

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2020 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. Cassandra Cruz  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Kolling Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8801 Wicker Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Saint John State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 46373-9703

County Lake County

Telephone (219) 365-8577 Fax (219) 365-6402

Web site/URL https://kolling.lcsc.us/ E-mail cncruz@lcscmail.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\* Dr. Larry Veracco E-mail lveracco@lcscmail.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Lake Central School Corporation Tel. (219) 365-8507

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 Sues  
(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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 10 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	77	64	141
1	83	81	164
2	81	60	141
3	66	67	133
4	86	85	171
5	0	0	0
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>	393	357	750

\*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1.1 % Asian
  - 3.4 % Black or African American
  - 14.7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 77.1 % White
  - 3.4 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: ≤1%

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	703
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Polish, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Arabic, Mandarin, Serbian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %  
23 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 106

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

95 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>2</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>11</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>67</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the 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.	32
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	25
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>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

<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.

Ensure each student becomes a self-directed learner and a contributing responsible citizen through an instructional delivery system that engages students in achieving their personal best.

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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Kolling Elementary is located in St. John, Indiana. It was named after Michael Kolling, who was the St. John Township Trustee for more than 12 years beginning in 1939, and also housed the public library in his home. Our school is one of six elementary schools in the Lake Central School Corporation. The Corporation serves three municipalities with three middle schools and one high school, in addition to the six elementary schools.

Kolling opened its doors in September 1955 as a school serving grades 1-6 with 14 classrooms, a cafeteria, and playroom. Over the years, St. John has transformed from what was rural farmland to an incorporated community with residential and commercial development. Kolling has added classrooms and reconfigured the original design several times to accommodate our growing population. Currently, Kolling serves 750 students in grades K-4 with 32 grade-level classrooms, 1 special education classroom, 1 music room, 1 art room, 1 computer lab, 1 library, 1 gym, and 1 cafeteria. We also have office space for our school service provider (SSP), counselor, and 2 reading specialists.

St. John encompasses 6.5 square miles in Lake County. It is situated 35 miles southeast of Chicago and 145 miles north of Indianapolis. St. John has received awards by various organizations including being named by SafeWise as the safest city in Indiana in March of 2020, and by Homesnacks as the 6th best place to live in Indiana in 2020. What makes St. John so appealing for its residents and families is the safety of the communities, its closeness to Lake Michigan and Chicago, low Indiana taxes, and the beautiful communities found throughout the town.

Many of our Kolling families show their Lake Central pride by attending various student performances and enrolling their elementary children in feeder programs for extracurricular teams and clubs offered at our middle schools and high school. There is also a wide variety of community activities available to residents, which include (but are not limited to), town and club sports, parks programs, churches, libraries, farmers' markets, wellness centers, visual and performing arts programs, and various social groups. We serve a community that is generous with their financial and physical support for various school and service projects and we regularly welcome their assistance, in a safe and organized way, to aid us in our efforts.

Kolling believes in working as a team to encourage and challenge all students in a well-rounded way. We attribute our success to the positive attitudes of staff, the shared goal to finding solutions that allow all students to achieve their personal best, and the comprehensive procedures we have in place using data to understand how systems are working and to adjust quickly and accordingly. We implement progressive instructional approaches proven to be successful with helping students learn. Rather than teaching students to memorize algorithms, our math instruction encourages students to learn mathematical concepts through inquiry and exploration. Traditional phonics and spelling instruction has been replaced with a tailored approach that begins with a spelling inventory which places students in groups designed to meet them at their stage of development. We implement differentiated guided reading, equipping all classrooms with high-quality leveled texts in a variety of genres and providing teachers with training on balanced literacy. We support teachers on building classroom libraries to supplement student reading materials and, through the support of the corporation, we have been able to provide all teachers with training on how to build class libraries and environments that best foster a love of reading for a diverse group of students. Writing is explicitly taught through a workshop framework that allows teachers to conference individually with students. This framework provides clear goals and feedback that is tailored specifically to them. It also gives students extended opportunities to write, and encourages students to choose writing topics that interest them.

Kolling Elementary's success can also be attributed to the services that focus on students' needs beyond academics. Kolling is fortunate to provide behavioral, social, and emotional support through our SSP and school counselor. Their daily schedules consist of providing individual and small group support for students confronted with adverse childhood experiences. These individuals also provide training to all students and staff on health and character education topics, and solicit schoolwide support for various character education activities throughout the school year.

The safety and security of our stakeholders is achieved through training seminars and planned safety drills. These efforts are coordinated through a partnership with local police and fire departments. Kolling is assigned a School Resource Officer (SRO) who is an officer for the St. John Police Department. Our SRO is present during the arrival and dismissal of our students. He is also seen in our building interacting with students and staff. Kolling's SRO meets regularly with the other five Lake Central SROs to help coordinate safety procedures and build cohesiveness through the three police departments that serve the corporation. As a result of SRO involvement within the schools, they are well-known and trusted throughout the community.

Kolling takes great pride in providing an environment where people love to work and learn. We are committed to using all available resources to meet the needs of every student.

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

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Kolling Elementary School implements a curriculum that is guided by educational program maps and instructional pacing guides for all subject areas that align with the Indiana Academic Standards (IAS). The curriculum maps and guides have been developed by a committee of teachers within the Lake Central School Corporation. The committee uses an educational planning approach in order to design curriculum units. These units include objectives, content and subject matter, learning experiences, lesson plans, instructional methods, instructional resources, and evaluation approaches. These tools were developed with the understanding that adjustments may be needed to incorporate effective instructional practices and to obtain student mastery. The IAS drive instruction throughout all content areas as teachers implement a variety of instructional strategies. These strategies enhance, encourage, and enable learning to help students engage in meaningful discussion and reflective thinking in order to achieve mastery. Instructional strategies include teacher modeling, direct instruction, guided practice, gradual release of responsibility, differentiated instruction, team teaching, cooperative learning, and inquiry-based instruction. The benefits of integrating subject matter into content areas allows students to retain what they are learning in different ways. Cross-curricular instruction has been included in the planning of the core curriculum. Textbooks are provided for all subject areas, however teachers extend learning connections through supplemental and relevant resources using professional development materials and technology. Assessments are used to check for understanding and to drive instruction as well as measuring student achievement and evaluating the process of learning by completing a task. Additional progress monitoring is scheduled for students who receive instructional interventions through the Response to Instruction (RtI) process. Grade level teams meet weekly to discuss curriculum content, assessment data, available resources, supplemental materials, and scheduling activities to further increase student engagement and motivation. Kolling Elementary is committed and dedicated to helping all students become independent self-directed learners, and problem solvers, while achieving their personal best.

**1b.** Reading/English language arts

Kolling Elementary teachers implement English Language Arts (ELA) through a balanced literacy approach. These methods are used to show students that language encompasses reading, writing, speaking and listening to build meaning. In addition, teachers use phonics and word study, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency together to prepare students to be lifelong readers. ELA instruction engages students with essential thinking skills and processes used across subject areas. Teachers use the IAS to drive reading and writing instruction throughout our ELA curriculum. This curriculum has been built by a team of Lake Central School Corporation teachers. The committee monitors, updates and implements ELA units into curriculum guides for each grade level. The units include performance assessments that align with the rigor of state assessments. Because literacy is a fundamental part of instruction in all disciplines, teachers are provided with professional development to improve students' reading skills. Teachers learn necessary strategies to assess and drive instruction while meeting the needs of all students. Students' progress is monitored continually to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and make detailed instructional decisions. Evidence-based instructional approaches result in the progression from a developing scholar, to a lifelong learner. Our daily ELA schedule focuses on structured reading skills that includes whole group and small group instruction. Literacy Footprints Guided Reading materials are used to differentiate small reading groups and Words Their Way is used to provide developmental phonics and spelling instruction. Both are tailored to meet children at their developmental stages of reading and writing. The units within the curriculum incorporate a variety of books including fiction texts, nonfiction texts and differentiated complex texts. These texts are incorporated to support instruction of the IAS and to accommodate various learning opportunities for children. Kolling has developmentally appropriate mobile libraries for each grade level to enrich students' literary experiences. Books from the mobile libraries can be sent home as literature for families to share. Kolling students are given many opportunities to enjoy reading books outside of the daily schedule of reading skills. During the school day, students are given self-selected reading time. This time

allows students to choose books to read independently resulting in enhanced comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and a deeper understanding of information. One School One Book and One District One Book are programs that encourage reading outside of the school setting. These programs educate our families on the importance and power of reading aloud to children and encourage families to read together at home. An online learning program called Reading Eggs fosters the learning and reading experiences for our students beyond classroom instruction. It helps build reading skills using interactive reading activities, guided reading lessons, and digital story books. Incorporating a modern technology program like this, allows teachers to create more innovative lesson plans and gives students the opportunity to learn at their own pace. A daily writing schedule is achieved using the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop. This comprehensive framework incorporates mini-lessons for writing instruction, independent writing time for students, and time for teachers to conference individually with students about their writing. Grammar, usage, and convention standards are taught throughout the curriculum using the scope and sequence presented in Calkins. Writing rubrics are used to assess writing, guide writing conferences, and are displayed in classrooms to be used as student references.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Kolling's math curriculum is centered on inquiry-based learning experiences which rely on inferential skills that emphasize multiple solutions that need to be proven using all methods of learning. It is our belief that a strong math curriculum is not built on the ability to memorize algorithms that lead to accuracy, but to develop strong number sense so that students are able to understand why strategies are effective, develop efficiency to solving problems, and fluently evaluate the reasonableness of their answers.

Our curriculum is also designed to engage and support the range of learners within a classroom. As computation skills are developed, students apply these skills in real-life contexts by working through story problems that engage students through content relative to them. This approach to learning allows students to investigate the meaning of a problem, plan, choose a solution pathway that makes sense, and defend their strategy during discussion. Through investigating, or working through a problem, students will ask questions that lead to a solution. During the daily math schedule, students learn and practice concepts through number talks, looking for patterns within numbers, as well as workshops. It is during the workshop portion of the schedule that students put into practice the strategies they have learned through investigating to find a solution. Math workshops are based on the belief that knowledge emerges in a community of activity, discourse, and reflection. Throughout instruction, and across all grade levels, students will use a variety of tools to support their understanding of math concepts and skills. Teachers encourage students to explore, notice patterns, develop efficient strategies, and to generalize ideas. Lesson closure routinely requires students to clarify their thinking by demonstrating, in a way that makes sense to them, how they arrived at a solution. The lesson closure also encourages them to value the ideas and strategies of their classmates. Math concepts and skills are taught throughout the school day through classroom routines, math games, the use of manipulatives (pattern blocks, shape counters), using number charts, and math vocabulary.

Benchmark assessments are reviewed by teachers in order to make informed decisions about instruction. Teachers also monitor independent work, checklists, quizzes, and unit tests to make decisions about the individual needs of students. Teachers will then allocate resources such as classroom paraprofessionals, volunteers, before school academic support, or support from the math tutor to provide struggling students with additional and prescriptive supports that align with our inquiry-based framework. All students are required to meet weekly lesson goals for Dreambox Learning, an online math program that adjusts to the individual learning paths of students, by completing lessons during school and outside of school.

### **1d. Science**

Kolling Elementary's science curriculum follows the IAS for Science 2016 and is an inquiry-based program covering the major branches of science: biology, chemistry, physics, and earth and space sciences. The scientific method can be seen in all facets of the science curriculum. The research-based adopted science curriculums are Carolina Science for kindergarten through second grade, and Full Optional Science System (FOSS) for third and fourth grades. The adopted curriculums allow students to perform experiments at all grade levels to reflect the ever-changing realm of science and the underlying premise that science education

should be an inquiry-based, hands-on experience. All grade levels are able to participate in hands-on interactions with living things such as plants, rats, chicks, bees, beetles, crawfish, and brine shrimp. Local sources such as Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation Board, the Environmental Education Center, the Enviro-Mobile, and local farmers come into the classrooms as supplements to what is being taught by the teachers. All students take science-based field trips to local attractions such as the Indiana Dunes, the Purdue Challenger Center, the Museum of Science and Industry, Lake County Fairgrounds, and Fair Oaks Dairy Farm. These trips allow students to connect classroom content to real world situations. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) activities are incorporated at all grade levels, fostering ingenuity, encouraging experimentation, supporting knowledge application, and encouraging teamwork. All of this extends into every part of our students' lives and will benefit the students throughout their education and into the workplace.

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

Our Social Studies curriculum is meant to provide our students with an understanding of the past and how it influences the present and future. The curriculum encompasses citizenship, government, economics, geography, and history and prepares the students for a globally connected world. Our teachers use the Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies (CRISS) program to access all modes of learning within the classroom. The use of Studies Weekly and Scholastic News help to provide differentiated levels and allows students to analyze text based on what is being learned in the textbook. Several of the ELA units in all grades are centered around social studies themes that provide cross-curricular learning experiences.

Community involvement is an important part of the social studies curriculum throughout all grade levels. Students work with the local police departments to hold toy drives for sick children, we have many community guest speakers visiting our school, such as firefighters and bankers, and our Veteran's Day assembly is a schoolwide event involving veterans from the community. Social Studies-based field trips are taken by all grade levels and include such places as nursing homes, Tri-Town Safety Village, Buckley Homestead, and the One Room Schoolhouse. The local Lions Club holds an essay contest for our fourth grade students which highlights the students' knowledge about our nation's flag. In order to understand the world we live in, students participate in cultural celebrations, current events activities, research projects, and presentations to parents.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

#### **1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

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

In addition to academics, students attend one of five specialized classes each day that include music, art, physical education (PE), computers, and library.

The music curriculum at Kolling is designed to allow students to experience music in a way that is sequential and developmentally appropriate. Younger students use many movement activities to develop the ability to respond to music in a given way by listening. As our students progress through this process, these movements and experiences are then given tangible concepts, like rhythmic notation and pitch patterns, that increase in complexity much like when one learns to read or do math. Students then take these skills and apply them to concepts like part singing and learning to play a recorder. This gives students a well-rounded base of music knowledge and provides them with the fundamentals needed to be successful in music courses beyond elementary school.

Creativity, expressionism, and collaboration are a few of the skills taught in Kolling's visual arts program. Students learn the fundamentals of art and develop skills necessary to make decisions, take risks, and build social skills, while having fun. At the end of the year, students' skills are displayed at the Artome Art Show where students get to see and feel what it is like to have their artwork professionally matted and framed like a real artist. The staff, students, and the community is welcome to join this remarkable event. The visual arts program at Kolling Elementary is not just visible in the art room. It is visible in the art they see in

classrooms and hallways as well as the art they create outside of school. It is what helps the students learn to express what cannot be said with words alone.

The Kolling PE program has a mission to instill a love of movement, exercise, and sport in our students that will remain with them throughout their lives. It is our goal that every Kolling student develops a positive physical self-image and feels empowered to be able to maintain a healthy level of physical activity. Kolling students are exposed to a variety of sports and games in a skill-based curriculum that includes individual, partner, small group, and team games. Students are taught the crucial role that physical fitness components play in their overall health, mental state, and academic performance. Students learn a full-body stretching routine that is consistently practiced throughout all grade levels. This includes beneficial Yoga practices to develop mind and body awareness. Kolling participates yearly in the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge. For the past eight years, Kolling Elementary has placed in the top two for funds raised in the State of Indiana. This event allows all Kolling students an opportunity to be a part of a community service and volunteer experience. In addition to our physical education program, students participate in an annual field day program at the end of the year.

As the 21st century becomes a heavily technologically driven world, we recognize that our students benefit from their weekly computer technology class. Software programs such as Learning.com, Easy Tech, Code Spark, and Code.org play a critical role in equipping all students to learn, live, and work in the 21st century. The research-based curriculum addresses the issues children face as they navigate a fast-changing digital terrain. National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) guide our curriculum to help evaluate the critical skills to help our students learn effectively and live productively in our global and digital world. Students apply these standards through a curriculum that focuses on applications, keyboarding and computer science skills, digital literacy and citizenship concepts, problem solving skills, binary coding, and programming and algorithms. The skills learned in the computer lab connect directly and support students in the use of classroom technologies.

Kolling works arduously to promote the very best children's literature to our students. Our librarian organizes published author visits, coordinates with the local county library and local amusement parks for reading contests, and hosts an annual Scholastic Book Fair. Kolling's librarian chooses grade level appropriate books that focus on themed character trait monthly lessons to read to students. During the summer, students are encouraged to read by visiting the district's mobile library, the Uni-Mobile. The Uni-Mobile visits local parks as a means of encouraging children to participate in the summer reading challenge. Students that complete the challenge are recognized at a back-to-school breakfast with the librarian and principal.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

Each classroom at Kolling is allotted 30 minutes each day that is devoted to students identified as needing small-group, academic support. This allotted time is referred to as the RtI block. During this time, students leave the classroom to receive speech services, reading and/or math interventions, and/or social and emotional interventions. Remaining students work on remediation, continuation, or enrichment of skills previously taught. No new instruction occurs in the classroom during RTI time.

In September, January, and May, all students at Kolling are assessed using summative benchmark assessments. These include a Next Step Guided Reading Assessment, Words Their Way Spelling Inventory, and a comprehensive assessment from our Investigations math curriculum.

After close analysis of these assessments and class performance, classroom teachers provide differentiated instruction with resources that include Literacy Footprints Guided Reading and Words Their Way. Students who are not progressing successfully in the areas of phonics or reading comprehension can benefit from small group interventions with a trained reading specialist. These interventions include Wilson Foundations Phonics, Leveled Literacy Intervention in grades K-2, and/or Comprehension Toolkit in grades 3-4.

Kolling employs a part-time teacher to fill schedule gaps for one of our specialized area teachers. Her responsibilities also require her to provide math support to identified students in grades K-2. The classroom teachers determine skill deficits that need to be addressed during this tutoring time. As new data are monitored, students in these groups may change.

Kolling's English Language Learners (ELL) receive academic support in grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension from an ELL certified teacher once per week if the student's World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) score indicates the need for support. Additionally, ELL students may receive help in the classroom from a trained ELL paraprofessional for 30 minutes each day.

Kolling offers academic support twice per week for thirty minutes before school. Students are invited to attend based on classroom performance and data analysis. During this time, teachers may utilize guided reading texts, Words Their Way spelling sorts, inquiry math practice, and other resources available to them. The purpose of this academic support is to target academic weaknesses and remediate them efficiently and effectively.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

The Lake Central School Corporation High Ability (HA) program is meant to challenge students to reach their potential by providing a wide range of opportunities for students who are identified as needing services in math and/or ELA. The program is designed to meet the intellectual, social, and emotional needs of identified students. The corporation understands that these learners are found in all socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic groups. Currently, Kolling has a HA class or cluster class in grades 1-4. These classes are taught by teachers that have been trained in gifted and talented educational practices.

The screening process used to identify students for the HA program consists of two major components: the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Iowa). All kindergarten and second grade students (who are not currently identified or only identified in one subject) take the CogAT test. If a student has a standard age score in the 96th percentile or above on either the verbal, quantitative, or quantitative/nonverbal subtest they qualify for placement in the HA program and will receive HA services for their identified area. If a student's age score is in the 88th to 95th percentile on at least one CogAT subtest, they will be screened further in the targeted area using Iowa. If a student's scores are appealed by a parent, the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) will be used as a third assessment.

The HA curriculum consists of advanced placement, standards-based coursework. Our ELA curriculum is novel-based and focuses on higher level thinking such as inferring, analyzing, and comparing various genres of literature. We also have a rigorous vocabulary curriculum that teaches sophisticated vocabulary words using Greek and Latin roots, synonyms, antonyms, and analogies. The HA math curriculum is an inquiry-based program that uses real world math applications and provides students with complex mathematical reasoning opportunities. Students in HA will often present what they learn in their coursework to other students throughout the school.

### **3c. Special education**

Kolling possesses an inclusive environment for all students receiving services through special education both in school and in the community. It is our belief and practice that all students are Kolling students and all staff members are Kolling staff members. Therefore, our approach to meeting the needs and celebrating the achievements of our students with disabilities is a collaborative effort made by all. Parents and community members volunteer to provide classroom presentations on disability education throughout our school. All students in the building eagerly celebrate differences and show their support for individuals with disabilities, especially during Disability Awareness Month in March, through activities such as spirit days and classroom lessons taught by our counselor and SSP.

Kolling's school psychologist and special education staff work to evaluate students to determine eligibility and provide staff with an extensive baseline to plan for instruction, intervention, and placement in services. Students who have support through special education may receive services from Kolling's resource special

education teachers, speech and language pathologist, SSP, counselor, vision specialist, deaf and hard of hearing specialist, mobility specialist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and nurse.

Kolling's continuum of services for special education includes consultation services, which require the special education staff to meet with the general education teacher to collaborate on how to best meet the student's needs in the general education setting; push-in support, which includes a student meeting with a paraprofessional or general education teacher individually or in a small group within the general education setting; and direct services, which include the student receiving direct instruction from a special education teacher or licensed special education specialty staff member outside of the general education classroom. All Kolling students participate in general education classes and activities for any areas not requiring direct special education services.

Student progress is measured through monthly progress monitoring of individual goals based on areas of need. Progress is analyzed to determine if a student's placement and supports are leading to adequate improvement. The case conference committee will evaluate data and information to determine if services are the least restrictive to helping each student close achievement gaps and achieve his/her personal best. A re-evaluation is requested by the student's case conference committee if additional information is needed to plan for the student.

**3d.** ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

**3e.** Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

It is our belief that before any child can learn, he/she must feel a sense of connectedness and safety. Therefore, social and emotional learning (SEL) practices can be found in all settings throughout our building, SEL material continues to be a common topic of staff meetings, and we have nearly accomplished our goal to have all certified staff participate in SEL training provided by Dr. Lori Desautels, an expert in educational neuroscience. In addition to implementing brain-aligned strategies and practices throughout the day, we strive to provide opportunities for students to take an active role in their own learning and leadership opportunities.

Students are chosen to lead our morning announcements that include the Pledge of Allegiance, the Kolling Bully Pledge, our Smile Line Quote of the Day, and a nutrition fact. Our schedule intentionally allows a rotating group of fourth grade students to assist during kindergarten lunch and fourth graders are selected to provide peer-mentoring in the library at the end of the day for younger students that require additional academic support. Fourth grade students can apply to be on the Robotics Team, where they end the season by competing in an area competition sponsored by the Robotics in Education Competition Foundation.

Fourth grade students are invited to apply to join the Kolling Student Council, which is responsible for various student leadership activities in the school and community. Fourth grade students are able to try out for the Spell Bowl Team, where they end the season in an area competition sponsored by the Indiana Association of School Principals. Our school is a site for Girls on the Run, which invites girls in third and fourth grade to be mentored by a combination of staff and parent volunteers and ends the season with a local community-supported 5K run.

Our school counselor and SSP implement a Character Trait of the Month program to promote social and emotional growth schoolwide. A Question of the Day, that is based on the character trait focus for that month, is asked each morning during announcements and displayed on a bulletin board where students are encouraged to leave their own responses throughout the day. The following day, our principal reads some of the previous day's responses during announcements to motivate students to continue participating. Teachers are encouraged to complete a challenge board in their classroom that coincides with the Character Trait of the Month. Participating classes earn a celebration with the school counselor or SSP.

Our school counselor and SSP promote social and emotional growth by providing small group student support. They use various curriculums such as Zones of Regulation, Random Acts of Kindness, and MindUP as resources to help address social skills, self-regulation, coping strategies, and executive functioning. Our SSP facilitates a group that allows fourth grade girls to meet, on a volunteer basis, in order to develop peer social connections that foster respect for self and others, conflict resolution strategies, positive self-esteem, and current topics pertinent to pre-teen girls.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Kolling Elementary strives to build partnerships with parents and community leaders willing to aid in our school's mission. We pride ourselves in clear and consistent parent communication and use methods such as the principal's weekly email as well as teachers' weekly newsletters. The two front office secretaries serve as the face of the school, serving a variety of stakeholder needs and assuring that building safety and organizational procedures are communicated to and followed by all visitors. Parents are able to access our student information database to check grades, attendance, discipline, report cards, and fees.

We have several supports for families with children entering kindergarten that are aimed at providing a sense of security and familiarity. We encourage parents to attend the corporation's Kindergarten Family Information Night to gain information about enrollment procedures and to attend the Kindergarten Hands-On Workshop where parents will learn strategies for working with their children on kindergarten readiness skills. Before school begins, parents are able to ride with their kindergarten child on a trial bus ride and to

bring their child in for an ice-cream social to meet classmates and the teacher before the first day of school. Prior to sending their children to school for the first time, kindergarten parents are invited to attend a Meet the Teacher Night, where parents gain comprehensive information about what they and their child can expect in kindergarten. A similar event is offered within the first few days of school for students in grades 1-4.

Parent and community member volunteer activities include reading to and with students, leading academic centers, hosting as the class art parent, chaperoning field trips, organizing class holiday parties, and assisting with our field day and Jump Rope for Heart events. We regularly partner with community experts willing to bring experiences into our classrooms for such topics as preserving energy, oral hygiene, personal safety, personal hygiene, agriculture, first responders, and character education. We organize community service projects that allow students and families to give back to US troops, local police and fire departments, families in need, Riley Children's Hospital, the American Heart Association, and the Lake Central Education Foundation. Kolling has a little free library outside the front office where community members are encouraged to take a book and/or leave one. We partner with several community organizations in order to provide after-school activities such as Drama Kids, Girl Scouts, and Girls on the Run. Kolling works with an outside organization to provide mental health services to students in situations where parents would otherwise not be able to coordinate these professional services outside of school and we partner with mentors through Kids Hope who are paired with at-risk children.

Our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) hosts numerous activities throughout the year to help raise funds for school and local needs and to provide activities that foster a sense of community and inclusiveness. Some of the activities include our Fall Fun-Fair, restaurant fundraisers where teachers serve meals, Christmas Shopping Extravaganza, and a family dance night.

We partner with high school and college students seeking educational careers in order to provide them with learning experiences in our building, while at the same time seizing the opportunity to enhance experiences for our own students. Classes offered at our high school allow students to be assigned at Kolling for experiences in journalism and the profession of education. We partner with area universities to allow their students to work with staff in a variety of certified positions and we regularly host student-teachers. Our investment of providing quality experiences to individuals in training also serves to maintain a pool of highly qualified individuals, who oftentimes will seek employment with us years later.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Kolling's professional culture stems from our commitment to continuous learning and our efforts to keep staff morale elevated. It is a shared feeling that teachers and support staff enjoy being a part of Kolling and feel comfortable learning from and sharing ideas with each other. Professional development is provided at the building level through bi-weekly staff meetings and weekly grade-level meetings that serve to align our professional practice, make informed decisions based on evidence and data, and keeps teachers current on changes affecting education. New teachers are assigned a mentor who serves to assist the new teacher with the corporation's evaluation system, implementing the building's instructional guidelines, grade book support, and meeting regularly to support the mentee in any other areas needed. We staff a fulltime building substitute that is available so that teachers can attend student meetings, collaborate with staff, and observe other teachers. Three days of the year are dedicated as teacher work days for classroom preparation. Kolling shares a technology trainer that helps teachers weave technology into their instruction by sending out weekly technology tips, conducting training, and co-teaching. A shared math coach is also available to help support teachers and paraprofessionals implement the math curriculum and learn best practices. Each spring, teachers are involved in the methodical process of class assignments by providing input for the following year that best meet the needs of our students. Information is regularly shared through building curricular and social committees. Social committee objectives include planning staff meals, social gatherings, holiday activities, supporting wellness challenges, celebrating staff milestones, and offering support and condolences to staff experiencing hardships. Members of our PTO support staff by providing reimbursement funds to certified and classified staff to help offset cost of supplies. The PTO also hosts staff activities such as the Sunshine Cart and staff luncheons.

Teachers are required to attend ongoing district professional development training seminars that support the implementation of curricular requirements for academics and social and emotional learning practices. A selection of high ability teachers attends the annual Indiana Association for the Gifted Conference and teachers wishing to add the area of Gifted and Talented onto their teacher license are provided with tuition support. Along with required training, teachers are encouraged to seek permission to attend professional training as long as the training aligns with our curriculum and mission. The principal and dean of students attend yearly school safety training and maintain status as school safety specialists through the Indiana Department of Education. The principal is a member of the Indiana Association for School Principals that provides her with resources and training that support educational leaders. In addition to attending teacher training alongside staff, the principal also attends bi-weekly meetings for district administrators and the district's annual week of summer professional development and training.

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

The climate and culture at Kolling Elementary centers on the leadership philosophy that every stakeholder is essential to achieving our mission. We strive to maintain the type of collaborative work environment implemented by historically successful leaders like American industrialist and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, who said, "Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." We employ a humble collection of individuals who rarely take credit for their contributions, exhibit professionalism at all times, respect one another, strive to be a part of solutions and not problems, and who hold themselves and each other to the highest standard.

The dean of students assists the principal to assure that policies and expectations are clearly and effectively communicated to all stakeholders. Both school leaders maintain an open-door policy that welcomes all stakeholders to communicate their concerns. Remedies to problems that arise consistently put students first, but also strive to meet the needs of those who serve them. The principal takes pride in developing meticulous schedules that utilize every second of each staff member's work day in order to maximize instructional time and the effects on student achievement. Staff members value the opportunity to influence children to achieve their personal best and therefore appreciate their structured work environment.

Who we are as a team can be summed up in the way Kolling teachers and staff responded this year when, without notice, our school corporation announced in the middle of a March 2020 school day that due to the COVID-19 crisis, we would not be returning to school. Teachers rallied together, helping one another develop meaningful and valuable learning opportunities for students. This collective effort was made available to students within 5 days and throughout the extended school closure. However, what was most impressive was that our staff did not panic to begin planning when this troubling news was announced. Kolling's teachers spent what may have been their final moments of the year with their students, making the best of their remaining time together while making sure their students left school that day knowing that their teachers value every moment with them. The planning frenzy was not felt by the students. Support staff throughout the building assisted teachers that day to achieve this for our students. This instinctive response is confirmation that while educational achievement is a high priority at Kolling Elementary, we believe the social and emotional needs of our students is paramount and that the sum of our school community is greater than its parts.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Kolling truly does not leave a child behind. Our safety net is far-reaching and strong. Kolling is a successful school because we have a reliable system in place to acknowledge all teacher concerns and identify all student needs. Three times per year, students are assessed using previously mentioned summative benchmark assessments. Kindergarten through second grade assessments also include a screener for characteristics of dyslexia. The purpose is to ensure that children are progressing at an adequate pace, use data to make informed decisions, and identify any strengths and weaknesses which might inform instructional changes.

The data points are collected and stored each year on a single Google document, which is sorted by class. Color codes are assigned to each data point, which indicate whether a student is performing at, above, or below benchmark. The data are kept intact and rolled over each year into a new document so that teachers are prepared, on the first day, to meet students where they are performing and to note trends across grade levels.

Kolling teachers strongly believe that analyzing this data impacts student success. Twice a year, Kolling conducts Student Assistance Team meetings (STAT). The principal, dean of students, SSP, counselor, and reading specialists meet with each classroom teacher to have a brief conversation about every single student in his/her class. Strengths and weaknesses are discussed, and what, if any, changes need to be made to the services that each Kolling student receives. Student needs can be deemed academic, behavioral, emotional, physical, medical, etc. The team takes thorough notes to reference throughout the year. Together, the team determines how best to support each student. During this meeting, it might be determined that a student requires Tier 1 interventions to be implemented within the classroom. These Tier 1 supports are then assigned and recorded.

When Tier 1 interventions have been tried over a period of time without significant success, a student is assigned more specific interventions in a small group, Tier 2 setting with a certified staff member specialized in supporting the areas of concern. During this process, an Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) is assembled, which is designed to support the student. The team meets to formulate a Tier 2 written plan which includes achievement goals for the student. Any specific interventions and/or accommodations are assigned and recorded. This may include small group ELA or math interventions, social or behavioral supports, and parent/home involvement. The team meets 2 to 3 times per year to review the plan and make changes as needed.

Students who do not make adequate progress after receiving Tier 2 interventions over a period of time may receive more individualized support or, in some cases, be referred for special education testing. These supports would qualify as Tier 3.

Kolling is committed to meeting all students' needs and we take great pride in this meticulous and systematic process that leads to quick and early interventions for our at-risk students and allows us to assure that all students are making adequate yearly progress.