U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Kathryn O'Loughlin McCarthy Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1401 Hall Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Hays   KS   67601-3753
City   State   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Ellis County

Telephone (785) 623-2510   Fax (785) 623-2518

Web site/URL http://oloughlin.usd489.com/   E-mail   vgile@usd489.com

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*Mr. John Thissen
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)   E-mail jthissen@usd489.com

District Name U.S.D. 489 Hays Kansas School District   Tel.   (785) 623-2400
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. Mandy Fox
(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

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

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):

4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools

6 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
[X] 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	31	38	69
1	31	32	63
2	34	27	61
3	30	33	63
4	39	26	65
5	36	27	63
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	201	183	384

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
    the school (if unknown, estimate):   1 % Asian
                                           0 % Black or African American
                                           2 % Hispanic or Latino
                                           0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                          93 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 14%

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 *to* the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	19
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	34
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	53
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	390
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.14
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
First languages spoken at O'Loughlin include: Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, and Gujarati.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %
        Total number students who qualify: 152

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %

    68 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.

1 Autism	1 Multiple Disabilities
0 Deafness	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deaf-Blindness	9 Other Health Impaired
15 Developmental Delay	15 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	31 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
1 Intellectual Disability	0 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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
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   21:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	94%	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 2018.

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 X   No

    If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1997

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

O'Loughlin recognizes children have unique individual needs, and seeks to establish an education design that will help children develop their maximum intellectual and social potential.

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

Kathryn O'Loughlin McCarthy Elementary School is in Hays, Kansas. This community, in the heartland of the nation, has a population of nearly 21,000. It is a regional retail, medical, and educational hub for Northwest Kansas. The community is composed of professionals and hourly wage employees to yield an average median household income of $49,500 per year with 2.38 persons in each household. While Medical related careers and employment opportunities are on the rise in the community, Hays has experienced a drop in the oil and farming industries, causing a negative economic and employment impact on our community. When confronted with challenges and change, our community shows resiliency and a great pioneer spirit.

Most recent census figures indicate the population consists of 89% white, 6% Hispanic and 5% Mixed Population. Perception within the school community is that there has been a significant rise in the poverty level for many of our families.

To provide additional context about our community, it is noteworthy that we have higher education opportunities through Fort Hays State University and North Central Kansas Technical College with student enrollments of 15,000 and 300 respectively.

O'Loughlin Elementary School opened its doors in 1990 as a "choice" school for students and their parents. It was not confined by neighborhood boundaries, busing routes, or additional financial expense to families. It was a new public elementary school that became an innovative community where unlimited success and lifelong learning could be fostered by staff and internalized by students who began O'Loughlin's inaugural school year. This unique vision of education included: a two-year looping of classes; an active parental role in the decision-making of school policy, student experiences, and support of student success; and the use of technology and research-based instructional techniques needed to reach all learners. With O'Loughlin's two desktop computer labs in 1990 to the current one-to-one ratio of students to iPads, learners are given numerous experiences via technology. Literature played a key role in the formative years at O'Loughlin; it remains today a link to all curricula as teachers implement the Reading and Writing Workshops by Lucy Calkins and integrate different genres into content-based units. Staff members have always endeavored to learn and develop new approaches for instruction to benefit students. Their hard work has been rewarded with numerous accolades: the Blue Ribbon Award; the Redbook Best School Award; Green School designation; many years of reaching the State Standard of Excellence on Kansas State Assessments; the Governor's Award three times; and the ESEA Distinguished School recipient two times. Individual staff members have received their National Board Certification, earned Presidential Awards in Math and in Science, honored with Milken Educator Awards, participated in the NASA sponsored NEWEST workshop, been Kansas Master Teacher of the Year, and won numerous grants from various groups. O'Loughlin School began and continues today with the vision of helping students succeed in school and in life.

Through the implementation of special programs and key strategies, O'Loughlin School encourages its students to meet their potential academically, socially and emotionally. Using the workshop model to attain Kansas College and Career Ready Standards within English Language Arts, learning has become student directed and differentiated through a self-leveling process that allows teachers to meet students at their current level of performance while elevating them incrementally. In addition, districtwide initiatives have increased staff participation in building level leadership, increasing positive school climate among staff. Within the past two years, O'Loughlin Elementary has participated in training from Safe and Civil Schools and has implemented a self-correcting, feedback loop in which we all have input through consensus building and are encouraged to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of common area procedures and school climate. Through this process, staff have developed guidelines for success (SOAR) which embody characteristics that are considered essential for lifelong success. The acronym SOAR stands for: Show integrity; Own your learning; Accept responsibility; Respect self and others. These guidelines for success, in concert with a growth mindset learning community, contribute to students meeting their potential (academically, socially, physically and emotionally), by embracing the power of "yet", and utilizing even poor outcomes as learning opportunities. This growth mindset school culture, initiated and modeled by staff, has been observed to instill grit and a love of learning in our students.

O'Loughlin School received the National Blue Ribbon School Award in 1993. This designation validated our mission from the inception of our school in 1990: provide all learners with the tools needed to be successful in school and become lifelong learners. As the years have passed, the vision and philosophy is still the same – student success is at the forefront of all instructional decisions made by staff at O'Loughlin School. The Blue Ribbon Award has most benefitted O'Loughlin by creating a school climate among staff members that attracts teacher candidates who are aware they will be held to high standards. This culture continues in that quality teachers continue to focus on high standards with the importance of meeting the needs of a diverse student population. When candidates are hired, they know they will be expected to implement research-based practices, gather and analyze student data, collaborate closely with colleagues, and engage in self-reflection to guide students in meeting their potential.

Family and community engagement have become more critical in the past few years because of the increasing demands on limited time. O'Loughlin first began with the use of parent volunteers in the classrooms; now, the communication with all parents, ones who volunteer and those who cannot, has increased exponentially. Teachers bring busy families to the school by sharing student products from all curricular areas during classroom celebrations. For those parents who are unable to attend, teachers provide a conduit of connectedness through emails, phone calls, newsletters, individual student plans, student progress demonstrated via technology, and parent meetings.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Core Curriculum:**

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Staff at O'Loughlin are implementing the Reading and Writing Workshop as the core English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. The Workshop was chosen to meet the needs of the students and is aligned with the College and Career Ready Standards. The workshop instills a love of reading and writing using authentic materials and further motivates children by giving them choice of what they read and write. Teachers schedule two hours each day for these subjects. Explicit instruction is given during the mini lessons and small group instruction. Conference time is used to monitor student progress and to provide a praise point and teaching point. The Workshop empowers students by requiring them to select text at their independent reading level. Instruction within the Workshops is differentiated based on student need during individual conference time and strategy groups. The Teachers College Assessments and writing rubrics are used as primary devices to make sure students are continuing to progress in both subjects. Additionally, these diagnostic tools are used to pinpoint student strengths and needs. Other assessments used are the PAST (Phonological Awareness Skills Test), Literacy First, and running records. This data and analysis of running records and anecdotal notes guide teacher instructional decisions. If a child does not make expected gains in reading and writing after differentiation, then he/she is taken to a Student Intervention Team (SIT) where there is interdisciplinary collaboration about what next steps should be taken to help the child. If students require more differentiation, we have two ESEA teachers who can meet with groups of students, individual students, or provide Reading Recovery as Tier II interventions. O'Loughlin also has two Special Education teachers who work to provide optimal learning experiences for children who require Tier III support.

1b. Mathematics:

At O'Loughlin Elementary, our math curriculum is based on the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards. Our district uses the Go Math curriculum during our daily whole group instruction. This curriculum was selected by a district-wide committee because it aligned with the state standards and met student needs. Teachers tailor lessons using whole group, small group, and individualized approaches. Throughout daily instruction, hands-on learning is utilized. Each lesson is designed using the explicit instruction model. Students are expected to go beyond the concrete understanding of numerical operations and apply this new learning to various situations while explaining their thinking. To supplement our curriculum, teachers utilize the Achieve the Core website to provide learners with additional materials and individualized instruction. Teachers assess students daily using various informal and formative approaches to monitor their individual growth. Teacher daily observations and performance on chapter tests are used to determine student need, so that students can be placed into small groups focusing on individual skills and/or missing foundational skills. Teachers implement 90 minutes of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) instruction weekly to differentiate instruction meeting the diverse needs of all learners. Through differentiated instruction, students can practice previously taught skills or enhance their knowledge using technology and other research-based approaches.

1c. Science:

Educators at O'Loughlin School utilize the Next Generation Science Standards as a guide for the science curriculum taught at each grade level. Students are exposed to multiple approaches of instruction when learning content to reach diverse learning styles. Classes are exposed to the 5E Science Learning Model to facilitate student-led investigations to further their content knowledge about specific concepts. Upper grades differentiate within their own experiments by changing desired variables. Authentic learning opportunities such as hands-on projects, use of real-life artifacts, exposure to scientific tools, meeting and learning from experts in the field during class presentations, and field trips contribute to the development of a student's schema. This also creates student curiosity about science concepts, so they formulate questions. Teachers utilize various technology-based programs to provide science content to students. Many of these sites provide leveled passages that make learning accessible for students at all levels. Teachers regularly check

for understanding through observation and completion investigations. Students share these projects with parents and other students at O'Loughlin Elementary through science fairs and displays. Students are asked to share scientific knowledge within a specific domain by completing projects using technology such as PowerPoint, Adobe products, Seesaw, and other iPad tools. Formative and summative assessments are used throughout each unit to evaluate students' level of understanding, drive further instruction, or reteach using alternative resources to ensure all students learn.

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

O'Loughlin's core Social Studies curriculum, myWorld Social Studies, was selected by a district-level committee to align with the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards for History, Government, and Social Studies. Our school engages students through multiple instructional approaches, interventions, and assessments. Explicit instruction is provided for each unit then extended into project-based and experience-based learning. Examples of content studied that engage students in hands-on learning include; field trips (History of Ellis County), wax museums of influential people (students researching and roleplaying), Famous Figures (students researching and public speaking), Market Day (student simulation of economics as consumers and producers), and theme-based units (Regions of the United States, Mapping, Native Americans, Leadership, Kansas History, Pioneer Trails). Students share their acquired knowledge with peer and parent audiences. Students utilize technology to synthesize and share information through PowerPoint, iMovie, Adobe Spark, and other programs. Civic engagement is promoted at O'Loughlin Elementary in many ways. To connect with the community and make learning more relevant, all students participate in a career day. Students in older grades are paired with students from younger grades in a buddy system to act as positive role models. Community members are invited to share their profession with students by bringing the tools and vehicles they use to provide their services. Students are encouraged to ask questions that connect their current learning with potential future careers. To promote further civic engagement, staff select a student group called Ambassadors. This group meets monthly to practice leadership skills and brainstorm ideas to support our school and community. Through their leadership, our school has improved the local community by donating used blankets to our Humane Shelter, saving our pennies to support the Accessible Recreational Park, and collecting food items for our Community Assistance Center. Recently, our school reached beyond our state borders in a school-wide initiative to collect items for the Nebraska flood victims.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our Library Media program supports students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge. Students in grades Kindergarten through fifth attend scheduled classes an hour a week. Students receive instruction on digital resources, such as online encyclopedias and search engines. They learn acceptable and ethical use along with critical thinking about determining the relevance and reliability of sources accessed. In all lessons, grade level content is linked to the library curriculum. Students practice written and oral communication and are taught to locate information and literature of interest. Students also participate in motivational literature initiatives such as our William Allen White Challenge, One School One Book Program, and Book Fair to help develop life-long literacy skills and a love of reading. At the library, students are expected to practice the essential skills of responsibility and respect for shared property by returning materials on time and in good condition.

At O'Loughlin, all students receive music instruction for one hour a week. They learn how to read musical notation, perform and create music while singing, playing instruments, and moving. During weekly music instruction, students learn social skills, team work, and are involved in character building activities. These essential skills contribute to their success in many other areas. All students perform in two programs a year.

Students are also able to participate in optional musical opportunities such as O'Loughlin Singers, which is an extra-curricular choir meeting one hour a week; KMEA (Kansas Music Educators Association) District Honor Choir, which meets one hour a week during the fall semester; and elementary orchestra, which meets seventy-five minutes a week. These optional opportunities expose students to in-depth music exploration and help them become confident performers who develop a love of music.

The Physical Education program at O'Loughlin Elementary involves kindergarten through fifth grade. Kindergarten and first grade classes meet three times a week for a total of ninety minutes. Second through fifth grade classes meet twice a week for a total of sixty minutes. The physical education program follows the standards set by the state of Kansas. Students participate in aerobic and anerobic exercises, engage in new skills and activities that can be used throughout their life, and learn the benefits of living a healthy active life style, including golf and archery. Students participate in fall fitness assessments and set goals for their spring fitness assessments. The students also take part in a fundraiser for the American Heart Association. This is integrated with our jump rope unit, so that students learn about making healthy choices and being civic-minded. Students develop character building skills such as working together and begin a good sport as they master a variety of skills and participate in multiple games within the curriculum.

All students at O'Loughlin participate in the Art program for one hour per week. The program develops confidence and helps the students experience joy through the creative process. Students are taught the proper and safe use of tools and materials. Exposure to a wide variety of mediums and techniques allows students to generate their own ideas and express them independently through their art. They acquire basic art vocabulary along with the elements of art. Students are encouraged to recognize and appreciate art around them and art across cultures as they acquire social and observation skills.

The Technology Lab at O'Loughlin serves all students. Kindergarten and first grades come to the lab twice a week for a total of sixty minutes. While in the lab, they learn about the basics of technology, different educational applications and how to use them, simple coding and robotics, and keyboarding. Second through fifth grades come to the lab three times a week for a total of ninety minutes. In addition to the above skills, these students learn about problem solving simple technical issues; how to create clips, videos, slideshows, and PowerPoints. As technology becomes integrated with all aspects of education such as acquiring knowledge, demonstrating learning, and producing work products, safety is at the forefront of our teaching. In addition to written, signed expectations for use of iPads, all students are taught safe ways to browse the internet and proper ways to identify issues they may encounter.

O'Loughlin Elementary supports the social-emotional learning of all students in multiple ways with a focus on being a Trauma-Informed School. Our school counselor presents classroom counseling lessons at each grade level throughout the school year. As appropriate to each grade level, these topics may include, self-regulation; anti-bullying; crisis preparedness and safety plans; problem-solving and decision-making; growth mindset; alcohol, drug, and tobacco awareness and prevention; character traits; and diversity. The counselor also works with students on an individual basis, as well as in small groups, to provide students with skills so they can be successful at school and in life.

3. **Special Populations:**

O'Loughlin Elementary School includes students from the following special populations: English language learners, students performing below and above grade level, and students who have experienced trauma. In addition to having core curriculum in the general education classroom that is differentiated by classroom teachers to meet student needs, support staff respond to the needs of special student populations in small group and one to one configurations by providing interventions and frequent progress monitoring, using assessments that provide staff with data needed, so time on task can be maximized and students can meet their potential.

Students who have been identified as gifted, or as having disabilities according to the special education process and state laws, have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that utilizes a combination of observation and a comprehensive battery of assessments to specify student strengths and needs in each domain (Health, Social/Emotional, Motor, Academic, Communication, Cognitive and Daily Living), including Accommodations, Modifications and Assistive Technology. Student goals are generated within a

team process. The team generally consists of the following: parent/guardian; general education teacher, special education teacher, related special education staff and the building principal.

Students IEP goals are generated within a team process during which members examine student performance and assessment results, to ensure goals target student needs and align with Kansas College and Career Ready Standards, or Essential Elements. A recommendation for placement and service times is discussed culminating in instruction that is specially designed for each student. Instruction is further personalized as special education staff connect with students, recognizing each as a product of his or her own, unique experience and interests, and then invests time with each student to make learning a positive, personal, nurturing endeavor. Students are provided with instruction using explicit teaching techniques followed by opportunities to apply learned skills to authentic tasks in reading, writing and math. Special education staff regularly encourage students to verbally share their own thinking. The development of this metacognitive process becomes self-extending, so students have increased independence and accountability for their own learning.

Students identified as gifted, and placed on an IEP through the process described above, participate in the SPARK (Special Projects And Resources for KIDS) program. S.P.A.R.K. students spend one day per week working on student directed, project-based learning to research a topic of interest and create several products that require higher level thinking. Students are motivated to expand upon their advanced reading, writing and math skills while having the opportunity to interact, create and problem solve with like-ability peers. S.P.A.R.K. content requires students to delve deeply into topics such as: Geography (landmark search, Amazing Race, Kansas Land and People); Spatial Thinking (Accurate Scale Models, Cosmology, 3-D Model Creation); Creativity (Quote Reflections; Perspective Drawing; Inventing; Music as Art; Create & Crack Secret Codes); Critical Thinking (Mysteries, Chess, Storyboarding, Current Social Issues); Thematic Units/Simulations (Discovering Density, Acid Rain, Ancestry and Genealogy Project, Genetics and DNA analysis; Foreign Language Study Unit); and Technology (Video Editing, Computer Coding, Computer Aided Drafting, Robotics). Students formally share their projects with parents and grade level peers, answering questions from the group, thus improving verbal communication. In addition to the SPARK program, O'Loughlin teachers coordinate schedules between grade levels, so advanced students can receive math instruction at their ability level without missing content from other core subjects.

When parents enroll students at O'Loughlin Elementary, their answers to one of four questions on the Home Language Survey indicate if a student needs to be considered an English Language Learner (ELL). English Language Learners identified with the highest need for literacy receive daily one-on-one instruction with the ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher. In the case of newcomers with very low levels of English language fluency, the bilingual ESL teacher provides targeted instruction, both push-in and pull-out. Given the possibility that Els can sometimes be mis-identified for Special Education, the bilingual ESL teacher works closely with the Special Education teachers and the school psychologist for accurate placement. O'Loughlin has several Els who are correctly identified for special education; these students get support from both programs. Conversely, we have Els who are identified as gifted. In addition to the above differentiation of instruction, ELL paraprofessionals work with many students and teachers (not only with identified Els). For example, while working with a newcomer with low English proficiency, the paraeducator regularly works with several other students in a small group, which gives the newcomer opportunities to develop basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) in a low-stress environment, while given academic support to other students with needs.

Students in special populations participate in the core curriculum, receive targeted instruction and are periodically assessed to determine the effectiveness of the interventions. Using the district's core curriculum, students are in the general education classroom for grade level, whole group instruction provided by the classroom teacher. During independent practice, or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) time in the general education classroom, students from special populations are provided with small group interventions, targeted to their needs and annual goals. Based on observation of student performance, staff regularly assess the extent to which students are responding to interventions. If students do not appear to be on track to meet their goals, staff collaborate to adjust the specially designed instruction until progress is made.

In the ESL program, multiple measures are used to determine individual students' language proficiency (for example, the screening KELPA-P test (Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment-Placement); the annual standardized KELPA2 proficiency tests; and one-on-one assessments). Based on teacher input, students may be provided extra support even if they have tested 'proficient' on state assessments. Students in the ESL program are also monitored for two years after exiting the program to be sure they have the skills needed to succeed.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

Upon entering O'Loughlin, it is evident that we strive to create a positive environment. Each morning staff, students, and parents pass through the center of our building and are greeted by our administrator. This greeting sets the tone for our day in that we see a joyful smile and receive a big hello. During morning announcements, our administrator welcomes and encourages everyone to have a great day and to treat others with kindness. To unify our school family, we all stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance together. At O'Loughlin, we highly value the academic growth, as well as the social and emotional growth of our students. Through explicit teaching and modeling of desired behaviors, our students are challenged to S.O.A.R. This acronym was developed through the process of consensus by O'Loughlin staff as our guidelines for success. S.O.A.R. stands for Show integrity; Own your learning; Accept responsibility; and Respect self and others. To further contribute to a positive environment, there is a large bulletin board located in the cross-section of our school where students have pledged to be a Soaring Eagle. On this board, you will find an array of positive referrals that show the ever-increasing number of eagles exhibiting soaring behavior. Students are recognized in this public forum and their positive behavior choices become concrete examples of our expectations when their names are shared on the morning announcements. The O'Loughlin Morning News is another highlight of our school. This daily news program motivates and engages students in academic challenges, classroom celebrations, and character development mini-lessons. These insightful lessons are created for the benefit of all students and used to incorporate school-wide language and expectations. The most popular segments include student recognition, student interviews, and our Throwback Thursday segment of our teachers as young students long, long ago. To review expectations throughout the common areas, videos are cycled every nine weeks to promote continuous implementation by staff and remind students of our high expectations.

Staff at O'Loughlin are made to feel appreciated and receive support from many stakeholders within the community. Building level administration keeps staff informed with daily emails and keeps an open-door policy. Students who participate in our school government (Ambassadors), host an annual staff appreciation sit down breakfast that begins with a formal invitation to staff members and students greeting and seating staff. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at O'Loughlin coordinates with school families to provide meals for staff during Parent Teacher Conferences and small gifts throughout the year to remind teachers they are appreciated. In addition, our PTA encourages teachers to share classroom projects with which they need financial assistance so they can use money raised to support teachers and students. Our social committee bonds us all together and builds staff morale with social gatherings, an abundance of treats, and festive activities throughout the year.

In addition to the items described above, O'Loughlin staff are supported professionally in a variety of ways. Within the building we have an English Language Arts Specialist who works directly to remediate students and meets with staff during grade level collaboration times as a resource for teachers. At the district level, the Instructional Technology Specialist provides professional learning opportunities to staff and provides support as teachers implement technology within the classroom. The Special Education Coordinator leads professional development opportunities about classroom management and positive behavioral supports. Our district also provides book studies on topics deemed relevant by staff to further support teacher and student growth. The O'Loughlin foundations SOAR team uses a consensus building, decision making process to provide all staff members with the opportunity to share their input and increase ownership of building wide procedures and routines which contributes to a positive school climate. Decisions that are implemented are part of a self-correcting feedback loop which requires annual review of common area routines and school-wide expectations to keep our school safe. O'Loughlin Elementary is ultimately distinguished by our students who make each day a soaring success.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

O'Loughlin utilizes technology to communicate with and engage parents in the education of their child using Seesaw. This student driven, digital portfolio lets students and teachers communicate with parents

about their individual child's academic performance and day-to-day activities in real time. Parents are also able to respond to posts affirming the work of their child while keeping current about classroom content and school news. Our teachers invite parents, district administration, and community members to the classroom to view finished projects and celebrate student success. Students produce high quality material with their audience in mind and use this opportunity to practice speaking and listening skills. O'Loughlin's active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) encourages family involvement with special activities at school. Family Engagement Nights provide family units with fun, theme-based activities that include meals. Daily we have parents volunteering to read with students and build relationships contributing to students reading improvement and social emotional development. It is not uncommon to see parents helping a small group with a STEM project or leading a few students in an enrichment math game. The equivalent of our student government is the O'Loughlin Ambassadors. In addition to possessing qualities that make them positive role models, our Ambassadors lead the school in performing acts of service that benefit our school and the community. These fifth graders have coordinated a food pantry drive to benefit families within our school and people within the community. They also raised and donated over five hundred dollars to a fully accessible public park in the Hays community. The Ambassadors are in the process of fundraising for an Eco-Friendly Water Bottle-filling Station which is anticipated to increase water consumption and reduce landfill. The School Mentoring Program through Big Brothers & Big Sisters allows volunteers to join their Little (designated student mentee) weekly for lunch and for classroom activities. One unique feature of O'Loughlin is our end of the year Parent/Teacher Conference. The objective of this scheduled meeting with parents is discuss their child's progress and serve as a resource to enrich the academic skills of students during the summer months. Throughout the summer, students and parents connect with teachers using Seesaw. The teacher posts helpful tips keeping families engaged with academics which has assisted in closing the summer academic gap. O'Loughlin has developed a yearly, school-wide career day in which local businesses and agencies provide stations for students to visit and explore the tools of each profession. Multi-age buddy groups are rotated through each station. Part of the focus in each station is to identify education levels and skill sets that are needed for each career. Presenters link student learning within the curriculum to required skills and education.

3. **Professional Development:**

Our school is built on a foundation of strong professional development. We believe that collaboration through professional learning and sincere self-reflection with mutual support and encouragement is the key to making our school successful. Administration is committed to providing ongoing and powerful learning opportunities for staff. Professional development is driven by the data gathered from student performance, staff interest, parent input, and curriculum needs. Staff start the year creating individual development plans which become annual professional goals. Throughout the year, staff strive to attend professional development opportunities to meet related goals. Four inservice days are designated within the school year to increase our knowledge of curriculum, school improvement process, and professional goals related specifically to O'Loughlin. In addition, we have a monthly early release day and a staff meeting permitting teachers time to analyze student data and collaborate.

One inservice day each year is organized by our partnering institution, Fort Hays State University. The university gathers staff input from multiple districts and designs an inservice day with expert speakers on various topics. Staff select sessions to meet their professional goals and interests.

Sincere self-reflection and mutual support are embodied within O'Loughlin's Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Teachers schedule at least thirty minutes a week to meet as a grade level team. During this time, team members analyze data and collaborate to meet student needs and encourage each other's professional growth.

During staff and PLC meetings, teachers take a leadership role in presenting new information and sharing with one another to increase learning for all stakeholders. A distinguishing characteristic of O'Loughlin's professional school culture is the degree to which all staff members are dedicated to reflecting on and refining their pedagogy. Implementation of the Reading and Writing Workshop with fidelity continues to be a focus for our staff. Ongoing professional development is provided by our Literacy Specialist. O'Loughlin also has teacher-leaders who facilitate technology collaboration sessions and professional book

clubs as an additional support for staff. Most recently we studied growth mindset as represented in the text, Resilient Learners. In addition to in-house experts, administration also supports staff in attending professional development outside our district with the foundational goal of increasing student achievement.

4. **School Leadership:**

The leadership philosophy of the Principal is that all school community members be respected, valued and included in a safe, positive environment. Collaboration and consensus building unify all staff by focusing on best practices for student achievement as the basis of all decision making. This philosophy provides the foundation for an inclusive school, comprised of leadership groups, that research specific topics and make informed recommendations to stakeholders who are provided a venue for additional input and a process for decision making. The leadership groups are: S.O.A.R. Foundations Team; Building Leadership Team (BLT); and The Student Intervention Team (S.I.T.).

The S.O.A.R. team is comprised of staff who have been trained through the Foundations program in the Safe and Civil Schools model. Members of this team focus on directing the culture and climate of the school through a self-correcting feedback loop so that all staff members cycle through a process that consists of; input about concerns, adoption of policies, implementation of procedures, evaluation of data and revision when needed. This Foundations training builds capacity within staff to lead school improvement through the consensus model of decision making. Consensus has been used to solicit diverse ideas from expert stakeholders to come up with routines and expectations for common areas. The Principal's role in this process is to serve as a tie breaker when a consensus cannot be reached after three failed attempts.

The B.L.T. is comprised of staff who meet to evaluate information and prepare recommendations about school improvement action plans, emergency preparedness, academic programs, and celebrations. End products are shared with the entire staff for further input, discussion and decision making.

S.I.T. is an interdisciplinary team of staff who meet to evaluate the academic, social and emotional progress of individual students using data gathered from teachers. This group collaborates and shares research-based intervention strategies that can be implemented in the general education classroom and take additional steps needed to facilitate student growth. These additional steps can include a referral to Tier II interventions, or a comprehensive evaluation to determine if Tier III interventions are required.

Leadership team decisions, and the leadership philosophy of O'Loughlin's building Principal have resulted in cultivating a school community that provides all stakeholders with a voice, maintains high expectations for achievement, and provides the structure needed for all members to be successful.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Since opening in 1990, our school has utilized "looping"–a design that allows students and teachers two consecutive years to learn together. Kindergarten and first grade, second and third grades, and fourth and fifth grades stay with the same teacher and the same classmates during their loop. Implementation of the looping structure shifts teachers from being specialists of a specific grade level, to being specialists of instructing children. The O'Loughlin community considers the practice of looping to be instrumental in the academic and social emotional growth of our students. Through the process of professional development and becoming a Trauma Informed School, staff have heard experts cite the relevance of quality relationships in the lives of young people. Looping provides the structure by which staff cultivate these meaningful relationships with our students and their families. While all teachers strive to establish a connected relationship with students and their families, we have discovered that having a student for two years, increases the depth of that relationship. These deep connections provide staff with insight into the qualities that make each student unique. The depth of these positive relationships increases parent-teacher communication, making O'Loughlin more welcoming to students and their families. Looping has also enhanced staff understanding of the continuity of the curriculum from one grade to the next. This knowledge of the curriculum combined with an understanding of student strengths and weaknesses significantly reduces the length of time required at the start of the second looping year. During the May Parent-Teacher Conference, teachers establish the importance of summer learning and students know they will be held accountable for at least maintaining their current levels of achievement. Parents, students, and teachers benefit because they are accustomed to classroom routines and expectations for success, maximizing learning time at the beginning of the year. The opportunity to connect at a meaningful level and grow in community is supported with the implementation of the looping model.