

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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	44	52	96
K	31	26	57
1	21	29	50
2	30	26	56
3	22	23	45
4	22	25	47
5	18	26	44
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	188	207	395

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

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 12%

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.

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	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	35
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	51
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	411
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 70 %
275 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %
 Total number students who qualify: 395

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %
11 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>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</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: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
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.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	96%	96%	95%
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.

Encourage, empower, and expect each student to become productive citizens in our local, national, and global society.

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

N/A

PART III – SUMMARY

“I will succeed!”, “I will succeed!” are words frequently echoed by students at JC Kelly Elementary. With the odds of success stacked against them and amplified by Associated Press stories published in 1997 calling the community the “Calcutta of the Rio Grande Valley”, JC Kelly Elementary students defy all risk factors. The children and families of JC Kelly Elementary are committed to their “beloved school” and to learning, even though they live in an area with poverty rate of 66.1% above the current rate of 33.4% for the four southernmost surrounding counties of South Texas. Located in the heart of Las Milpas in Pharr, Texas, JC Kelly Elementary is the pride and joy of this humble community. It is a “second home” to 395 students in educational programs which include full-day pre-kindergarten (3 yr. and 4 yr. old) through fifth grade. Some students come from homes with limited or no access to utilities. Situated five miles from the US-Mexico border, it is surrounded by modest dwellings, platted streets, and includes the St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Catholic Church.

JC Kelly Elementary opened its doors in 1979 to help fulfill the hopes and dreams of hard-working parents in the predominantly farm community. Hidalgo ISD fulfilled its commitment to serve, educate, and inspire the children of JC Kelly Elementary by starting four modest classrooms serving kindergarten through first grade students in the Cabrini Catholic Church. The white stucco building of the Cabrini Church soon turned into four military-style barracks and became John Connally Kelly Elementary School, named after a local prominent rancher credited with much of the surrounding area’s development. The school has undergone a phenomenal transformation in the 39 years since its inception while overcoming many challenges that typically beleaguer a Title I school.

Currently, JC Kelly Elementary serves a student population that is 100% Hispanic, 93% economically disadvantaged, 69.62% English language learners, and 83% academically at-risk. One-hundred percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch and approximately 2.78% of JC Kelly Elementary students qualify for special education services to help meet their individualized academic needs. This small rural school has a mobility rate of 12.4% and a 38% enrollment from surrounding school districts, within twenty miles.

JC Kelly Elementary School leadership collaborates with faculty and parents to tap into the community’s core belief of “success, success, success” to accomplish its current mission. All students are provided with a challenging and dynamic educational program that nurtures a student’s intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth in a positive and supportive environment to become productive citizens in society. Despite its formidable challenges and diverse demographics, JC Kelly Elementary encourages ALL students to reach their full potential, strive for academic success, and prepare for transition to Hidalgo Independent School District’s early college high school and beyond. Through targeted initiatives in and out of the academic arena, students participate in a rigorous instructional program focused on developing mastery knowledge in the core curriculum: language arts, math, science, social studies, as well as in fine arts and health/physical education programs. Student success is celebrated in the School Performance Reward System which includes academic recognition, Hall of Fame, Student of the Month, Masters Walk of Fame, attendance, and reading incentive ceremonies. Through the consistent implementation of these key strategies/initiatives students have developed and fostered a growth mindset to become lifelong learners. As a result, this past school year, JC Kelly Elementary reached a milestone by receiving all six Distinction Designations in the three eligible subjects for the performance in the State Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Students also participate in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) and Spelling Bee challenging them academically, boosting morale, and encouraging healthy competition which transfers into the classroom. Students’ socio-emotional needs are targeted through the Positive Intervention Behavior System (PBIS) framework, including character education curriculum, counseling programs, and Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies. These programs use positive reinforcements which promote self-discipline, creating an environment conducive to successful academic learning.

Cultural traditions play a critical role in the development of language and academics. The one-way dual language model has been a key strategy of the Kelly educational program since the 1990’s, as cited in educational research works by dual language experts like Thomas and Collier. Using native language

instruction through the content areas ensures students use what they know to acquire content. Multicultural activities like Día de las Madres, Cinco de Mayo, Día de la Independencia de México, and Día de los Muertos allows the school and families to share elements of their culture to build connections and identity. Likewise, the American culture is honored through Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. activities. Other community events that promote physical wellness and citizenship skills include annual Community Walk, City of Hidalgo Borderfest, Friendship Festival, and Superintendent tournaments. At Kelly the “whole child” approach ensures that students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Kelly sets the standard for a comprehensive, sustainable school improvement model for long-term success, a direct contribution to student achievement.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Kelly ensures that every student achieves excellence in mastering the language arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The foundation of Kelly's comprehensive reading program is based on the framework of Balanced Literacy specifically chosen because of its intensive, systematic, small group, blended approach to learning reading and writing. In the early childhood classrooms, teachers use explicit phonics and phonological awareness programs supplemented with the use of a basal reader. Pre-kindergarten through 1st grade teachers incorporate phonological awareness curriculum lessons within their reading block. Building on foundational skills, teachers begin the steps towards mastery of academic Spanish and English through the content areas. The fluency program ensures that students read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression. Every grade level identifies expected fluency goals per six weeks and students are assessed monthly on foundational skills, fluency, and comprehension. At Kelly, writing is implemented through written reflections, essays, compositions, and writing portfolios. Kelly, in conjunction with other district campuses, participates in fourth grade writing camps to target concepts and skills.

Kelly's success in teaching the state-mandated TEKS in mathematics is attributed to the fidelity of the process and readiness standards to ensure the alignment and fundamental concepts. By doing this, the teachers provide explicit and skill-based instruction formatted to facilitate high-quality discourse among teachers and students. This approach helps Kelly Rovers think at high levels, solve complex problems, and perform a variety of academic, rigorous tasks with mastery. Every classroom is equipped with hands-on manipulatives to address the kinesthetic, multi-sensory and various learning styles of the Rover family. Integrating songs and chants during class, music, and physical education has elevated numeracy skills. In addition, the use of anchor charts and supplemental aids have given all students the concrete support needed to excel. With the assistance of the special education department, implementing a co-teach model has allowed special needs students to extend their learning and meet on-grade level demands and beyond.

Kelly teachers foster science instruction through use of investigations, hands-on lab experiences, and computer-based programs. This blended learning approach was chosen because teachers discussed the need to provide students with virtual experiences as well as engaging class activities to encompass all learning styles. Keeping science notebooks to record and reflect on inquiry-based observations, activities, investigations, and experiments pave the way for Kelly Rovers to master science concepts and learning standards (TEKS). Educational field trips and science fair events are another way the school enriches real world experiences necessary for long-term learning. The core of the Kelly science program is also its dynamic science lab run by innovative, energetic staff members. This lab has all necessary science equipment, materials and resources aligned to daily lessons. Project-based learning instruction is another way to empower students as they prepare for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) practices at the secondary level. This approach is effective and supports rigorous instructional practices. Kelly Rovers practice science in the classroom the way that scientists and engineers do, by working collaboratively to solve problems and explore challenges aimed at deepening academic knowledge and skills. This hands-on and inquiry-based instructional approach was chosen because it stimulates more authentic questions and meaningful investigations.

Social studies TEKS instruction is a key component of a well-planned, social, and civic-minded instructional approach. This curricular approach was chosen to help Kelly Rovers build a strong foundation in citizenship, shared history and culture, as well as to build strong connections to the community and beyond. Kelly teachers supplement the TEKS-aligned Social Studies curriculum by engaging students in real-life civic learning experiences. For example, third through fifth grade students participate in elections for student council giving them a hands-on experience on voting and the election process. Elected officials are invited to the school to share their passion for public service. Social responsibility is promoted, across all grade levels, through participation in canned food drives, anti-bullying and anti-drug rallies, annual Christmas toy drive, and cancer awareness fund drive. Annual patriotic celebrations and college and career fairs help Rovers build national identity and higher education preparedness. Creating a living wax museum and annual multicultural fair elevates historical and cultural experiences for students. Kelly's library has a

wealth of biography books, maps, and instructional videos aimed at exposing students to significant people in society and cultures across the globe.

The Kelly early childhood curriculum is an integrated approach that focuses on thematic units engaging early learners in all core subjects. This has a positive impact on language and literacy instruction in children's school readiness. This curriculum serves as a platform to scaffold key foundational concepts and skills in early literacy, fluency, numeracy, early writing, social-emotional, and technology. Through the alignment of pre-Kindergarten Guidelines to the TEKS, teachers provide whole group, small group, and learning centers to increase rigor and develop proficient readers across all disciplines. By the time Rovers reach 3rd grade, they are academically ready and successful on state mandated TEKS assessments.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Kelly assures the development of the whole child by implementing programs in other curriculum areas which are aimed at supporting each Rover's well-being, academic learning, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. The main purpose is to involve and inspire kindergarten through fifth grade students through active learning, critical and creative thinking, physical and health consciousness, reading fluency, and innovative problem solving. Fine arts, Physical Education/Health, and Technology/Library are aligned to state standards through use of campus curricular programs.

Through a multi-sensory learning approach, Rovers in grades K-5 participate in the study of fine arts. Once a week for 45 minutes, students receive TEKS-driven instruction which includes choir, creative expression, art, and dance by engaging students to utilize their voices, bodies, and rhythmic instruments to develop their talents. For example, the Rover Choir participates in the city's annual Christmas Program, report card nights, talent shows and motivational assemblies. In addition, the creative expression that students attain supports the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Program in the areas of oral reading and storytelling. These programs allow for students to develop public speaking, communication, and problem-solving skills which are an integral component of classroom presentations. Student artwork is displayed across the campus for all to see. Classrooms have designated spaces where student authentic art is displayed to showcase visual literacy skills, original artwork, and appreciation in other disciplines in everyday life. Kelly provides an extended day art appreciation club where students are empowered to explore through innovation and creativity. Dance is an extracurricular activity used to promote self-confidence, discipline, and student learning by enhancing collaboration, leadership, creativity, and comprehension skills necessary for a strong academic foundation. Kelly Elementary has a cheerleading dance team, that actively participates in community parades, school assembly, and district rallies aimed at increasing family and community engagement.

Rovers (K-5), participate in Physical Education (P.E.) class four times a week, engaging in activities aligned to state standards (TEKS) which promote team building, motor and sensory skills, and habits for an active, healthy lifestyle. Health topics addressed are obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes prevention, self-management, informed choices, and critical judgement; all which empower Rovers to make healthier life-long choices. At Kelly there is a direct correlation between physical fitness and academic achievement because P.E/Health staff provides activities to strengthen body and mind. Fidelity to active, physical movement supports student's critical thinking, mental flexibility, and academic performance. Students in grades 3-5 are assessed with Fitness Gram which assesses components including aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility. Campus health and fitness initiatives include: Athlete of the Month, inter-district sports competitions, and after-school sports activities. Topics addressed in P.E. are in conjunction with the school counseling department, include anti-bullying, bus safety, red ribbon week, character education, and conflict resolution. Kelly students are participating members of the district Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) which holds an annual health fair. Partnerships with community health organizations support the goal of Kelly Elementary to promote the health, and overall well-being of students and the community at large.

Kelly operates an integrated technology applications program, in alliance with the TEKS, and offers K-5 student's technology classes five times a week. The technology program includes creativity and innovation using robotics and student-created PowerPoint presentations; communication and collaborative networking

in developing and designing digital products while in the labs that increase student digital literacy. Research skills are enhanced during technology class and integrated with the school events such as in the living wax museum, multicultural and science fair, and the literacy fair. Critical thinking and inquiry-based learning are critical goals, as well as digital citizenship which helps Rovers learn to act safely and responsibly, and with courtesy and respect, in the digital world. Technology operations and concepts are reinforced weekly, in content areas in addition to foundational skills.

Kelly's library is the treasure of the school. All students attend library twice a week supported by a certified librarian who cultivates the love for reading and strong literacy skills with focus on fluency and comprehension according to the TEKS. The librarian works hand in hand with teachers to find necessary TEKS-aligned materials and resources to enhance student research experiences and enrich classroom instruction. The librarian and parent liaison work together to engage families by holding book fairs and library events aimed at bringing in parents to sit with their children and explore the numerous resources in the library.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

At JC Kelly Elementary, success is credited to their strong belief in bell-to-bell instruction. Therefore, instructional planning at Kelly begins by aligning instruction, curriculum, and assessment correlated to the TEKS. Through the analysis of campus, district, and state data, stakeholders meet to support staff and explore resources to meet the needs of all students.

Teaching and learning at Kelly is centered on five instructional approaches. A student-centered approach ensures that students are engaged via interactive, hands-on activities aimed at building motivated, self-learners and problem-solvers. For example, teachers' daily lesson plans integrate hands-on experiences, academic games, learning centers, anchor charts, differentiation, 21st century skills, and quality materials/resources. Tiered instructional approach is a method in which teachers vary the level of assignments, so all students have a chance to be successful. At Kelly, classrooms are carefully designed to maximize space and yet provide tiered learning to meet needs of students at different reading and academic levels. The multi-sensory instructional approach (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile) guides teachers to present information in different modalities to enhance mastery of new concepts. Engaging the different learning styles of students is best met when teachers plan and use foldables, anchor charts, visuals, hands-on materials, music, lab experiences, and technology.

The scaffolded instructional approach enhances delivery and mastery of concepts and skills when using a variety of high yield strategies. Teacher lesson plans are reviewed weekly to include scaffolds to meet students at their instructional level and encourage them to on-grade level mastery. Teachers use a planning guide to create their lessons beginning with the big idea, selecting an engaging experience, a Bloom's taxonomy level, and stimulus (genre, table, graphic organizer, etc.). The culturally relevant approach to teaching embraces diversity and validates culture and language. With 70% of English learners, inclusion of culturally relevant texts, books, tasks, and higher-order thinking questions is a non-negotiable. Validating students' background and using what they know is a common practice in all classrooms and is evident in the work displayed such as student-generated alphabets, anchor charts, thinking maps, and journals. Kelly understands the value of language and culture and how intertwined they are in educating students. Both languages are validated across the campus and English and Spanish signage, announcements, books, music, and posters are a common practice.

To maintain a high level of achievement at Kelly, effective instructional intervention with a focus on all accountability performance levels, is a critical component in Rovers' success. Teachers plan activities that engage learners in targeted TEKS. The Rover Building Scholar program provides a comprehensive, multi-tiered instructional process which addresses the cognitive, affective, and linguistic needs of every child. Kelly offers daily, 30-minute, morning interventions, in-class supports, and pull-outs if needed, as well as after-school tutorials from 3:15 to 4:30 designed to assist Rovers reach academic success. All staff members service pre-K to fifth graders in the Rover Building Scholar program (tutorials). Kelly also offers science and writing camps to supplement in-school interventions and tutorials. Problem-based learning for master level students ensures rigorous activities to challenge and expand student learning. Computer labs are open

before, during, and after school providing students robust, digital lessons and explicit instruction on strategies for reading and math in two languages. Parents are notified about all interventions made available for their children and ongoing students' academic achievement, efforts and progress. Building scholars is the goal of this program within the high needs Kelly community.

Kelly staff rely on data from formal/informal TEKS-based assessments such as quizzes, unit tests, projects, six-week exams, district benchmarks, and computer-based diagnostics to provide on-demand student data portfolio to inform instructional decisions. All student sub-groups at Kelly have performed within 10 percentage points of all students. Teachers and administrators use this assessment data to routinely monitor all students progress throughout the year (beg-, middle-, and end-of-year). Data from these assessments are used to adjust lesson plans, daily instruction, and interventions. During weekly PLCs, teachers discuss strategies implemented and share student successes and challenges while collaboratively planning solutions aimed at meeting the needs of all student populations. These shared experiences help teachers analyze and improve their instructional practices. By tailoring lessons, teachers ensure equitable time and resources are adjusted to meet needs of all students. Student data is not the only formal systems used to monitor progress and achievement. Formal and informal observations are used to provide feedback ensuring TEKS instruction and assessments are mastered.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Kelly Rovers' climate of high expectations and culture of "No Excuses" resonates across the campus through the deliberate focus on the importance of maintaining high rates of student/teacher attendance and achievement. Every day is an amazing day to be a Rover at Kelly! Daily announcements of attendance rates of individual classes are made to engage, motivate, and boost morale. Selecting and announcing a Kelly Student of the Month recognizes outstanding students for their academic, social, and emotional growth. Accelerated Reader Scholars are selected as well as Master-level students who are recognized at the Master's Walk of Fame celebration and breakfast at a local restaurant. Students' and teachers' birthdays are announced daily as well as posted on the school marquee, helping to create a sense of value and support for everyone. The school creates yard signs, bumper stickers, wristbands, magnets, and pins for parents to "show-off" their child's successes (perfect attendance, student of the month, honor roll, etc.). Field trips to such places as bookstores, restaurants, museums, and zoo boost students' self-esteem and morale.

Kelly teachers are recognized through Teacher of the Month and Teacher of the Year nominations and celebrations. In fact, Kelly teachers have been awarded District Teacher of the Year for three years in a row. Administrators never forget what it is like to be in the classroom. They make it a point to announce positive messages for teachers or leave a note in class to recognize their hard work and commitment. Monday Week-At-A Glance meetings give administrators and teachers an opportunity to talk with each other about weekly activities, expectations, look-fors, and PLC topics. A motto at Kelly that nurtures positive rapport, builds capacity, and enhances reflective practices, is "Teacher Voice, Teacher Choice". Teachers can express opinions without reprisal. This builds trust, confidence, a sense of individuality and professional craftsmanship. The principal's open-door policy reflects the commitment to this motto by having a willingness to listen and be available for the staff. At Kelly the promotion of professional learning is a valuable part of teachers' work and the collaborative development process. Teachers set goals for enhancing their teaching and raising student achievement. The collaborative development of these goals builds trust between teachers and leaders as they work towards a shared vision and mission. These numerous engagement and motivational strategies, aimed at boosting teacher and student morale, positively impact student achievement by ensuring high levels of master performance for overall school success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Kelly, families are an integral component of student success. Kelly has long understood that families, community, and staff collaboratively work to improve learning and development of children. Aligning to the TEA family and community engagement plan, Kelly offers an integrated school, parent, and community support system aimed at supporting school improvement efforts proven to directly impact and support Rover academic success. One approach used is family-to-family support which is fostered through the Rover Parent Center where families work to support their child's teacher. Through the Helping Hands program, parents have a chance to create resources that enhance teaching and learning in the classroom and home. Parents are encouraged to engage in meaningful events designed to strengthen their family bond to support the whole child. Events such as Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, Meet the Teacher Night, curriculum and literacy nights, cultural festivals, and academic camps strengthen the support systems between school and home.

The establishment of a Family and Community Engagement Committee (F.A.C.E.) has been an additional school improvement strategy contributing to Kelly's academic success. Through this parent leadership committee and other school efforts to engage parents, the school has provided a platform to inform parents about their child's academic achievement and challenges. Parents are informed about test data, grade level expectations, school policies, and provided self-help ideas on how to help their children at home. Four times a year, Kelly parents attend district F.A.C.E institutes where presenters from local health clinics, women shelter's, boys/girls club, libraries, local churches, and hospitals meet to inform them of what is available to them. Learning English and getting a GED is extremely important for some families, Kelly ensures that parents are informed and signed up for classes held in the district. Increasing family

participation in decision-making is evident with an increased membership of parents in committees such as site-based decision making (SBDM) and language proficiency and assessment (LPAC), F.A.C.E, Campus Improvement Plan (CIP), dual language education, and early literacy. Equipping families with tools to enhance and extend learning is key as it offers trainings on parent portals, online registration and online library resources. Make-and-take family nights allow for parents to learn strategies that extend learning at home. Local non-profit organizations provide education on health, nutrition, and parents-teaching-parents workshops. Participation of Kelly families in all activities is closely monitored by the campus principal and the parent liaison. Through the comprehensive needs assessment process, the annual parent survey offers a way for family voices to be validated and campus decisions to be made. In addition, JC Kelly disseminates information, including assessment data, school initiatives, student outcomes, challenges, interventions, and programs/services provided, during quarterly parent institutes, bi-annual curriculum nights, and parent-teacher conferences.

3. Professional Development:

Kelly supports professional learning of all teachers and administrators by using the state-mandated evaluation system, TTESS. Through this process, the administrators at Kelly seek to develop habits of continuous school improvement which has led to increased student achievement and impact staff capacity. The role of the administrators has been to use evidence-based feedback for professional development and for ongoing dialogue and collaboration. By aligning to this mandated system, administrators have ensured not only that the professional development plan meets the goals teachers have set for themselves, but that it aligns campus initiatives, TEKS standards, and supports student achievement. Kelly conducts a rigorous, comprehensive needs assessment to design a professional development plan which is aligned to the district and campus improvement plan. Kelly teachers receive trainings such as Thinking Maps, sheltered instruction, compliance and program updates, dual language, gifted and talented testing, state TEKS, co-teaching model, and high-yield strategies among many others. These strategies address the challenges facing teachers when looking for the best instructional practices to meet the high needs of the student population served at the school. Book studies conducted at the district and campus levels empower teachers toward improving performance and enhancing student learning through deliberate TEKS-based, instructional practices.

Building Leader Academy PLCs offered to current leaders, grade level chairs, and aspiring administrators has been an ongoing commitment at the school. Through these PLCs, future leaders are trained on research-based frameworks, TEKS strategies, and other data-driven strategies aimed at improving leadership skills and knowledge. Working with academic consultants and district staff, teachers and leaders learn strategies to develop a common vision of excellence. These outcome-based trainings give them a platform to experiment with innovative instructional approaches and allow them to nurture and mold their leadership skills. In addition, Kelly teachers collaboratively participate in vertical alignment meetings in the four core areas with teachers from other elementary schools. Teachers at these meetings dialogue collaboratively, sharing best practices, materials, and resources on targeted focus TEKS. Through these networking opportunities, Kelly teachers target concepts and skills which need strengthening and share strategies which have proven successful. Because Kelly serves a high number of at-risk students, in one of the highest poverty areas in the county, it is important for the staff to continually monitor student progress, adjust pacing charts, modify instruction to meet student needs, and push for elevated instructional rigor. Building teacher capacity, in instruction and social-emotional supports, has led to high success for Kelly Rovers.

4. School Leadership:

At the core of the Kelly leadership structure is shared leadership where staff takes responsibility in working together towards a common goal increased student learning. This is a critical component of its leadership philosophy as it creates an environment where staff becomes change agents - inspired to achieve extraordinary success. The leadership team at Kelly includes the principal, assistant principal, lead teacher, grade-level chairs, and school counselor. The main role of the principal at Kelly is to set a clear sense of direction to have the greatest impact. As a leader the principal shares a common understanding of the organization, the vision, mission, goals and activities by building transparency through weekly Monday morning meetings where high expectations are set and communicated.

The principal and assistant principal collaborate to coordinate information, organize the instructional structure, encourage staff and students, evaluate staff members, implement professional development plans and create steps to ensure a positive staff and school culture. For example, during weekly PLCs the leadership team teaches best practices, guides data analysis, and shows teachers how to write quality lessons which are aligned to TEKS and state assessment standards. Both administrators visit classrooms daily, helping teachers develop various classroom strategies by providing immediate formative feedback. Aligning to the role of the principal, the assistant principal and leadership team ensure the implementation and evaluation of initiatives, programs, compliance requirements, and policies. The unified efforts of the leaders and staff promote a culture of responsibility and adaptability where high expectations for student achievement – 100% and No Less – are internalized and advocated. In addition, lead teachers and grade level chairs are given the opportunity to serve as mentors and coaches for novice teachers as well as provide a system of support by ensuring alignment of curricular practices, strategies, and lessons. Throughout the year, teachers serve in various campus committees such as the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), Site-Based Decision-Making Committee (SBDM), Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) committee, RTI, and Gifted & Talented (GT) committee, among others. These leadership opportunities develop teacher leaders; build capacity at the school and district level, and support collaboration and ongoing professional learning for all staff in support of the TEKS. This alignment assures that the team works as a unit and functions well because everyone has a common language of accountability at all levels. As a result, all stakeholders share in the extraordinary results that students accomplish while on their journey to success.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most instrumental and successful strategy for academic success at JC Kelly Elementary is the process of the Professional Learning Community (PLC). The recurring, action oriented, data-driven PLC has had a profound impact on the structures and culture of the school. Kelly's implementation of PLCs started three years ago as just weekly meetings but quickly became more meaningful, purposeful platforms for innovative learning. The job-embedded learning which happens during the Rover PLC goes far beyond just sitting and listening to an administrator; rather, the sessions are planned, interactive, hands-on, and focused on student outcomes. The process of the PLC happens in the Rover Data Room, where the walls are transfigured yearly to theme-based, interactive visuals representing data. Teachers fill out student IDs including demographics, RTI, progress monitoring, and assessment data. These color-coded IDs are systematically organized to align with performance levels and measures.

At Kelly, the purpose of displaying data is to promote transparency – where every data piece is on display for every child, teacher, and program. Data is analyzed at the beginning of the year and ongoing updates are posted to track progress. The school has experienced dramatic changes in leadership and teacher practices because of the work done in the PLCs. For example, leaders have become teachers, while working through curriculum documents, pointing out highly tested processes and literacy components which need strengthening. Also, teachers create presentations on strategies which can yield higher outcomes for English learners and special education students. Inquiry and reflection are at the heart of the PLC. All dialogues, discussions, and networking address the overarching goal across all populations. Kelly teachers can be heard delving into data, making informed decisions about interventions and programs, discussing lessons and activities, or engaging in high yield strategy camps. During PLC time, collaboration represents a systematic process where staff work together interdependently to enhance classroom practices leading towards better results for students, teachers, and school.

Learning by doing is a major part of the PLC where the staff turns aspirations into action and visions into reality. Teachers roll up their sleeves to align curriculum standards to instruction and assessments across all grade levels and subject areas. The very reason that Kelly teachers work together in teams and engage in collective inquiry is to serve as catalysts for action centered around one purpose – the whole child.