

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2019 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 Mrs. Kathleen Jane Cigich

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

Official School Name Lakewood Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 14600 Lamar Avenue

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

Overland Park KS 66223-9998  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Johnson County

Telephone (913) 239-6500

Fax

Web site/URL http://bluevalleyk12.org/lke

E-mail kcigich@bluevalleyk12.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. Todd White

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail twhite@bluevalleyk12.org

District Name Blue Valley School District Tel. (913) 239-4000

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 Cindy Bowling

(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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 21 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 5 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 35 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	51	43	94
1	46	44	90
2	49	61	110
3	60	45	105
4	60	59	119
5	49	44	93
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
<b>Total Students</b>	315	296	611

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 33 % Asian
  - 5 % Black or African American
  - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 50 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 13%

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	34
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	44
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	78
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	607
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Arabic, Bangla, Bosnian, Chinese, Farsi, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Igbo, Indonesian, Kashubian, Korean, Kutenai, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Nepali, Portuguese, Russian, Sign Language, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6%  
Total number students who qualify: 34

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
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>18</u> Autism                 | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>13</u> Developmental Delay    | <u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</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: 1
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	18
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	23
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 23:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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 2018.

<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.

Lakewood Elementary is a community of learners committed to academic growth, while working together to foster meaningful learning through real-life connections and focus on the individual growth of each student.

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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“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” -Margaret Mead

Welcome to our little piece of the world...Lakewood Elementary, a place where children feel safe, valued, challenged, and nurtured. They are excited to learn and are active in the learning process. Here we find engaged learners researching animals and creating habitats, debating what pioneers should put in their covered wagons as they travel west, developing a business plan to market and sell a product, and writing and producing a curriculum-based musical performance. These Problem Based Learning (PBL) experiences are shared with other students, staff, and community members. Little do they know that this “fun” learning is really based on sound, researched principles and that their activities are the result of an ever-evolving process of providing meaningful learning for students.

Our goal at Lakewood is to provide children with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to excel as 21st century learners. Lakewood educators continually question, research, and study how children learn. Most importantly we discuss, share, and analyze this information during our weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting time. We found that when people come together with passion and dedication, the result is powerful. These guiding principles evolved through this process:

**Mission Statement:** Lakewood Elementary is a community of learners committed to academic growth, while working together to foster meaningful learning through real-life connections and focus on the individual growth of each student.

**Vision Statement:** As a professional learning community, Lakewood Elementary’s collaborative teams are committed to providing students with personalized learning in a supportive environment in which they can flourish.

Our path led us to the philosophy and practice of brain-based learning. Brain-based learning involves acknowledging the brain’s rules for meaningful learning and organizing information. It is based on the physiology of the brain and associated research that delineates the most effective techniques for helping the brain receive, organize, retain, and apply new information. This approach to the learning process suggests that basic skills are better understood and retained if acquired in an integrated experience where students are given time to reflect upon and process information. At Lakewood, we have translated that theory into practice. We believe learning should be a seamless flow of information and experiences. In order to give students more meaningful, connected learning opportunities, year-long themes in each grade level are developed around district standards. Content within each theme is a spiraled K-5 connected program with appropriate overlaps in units of study between grade levels. Skills and concepts from core subjects are pulled together into units of learning that excite, engage, and make sense to children. Multiple opportunities for learning are provided at developmentally appropriate levels to promote mastery of skills and deep understanding. These opportunities are created through our collaborative process that allows teachers to bring together their multiple perspectives and skills to generate effective methods for teaching students.

Passion for learning is at the core of the Lakewood culture. It is a commitment to respecting children as individual learners and providing an educational journey that seeks appropriate strategies to maximize each student’s potential. With a shared responsibility for all students, specialists and classroom teachers provide differentiated experiences to extend, support, modify, and challenge each child’s individual path of learning. Because we are striving to build one cohesive system that serves all students, our emphasis is on addressing individual student needs within our comprehensive learning framework.

Throughout our building, a caring and respectful attitude prevails. You will hear students using the language of a growth mindset. A common language is established through the teaching of our district-adopted Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum. Because this curriculum is taught, modeled, and practiced by the entire community, a strong sense of emotional and physical well being develops. This sense of safety allows the students to be more successful in their academic endeavors.

Parent involvement also contributes to the success of our school. Our parents believe in the Lakewood philosophy and continue to demonstrate this through involvement in PTO, participation in and organization of fundraisers, and classroom support. Community is another important factor in our students' lives. Lakewood is located in a suburban community in Overland Park, Kansas. Our school has a diverse, ever-changing student and family population. This creates a unique challenge as we strive to maintain the personalized, family-centered, nurturing environment of a neighborhood elementary school. Lakewood has been recognized and received a variety of awards for achievement. Our students consistently show strong performances in all formal assessments. Their achievements result in awards at the local, regional, and state level, including the Governor's Achievement Award, Standard of Excellence for Kansas State Assessment, and recognition as a School of Service. More importantly, rewards come daily when we see the joy of learning expressed on the faces of our students.

At Lakewood, we know that each student's day is filled with meaningful learning experiences enhanced by a safe and welcoming environment that promotes caring attitudes and develops an enthusiasm for learning. Students leave Lakewood confident in their ability to embark on a path of their own. Each teacher realizes we have traveled a great distance and embraces the journey that lies ahead. The success of Lakewood comes from the sum of its parts...we are better together.

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

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

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

Lakewood utilizes the K-12 Kansas College and Career Readiness (KCCR) language arts standards which include speaking and listening, writing, reading: foundational, reading: literature, and reading: informational. The English Language Arts standards are addressed using a balanced literacy approach that includes word work, shared writing, independent writing, shared reading, read-aloud, independent reading, guided reading, guided writing, phonemic awareness, and research through both small and whole group instruction. A balanced literacy approach is research-based, brain-compatible, and allows for differentiated instruction and learning. Students experience a wide variety of materials, both in print and online, including district-adopted texts and differentiated trade books that integrate our science and social studies standards following the district Integrated Literacy (iLit) framework. Our brain-compatible research has emphasized the effectiveness of teaching metacognitive strategies and critical thinking skills to help facilitate the comprehension of text. Technology is used to enhance learning in a meaningful and purposeful way in an effort to create global learners.

During a fifth grade science unit of the Earth, the Moon, and the Stars, learning is integrated across the curriculum. During writing, students read a Benchmark Education book entitled, *Putting Humans in Space: Worth the Cost?* After reading the text, students read and evaluate three different sample opinion papers. Following their evaluations, students write an opinion paper with supporting evidence. They then participate in a Reader's Theater that focuses on speaking, listening, and presentation skills. The students plan and record their presentations using the Green Screen App on iPads. Formative and summative assessments, such as the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Benchmark Interim assessments, informal reading inventories, and anecdotal records are used to determine student progress and to drive instruction. These measures of student performance assist the staff in understanding student needs and developing appropriate modifications and programs. General education interventions are provided for students who demonstrate the need for additional support.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

Lakewood utilizes the K-12 Kansas College and Career Readiness math standards which include operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, geometry, and numbers and operations. The math standards are addressed using a process-based approach utilizing the district-adopted resource. Instructional approaches include whole group instruction, guided math, visualization strategies, real world application, and hands-on learning. The desired outcome is for students to identify and use the appropriate tools when solving a mathematical problem. Technology is used to explore and deepen understanding of mathematical concepts. We facilitate discussion among students to build understanding of mathematical ideas by analyzing and comparing student approaches to solving the same problem. These strategies allow us to accommodate all student learning styles. Each classroom promotes an environment that supports productive struggle in math while diminishing math anxiety and increasing student confidence. Emphasis is placed on both process and performance.

In kindergarten, students make real-world connections as they study two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. The students learn the attributes of the shapes and then look for objects around the school that can be classified as that shape. As they discover shapes around them, they draw a picture, write about it in a journal, and read it to other mathematicians. As an extension, the students communicate this knowledge through creating a Chatterpix project. In third grade, during a study of plants and animals, students create a garden or habitat. Their design is laid out on grid paper where area and perimeter are calculated. Formative and summative assessments are used such as Measures of Academic Progress, EnVision topic assessments, EnVision topic performance tasks, and teacher observation. These measures of student performance, paired with day-to-day observations and teacher-made evaluations assist the staff in understanding student needs

and developing appropriate modifications and programs. General education interventions are provided for students who demonstrate the need for additional support.

### **1c. Science:**

Lakewood utilizes the K-12 Next Generation Science Standards. The state standards have three dimensions: disciplinary content, scientific and engineering practices, and cross-cutting concepts. Instructional approaches include inquiry-based, experiential activities which allow students to apply the material in context. Pairing practice with content increases student understanding and application. Students are immersed in the science standards through the integration of English Language Arts and Science curriculum. Differentiation is provided during the ELA instruction which enables all students to successfully participate in science-based investigations. Formative and summative assessments are used including performance-based authentic assessment and teacher observation. Using trial and error, students are involved in self-assessment as they practice the engineering process to generate solutions to STEM-based problems.

Fourth grade students learn about the processes that shape the earth. After reading about weathering, erosion and deposition, students demonstrate these processes through a song and dance. Next, using Legos to represent the earth, they weather, erode, and deposit Legos (earth materials) to show how the land changes over time. Finally, they recreate a rainstorm and flood using an earth material mixture, a stream table, and water to determine the effects of water erosion on landforms. Through this integrated approach, the fourth graders develop a deep understanding of how the earth changes.

First graders become zoologists as they investigate the different classifications of animals. Student voice and choice is exercised as students choose an animal to research. The ELA curriculum is integrated as students read nonfiction text to gain knowledge of their animal. Students create a project that allows them to teach and share the information with their peers. This learning experience culminates in a field trip to the Kansas City Zoo where the students speak with a zoologist as well as observe the animals in their natural habitats. Students can apply the knowledge they learned as they look at the animals. Students are assessed using a performance rubric. Accommodations include differentiating levels of text, study guides, partner work, and additional adult support. Our integrated, experiential approach to science allows all students to be successful.

### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Lakewood utilizes the Kansas Standards for History, Government, and Social Studies. The state standards include: civics/government, history, economics, and geography. Our social studies instruction requires students to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and communicate at high levels. The goal of our Social Studies curriculum is to prepare students to be informed, thoughtful, and engaged citizens. Social studies comes alive for our Lakewood students! Second graders become entrepreneurs by developing a business based on information gathered from a market research survey. Students create a business plan then manufacture a product that will be sold to third grade consumers. An understanding of economic concepts is acquired through the integration of leveled ELA materials in addition to the district-adopted Social Studies text. We include the community through experiential field trips to nearby businesses to learn about how they meet the needs of their consumers. Mathematical concepts are applied when students calculate their profit after deducting expenses such as rent, taxes, business loans, and making a charitable donation. Student learning is assessed through teacher observation, performance rubric, and self-reflection.

In fourth grade, students become pioneers as we travel west in an Oregon Trail simulation. Students assume the role of a pioneer, pack their wagons, join a wagon train, and work through the obstacles pioneers faced as they traveled west. Our emphasis during this project is not only learning the content but developing communication and collaboration skills while working through conflicts that arise on the trail. Students interact with differentiated fiction and non-fiction texts to build schema of life on the trail. Narrative writing skills are taught and practiced through daily journal entries. Students are assessed through their journal entries, a performance rubric, and content-related assignments. Accommodations are made based on student needs by differentiating levels of text, study guides, partner work, and additional adult support.

**1e. For secondary schools:**

**1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

A favorite among Lakewood students is their daily visits to specials classes. These classes are an opportunity for all students, grades kindergarten through fifth, to learn content in multiple settings. Our special classes include weekly visits to a visual arts classroom and computer class and biweekly visits to physical education, foreign language, and performing arts. All classes are taught by educators licensed in their areas and provide an outlet for students to learn in an alternate setting and express themselves through various forms of instruction.

Visual arts focuses on students learning to understand the difference between process and product. The art teacher uses various strategies to teach students skills that allow them to make decisions in the process while not focusing on the end product. The model of mass produced artwork cannot be found at Lakewood. Visual literacy, which is the ability to interpret, negotiate, and make meaning in the form of an image, is taught in the art classroom through Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS). The main aspects of VTS are teaching students to think about the following inquiries: “What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find?” This framework is used across the school particularly as teachers pick up a book and ask students to look at the cover and analyze what they might be reading.

The library supports the district vision for library media programs by providing learners with the resources and literacy skills necessary to ensure academic achievement and success in life. The library is known for flexible access which means students can come and go through their week. Students have one scheduled visit a week with their classroom teacher for check out but may visit as often as needed to fulfill their love of reading or need of information. A visitor to the library would notice there is a diverse collection of literature for all learners, an inviting atmosphere, and technology integration. Our library media specialist is a collaborative instructor who teaches in tandem with classroom instructors and provides students with strategies to develop a lifelong love of learning in correlation with the literacy skills that are needed to be a successful adult.

The mission of the world language program in Blue Valley is to empower students to attain advanced communicative proficiency and to expand cultural perspectives as lifelong learners of languages other than English. Lakewood students attend Spanish class twice a week for thirty minutes. Students engage in learning opportunities where they develop their interpersonal, interpretive, and presentation communication skills. The teacher is committed to providing an immersion-like environment where the target language is the language of teaching and learning.

Physical education is a priority as we know that our students must be active and moving in order to feel healthy, confident, and ready to learn. All students attend physical education class twice a week. During their time in class, students learn standards and skills in units based on fitness, rhythms, locomotor and non-locomotor, spatial awareness, lifelong physical activity, and cooperative activities. The physical education teachers work alongside the school counselor, classroom teachers, and nurse to enhance the well-being of each child.

To support the social and emotional well-being of our students in all grade levels, our school counselor teaches monthly lessons that highlight character development, career awareness, digital citizenship, and health and well-being. Through the counseling curriculum, students are able to identify healthy choices, practice self-discipline, recognize bullying and conflict, use problem solving skills, and discuss emotions. These lifelong skills support their learning in all subjects areas. Our classrooms meet at least quarterly with a buddy classroom to provide partnerships between grade levels and leadership opportunities. During these

buddy class events and counseling lessons, activities are focused on the Blue Valley virtues which are respect, responsibility, compassion, courage, perseverance, self-discipline, and honesty. Throughout the school year, students use the virtues and skills taught in counseling when approaching daily tasks. These skills are the foundation for decision making for a lifetime.

### **3. Special Populations:**

Classroom teachers, the reading specialist, the enrichment specialist, and special education teachers come together to generate, challenge, dissect, and connect ideas from multiple perspectives. Through this collaboration, the ability to meet varied student needs becomes stronger.

Lakewood has a problem-solving process in place designed to address students of concern. Through classroom assessments and teacher observation, teachers identify students who may need support. Teachers discuss strategies and develop a general education plan during their weekly grade level PLCs. If more support is needed after implementation of these strategies, the needs of the student are reviewed during monthly Kid Talks which involve the grade level team, specialists, and special education teachers. Data is recorded and additional ideas are generated to assist the student. If more support is needed, our Student and Teacher Assistance Team (STAT) is available to seek strategies for students who have any specific academic, social, behavioral, or emotional need. This team, consisting of the classroom teacher, special education teachers, school psychologist, counselor, reading specialist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist, social worker, and the principal, works to create realistic interventions addressing specific learning needs, articulated through a carefully monitored individual learning plan. Peer partnering, home partnerships, behavior plans, social circles, modified classroom work, and informal para professional assistance are examples of possible interventions. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are developed when problems are more pervasive. Both our students with disabilities and our students of high ability are served from a tiered system of support. At Tier 1, general education interventions help provide a differentiated educational program in math and reading at the classroom level. Tier 2 provides for those students needing some services beyond the scope of the general education classroom. The enrichment specialist, for example, might provide extensions to a specific student or small group. The special education resource teacher might provide a word decoding strategy to a student struggling with word identification. Tier 3 would be devoted to serving those students whose needs are clearly beyond the scope of the classroom curriculum. The enrichment teacher might facilitate a directed independent study for high achieving students. Similarly, a resource teacher might provide specific techniques and materials for students who are not making expected progress even with general education interventions.

At Lakewood, we practice responsible inclusion for our students; keeping them in the regular education program to the greatest extent possible with accommodations, modifications, or extensions. Examples include assessments done in small groups, text read aloud, frequent breaks, and flexible seating. Our strong collaborative culture and belief in differentiated instruction makes serving the needs of our diverse students an integral part of all that we do.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Student social and emotional growth provides the foundation for the climate at Lakewood. Every student learns how the brain works and that a growth mindset is key to successful learning. Kindergarten students are taught that “I can’t” is not the answer but instead “not yet.” The atmosphere at Lakewood is safe, nurturing, and homelike. Children are relaxed and confident about their learning. We know from Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory that students must feel safe and have a sense of belonging before addressing academics. This is done by building personal relationships with each and every student. Students are welcomed into the building first thing in the morning by the principal and support staff. Teachers meet the students in the gym and begin their day ready to learn. Our passion for learning is felt each day as the principal sets the stage for students, teachers, and parents to ask questions, initiate learning, problem solve together, and foster a love of learning. Morning meetings in each classroom allow for students to share stories from home, ask questions about each other, and learn more about students as individuals.

Teachers must feel supported in order to be effective. Just as our students are seen as individuals, the teachers are seen as unique individuals and valuable members of their teams. Lakewood and the Blue Valley School District have a great sense of pride in hiring and retaining the best of the best, ensuring that every Lakewood student has exemplary educators leading them in their educational journey. Teachers are empowered to unite the art of teaching with the science of learning. Teachers are supported by many resources including instructional design coaches, district coordinators, peer mentors, principal and district administrators.

Above all, we are happy. Our job is to smile each and every day and share a laugh. We know that, as the adults in the building, students are watching our behavior and we are modeling our interactions with others. We want them to learn that our positive outlook on life has a lasting impact. We have challenges. We have hard days. We finish each day as a team. No one is ever alone -- we are in this together. Lakewood is a joyful place, full of warm hearts and strong relationships.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Lakewood prides itself on our strong, trusted relationships between school and home. It is important for us to get to know our families and the community in order to build partnerships and encourage involvement. We know these support systems are important to our success.

For example, high school students visit as part of a teacher education practicum program. Local meteorologists visit for discussion on a weather unit. Community Helper day is a huge hit in first grade where students learn about all different types of careers in our area. Lakewood families and staff help provide school supplies and other resources as part of a partnership with our sister school located in an urban area. The Green Team, a classroom of Lakewood fourth graders, works closely with Johnson County Recycles and the district 18-21 year old program for young adults with special needs.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) exemplifies this vision and helps to support effective communication through monthly open door meetings, weekly communication in the principal’s memo, and many events that tailor to a wide variety of families. The PTO assists in the creation of an atmosphere of collaboration between children, school, parents, the district, and the community. PTO supports programs such as Ice Cream Social Night, Skating Parties, Back to School Nights, Book Fair, Mother Son Shootout, Daddy Daughter Dance, and Carnival. Monthly restaurant nights are a wonderful community event where parents are encouraged to visit a local restaurant with a percentage of profits supporting Lakewood. The widely popular cultural arts program is integrated into the school curriculum by the teachers. PTO supports visiting authors, integrated art experiences, and field trips to local theaters and museums. To ensure partnerships, the principal and a teacher representative attend the monthly PTO meetings. Scheduling of events accommodates both non-working and working parents.

As part of our partnership with families, Lakewood holds parent-teacher conferences biannually. Conferences provide an opportunity for parents/guardians and teachers to discuss student success, achievement and areas of growth. Academic profiles for primary students are updated quarterly and students' profiles in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade are updated weekly through an online student information system. Parents have access to these profiles to support ongoing dialogue around student performance. These formal check points are important but teachers maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians about achievements, challenges or concerns. We approach each student as a team and communication is key to our success. The principal sends out weekly, online newsletter to the community to keep families informed. The power of social media is used as well and updates are done often on the school webpage, the school Facebook page, and on Twitter.

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

Professional learning is a top priority in the district and at Lakewood. The Blue Valley School District believes that advancing educator effectiveness through relevant, collaborative, sustainable and results-oriented professional learning demonstrates an unwavering commitment to all students. To that end, educators are provided with opportunities to access new knowledge and skills. The foundation of our learning occurs through Professional Learning Communities which is job-embedded learning that takes place continually through weekly meetings with the administrator, instructional design coach, peers, and specialists.

To support this learning, a team of teacher leaders from Lakewood comes together to establish the school blueprint each summer. The blueprint serves as the road map to professional learning. Within the blueprint, the district's strategic initiatives are highlighted which include world academic leader, health and well-being, digital district, exemplary educator, and professional learning. Each area is a cornerstone of the professional development provided during the year and aligns with instructional goals, curriculum and assessment, mentoring, and technology. Flexibility is key in this planning as we know we must adjust based on students' needs, curriculum changes, and feedback from the community, students and staff.

Our focus this year has been on working together to better meet the needs of our students' well-being. Recent professional learning experiences have included positive behavior implementation strategies paired with learning around Zones of Regulation. Throughout the building, students and staff are using common language that promotes self-regulation and the ability to problem solve utilizing a cognitive behavioral approach.

Professional development is tailored to the needs of our teachers, just as we tailor our instruction to the needs of our students. Teachers set learning goals each year. For example, three teachers this year are part of the district's Blended Learning Bootcamp. The teachers are learning how to blend technology into daily instruction to help raise student engagement, personalize instruction, and improve assessment results. While honing their individual skills, they bring their learning back to their classrooms and also to their colleagues by sharing their learning through collaboration hours monthly after school.

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

Leadership at Lakewood is a shared model. Two main committees, Nuts and Bolts Team and Mission and Vision Team, work together to make building-wide decisions that support student learning each day. The Nuts and Bolts team collaborates on decisions such as schedules, assemblies, policies, and procedures. The Mission and Vision Team partners on professional learning opportunities for staff, adjusting the school blueprint, and supporting staff to meet the purpose of our mission and vision.

The principal is the connection and liaison between all stakeholders at Lakewood. She is the support system for the teachers, parents, students, and the community. Her philosophy is all means all and she works each day to make sure each and every student at Lakewood is feeling successful. Her leadership model encourages others to have confidence in what they can do each day and make decisions that always have students' best interests. The building is known for the way it feels: calm and inviting.

The instructional design coach (IDC) serves as another connection piece to the district vision. Her role is to support instruction through the coaching model. The coach, as part of the Instructional Design Team, partners with educators to cultivate student-centered, future-ready, and personalized learning experiences for all students. In her leadership role, she is dedicated to quality instruction, partnering with educators, and student success. Our IDC is seen as a partner who works alongside teachers to make decisions while encouraging new, engaging, and innovative strategies.

Student leadership is encouraged through Safety Patrol, Broadcast Center, and Buddy Classrooms. Parent leadership is encouraged through the Parent Teacher Organization and by schoolwide and classroom volunteer opportunities.

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

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“Strong teachers don’t teach content; Google has content. Strong teaching connects learning in ways that inspire kids to learn more and strive for greatness.” -Eric Jensen

Imagine sitting at home all day watching ten different half-hour television programs. At the end of the day, would the average person be able to remember or make any meaningful connections about what they watched for the whole day? Now, imagine binge watching a Netflix series for the entire day. The series affords the opportunity for rich, deep content to be presented allowing the viewer to make connections and invoke a response driven by emotional involvement.

Our quest for change has been a long, thoughtful process. Over the course of several years, our staff was committed to researching, participating in book studies, having collaborative discussions, and exploring new strategies. Our focus was in the areas of meta-cognitive reading strategies, growth mindset principles, the physiology of the brain, brain-compatible instruction, and integration.

Equipped with this new knowledge, we concluded that daily learning should be a seamless flow of information and experiences. Teachers deconstructed and analyzed each state and district standard for all subject areas. Once connections were identified, teachers formed integrated units of study. Based on those units, yearlong themes were developed to give students more meaningful learning opportunities. Each grade level has a common thread that is woven through each unit. For example, students in first grade spend their year investigating concepts such as friendship and sound waves. Fifth grade concentrates on building strong foundations in reading, writing, American history, and problem solving. These valuable experiences ensure that students not only achieve at high levels but are engaged and excited to learn. As a result of this change, standardized assessment data indicates significant growth in all academic areas. State testing data indicates that our students are consistently scoring above the state and district mean. Because this type of learning creates an emotional connection, it promotes stronger student engagement. This allows the brain to intake, store, and retrieve information, make connections, and achieve higher-level learning. Learning comes alive.

Our hope is that we have inspired a group of thoughtful, informed students who will, indeed, go out and change the world.