiments, and exploratory learning methods are used to engage students. Products of learning can be seen throughout the building on bulletin boards, in electronic student portfolios, and on display in the library. Frequently, student learning teams work together to solve problems, diagram solutions, and present their findings to classmates. During these presentations, our students practice civil discourse and are purposefully taught how to build an argument, ask questions and provide counter arguments in a respectful way.

At KHES, an MTSS framework is used to plan for and provide differentiated instruction to all students. Data from formative assessments, universal screeners, state and local benchmarks, progress monitoring, and behavior plans are continuously collected, reviewed, and used to identify student needs. Tier I, the differentiated core curriculum, includes universal supports and instructional practices which benefit all students. Teachers use management strategies like Daily 5 and Daily 3 to promote independent work skills and provide differentiated instruction when needed. When students do not respond to Tier I supports, teachers meet with colleagues to identify weaknesses in instructional practices. This analysis drives teachers to develop an appropriate Tier II intervention plan including fluid differentiated grouping with additional supports.

When it becomes apparent that a student is still deficient in specific skills despite receiving support at the Tier II level, the MTSS Team collaboratively develops a more intensive individual intervention plan at a Tier III level. The MTSS Team employs a systems approach using data-driven problem-solving to maximize growth for the student in need and is instrumental in providing suggestions, resources and support to teachers as they help struggling students achieve success.

Our master schedule is designed to maximize instruction, provide intervention supports and furnish common planning time for all grade level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to meet, review data, and assess instruction. Each grade level has a 30 minute intervention/enrichment block called SOAR time. Creative scheduling staggers SOAR time so that EC Teachers, ESL support, Interventionist, and Teacher Assistants are available to provide intervention support across grade levels. These resources are reappropriated at the beginning of and throughout each school year, as student needs change.

As a high performing school, we identify students who SOAR academically and ensure they are provided with rigorous instruction. Our Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) teacher facilitates instruction for both AIG identified and unidentified students using a combination of pull out, push in and consultative models. Our AIG facilitator and Media Specialist collaborate with teachers to meet with fluid groups of students who demonstrate a need for a higher level of instruction based on classroom performance, teacher observation and formative assessments.

An achievement gap of more than 10 points exists for two of our subgroups: students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students. To close this gap for students identified with a disability, KHES participates in a county self assessment to assist IEP teams in implementing identified universal supports and IEP goals with fidelity. School-wide programs support economically disadvantaged students, such as Food for Thought (a weekend food bag program), teacher professional development on childhood trauma, and mental health first aid. Additionally, building authentic relationships with students is a priority and a

school-wide emphasis. Community resources also are available for parents through various partnerships with local agencies, such as the Positive Parenting Program. These programs target the overall well-being of the child and address basic needs so students are able to focus on their academic progress at school. While students in these subgroups lag in academic proficiency, these combined programs help students achieve expected growth as measured by the Education Value-Added Assessment System.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

KHES employs a variety of strategies to create a positive climate that engages and motivates students and teachers. Explicit instruction in core socio-emotional skills helps students navigate the complexities of school academics, friendships, and problem solving. Throughout the year, students have opportunities outside the classroom to practice positive social behaviors. These include PTA movie nights, PTA Talent Show, Celebrity Scoop Nights at the local ice cream parlor, before and after school clubs, and SCA Spirit Days. Recognizing the needs of the whole child and providing additional instruction and support from adults who genuinely care is what keeps our culture strong.

Our PBIS program provides a framework that includes instruction in school wide expectations and frequent reinforcement of positive behavior in all areas of our building. Students who are “caught” SOARing are recognized with a certificate and acknowledged on morning announcements. Their picture is displayed in the PRIDE Hall and they receive an “I Got Caught SOARing” button to wear proudly. Classes also are recognized with “I Got Caught SOARing at KHES” pencils and a visit from our “Friendly Falcon” that accompanies the class for a week as they travel throughout the school.

Each year, a new PBIS theme is chosen. This year’s theme is #choosekind and has been promoted through a One Book, One School project, classroom marble jars that count acts of kindness, and an original holiday play about kindness (written by our music teacher). Third grade students performed the play and were joined by fourth and fifth grade students during the finale, singing “Put a Little Love in Your Heart.” Commitment to our theme builds a sense of unity among staff and students.

Teachers feel valued and supported at Kitty Hawk Elementary School. A culture of shared decision making exists where input is gathered and consensus is built before big decisions are made. Staff members complete a school climate survey each year and the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey every two years. Data from both surveys are shared and used to identify areas for improvement. Low teacher turnover and high staff morale are both by-products of culture building activities throughout the year. During faculty meetings, staff members are given the opportunity to recognize acts of kindness from colleagues and the principal acknowledges adult SOARing behavior with blue and white “falcon” feathers. Faculty and staff also participate in activities such as Walk/Bike to School Day, chili cook offs, jeans week, SCA Spirit Days, after school gatherings, and our annual PTA fall carnival.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

At KHES, our commitment to teaching and learning is supported through dynamic and cooperative relationships with our families and community. We keep an open line of communication and share decision making and leadership responsibilities. We encourage parents and community partners to be involved with our mission of teaching and learning.

News You Can Use is our principal’s monthly newsletter that supplements communication from the classroom teacher and PTA. Information about school successes, challenges to be met, upcoming activities, and information meetings on new programs or initiatives all are communicated using our learning management system, social media, email, and mass communication platforms.

Parents are members of our School Improvement (SIT) and Budget Teams. The SIT provides a view into the world of school data-based decision making that supports teaching and learning. Parents participating on our Budget Team get a first hand look into funding sources and a deeper appreciation of competing school resources. Parents who volunteer for these school leadership teams are ambassadors for KHES to other parents and community organizations.

We reach out to parents and the community to provide information, entertainment and celebrate achievement. Kindergarten Kick-Off, August Open House and PTA Back-to-School Night offer parents

and students opportunities to learn about school expectations, meet teachers, review curriculum, and get excited for the new year. Science and Math Nights bring all ages together to showcase STEM skills and help parents understand what is needed to be college and career ready. End of year activities such as Kindergarten Moving Up Ceremony, Fifth Grade Graduation, and School Awards Assembly bring families and extended families together to celebrate student achievement. While our PTA fall carnival, talent show and movie nights are great sources of entertainment, parents also enjoy participating in living wax museums, poetry cafes, and literature circles.

Parents, former parents, extended family, and community members all volunteer in our building, logging more than 3,000 hours a year. Their work supports teaching and learning throughout the school. Parents help keep our library running by reshelving and checking out books, organizing book fair, setting up crime scene investigation activities, restocking escape boxes, or selecting books for a literacy cafe. Community members work in our kindergarten and first grade rooms, assisting with craft projects or reviewing and strengthening early reading skills. Whether it's an enrichment book club, science lab set up, guest speaker about a learning objective, or chaperones on a field trip, our parents and community members contribute to our success and help us reach higher and fly further year after year.

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

Administration and teachers at KHES are committed to continuous professional learning (PL) that is research-based and linked to our School Improvement Plan (SIP). With the support of our Central Office and PTA, we systematically analyze evidence of student proficiency and learning, identify areas for improvement, and write goals and strategies that address areas of weakness. It is not always affordable to attend regional, state or national conferences since we are a rural school district. Teachers take advantage of district PL opportunities, network with other teachers in and out of district, and organize PL opportunities within our building.

Central Office PL opportunities throughout the year typically relate to new curriculum, curriculum pace guide planning, use of technology in the classroom, or training related to a new state initiative. During the past 10 years, the district and KHES have made a significant investment of time and funding in state level training for MTSS, PBIS, literacy benchmarking and progress monitoring, and math. In each of these areas, we've implemented a "train the trainer model," with trainers returning to KHES and providing initial training with frequent and targeted follow up.

During the past four years, math PL has been a focus. School leadership and KHES teachers representing all grade levels have participated in summer math conferences for the past two summers. Cross-grade level teams then met, reviewed their training and discussed how they could support each other. Ongoing discussions continued in grade level professional learning community team meetings and math benchmark assessment data was reviewed. The Math Curriculum Team, as a direct result of these meetings, now hosts Family Math Nights whereby students share math activities that support math instruction. As a result, we have experienced a growth from 63% to 75% in math proficiency.

KHES teachers initiate books clubs based on student need or teacher interest. Teacher teams meet monthly to discuss what they've learned, how it will improve teaching and the impact on student learning. Topics have included grading practices, growth mindset, strategies to motivate and engage students with and without special needs, and what's new in genre fiction.

The new North Carolina Digital Learning Competencies (DLC) have inspired our teachers. They continue to stay on the cutting edge of digital innovation, and some classrooms now are identified as digital innovation classrooms. DLC take students beyond "sit and get" technology, using computers and tablets in new and innovative ways. Additionally, some of our teachers recently attended the state technology conference and now are spreading digital innovation and professional learning throughout the school.

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

The KHES leadership philosophy is a blend of styles based on situational needs. Servant and Democratic styles dominate, using shared decision making and consensus building strategies that support teaching and learning. KHES staff know they have a voice in the process, whether it's hiring new teachers, master scheduling, student discipline, or professional learning.

Teachers, students, and parents have ready access to school administration. Administration has an open-door policy with staff, parents, and students. Accessibility and visibility are its concurrent goals. Relationships are developed and nurtured because it makes the hard work easier. "I am here but to serve" is a phrase commonly heard as administrators answer questions on the fly, help students carry books to the library, touch base with a student before school, or grab the mop when cafeteria spills occur.

The KHES leadership structure is built from the classroom up and relies on a two-way flow of information. Teachers, staff members and administrators participate with various PLC teams that meet regularly to review data, assess goals, plan instruction, problem solve new concerns, or participate in PL. Grade level PLC teams and the MTSS team meet weekly, while school curriculum and PBIS teams meet monthly.

Staff members serve on the school leadership team which provides a dual purpose as our school safety team. These two teams participate on our school improvement and budget teams along with elected parent members. They meet at least once a month and focus on school needs using a problem solving and shared decision-making approach.

A one-day, off campus retreat for the school leadership team is held each summer where SIP goals, student achievement data and PBIS data are analyzed. Additionally, ideas that boost student learning are discussed, changes for the following school year are considered, and the master schedule is reviewed with an eye toward maximizing instructional time. School teams share meeting information so everyone is kept in the loop about successes, concerns and decisions. All decisions are measured against their impact on teaching, learning, and how they support our school improvement plan.

Our principal, assistant principal and school counselor comprise our school's admin team. This team has an unwavering dedication to maximizing instructional time and minimizing interruptions. They are the top tier in the school's PBIS program and make decisions based on the whole child. In addition to "leading with soul", our admin team nurtures, encourages and grows teacher leaders so that future generations of Kitty Hawk Falcons will continue to soar.

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

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At KHES, our MTSS program is the most influential practice that directly impacts our school's academic success. We have been using MTSS and its predecessor, Response to Intervention (RtI), for ten years. Today's MTSS framework is a blend of academic and behavioral supports that customizes instruction for all students. A three tiered approach using data-driven, problem-solving methods allows the school MTSS team to address academic deficits and/or behaviors that impede learning.

MTSS helps us to quickly identify students who struggle academically, accurately pinpoint their struggles and design interventions to help them succeed. Through progress monitoring, teachers are able to track growth, or lack thereof, and make appropriate adjustments. Our unwavering emphasis on student growth and success has allowed KHES to demonstrate high growth in all subgroups year after year.

Over the years, assessments have been realigned, new learning standards have been written and revised, and new benchmark targets and school grading systems have been introduced. Through it all, KHES students continue to perform well and consistently demonstrate high rates of proficiency. While proficiency toward college and career readiness is important, student growth is our overriding focus. The MTSS program takes students at their beginning start point, whether it be below, at or above grade level, and helps them achieve a year or more of growth.

The behavioral component of MTSS is the PBIS framework. Every August, we teach students what behaviors are expected in each area of the school. With consistent review and reinforcement throughout the year, most of our students meet our expectations and help contribute to a safe and distraction free learning environment. When students display behaviors that interrupt teaching and/or learning, a three tiered approach is used to identify the disruptive behavior, develop an intervention strategy that reinforces the desired behavior, and apply a reward system for success.

The year prior to implementing PBIS with fidelity, our school had more than 250 office referrals. After developing strategies, systems, and re-training staff, the office referral rate was cut in half two years in a row and now averages about 70 per year. Our consistent work to train staff, educate students, and continuously keep our PBIS program fresh with new ideas and themes, has resulted in KHES being recognized by the NC Department of Public Instruction as a Green Ribbon and Model School.