

U.S. Department of Education
2021 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. Kiana Billings Coleman
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Hall-Kent Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 213 Hall Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Birmingham State AL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 35209-6598

County Jefferson

Telephone (205) 423-2430 Fax (205) 423-2432

Web site/URL https://www.homewood.k12.al.us/hkes E-mail kcoleman@homewood.k12.al.us

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. Justin Hefner E-mail jhefner@homewood.k12.al.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Homewood City Schools District Tel. (205) 870-4203

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 Mr. Charlie Douthit
(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, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

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, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	12	10	22
K	57	62	119
1	49	52	101
2	57	59	116
3	57	55	112
4	46	50	96
5	49	49	98
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	327	337	664

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3.2 % Asian
 - 25.6 % Black or African American
 - 11.1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 56.5 % White
 - 3.6 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 11%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	40
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	35
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	75
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	660
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

Arabic, Bengali, Spanish, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 14 %
95 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 27 %

Total number students who qualify: 178

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

84 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>17</u> Autism	<u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>1</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>15</u> Developmental Delay	<u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>33</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</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: 5

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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	38
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	22
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	27
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 17:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
 Yes No

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

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

The mission of Hall-Kent Elementary is to educate and empower all students to maximize their unique potential.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

At Hall-Kent Elementary, we started the school year with two instructional options for students: traditional or virtual. At least one of the teachers in each grade level taught all virtual classes. For the second semester, many of our students returned to traditional school. Those students who wished to remain virtual continued with the original classroom teachers, but the learning environment transitioned to a hybrid model. Teachers delivered live instruction to both traditional and virtual students.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Hall-Kent Elementary is a student-centered school enriched by tradition, vision, and compassionate spirit. Established in 1887, the school has served children in its community for over 100 years. Located in a suburban district outside Birmingham, AL, Hall-Kent is one of three elementary schools in the Homewood City Schools District. The school is located in a diverse community and serves various socio-economic groups. Residents zoned for Hall-Kent include students from well-established neighborhoods, newer subdivisions, and apartment complexes. Population diversity helps to enhance student learning, tolerance, and appreciation of cultural differences. Our student enrollment has rapidly increased over the past ten years from 400 to over 600 students in preschool through fifth grade. In response to increased student enrollment, a new wing was added to the school providing six new classrooms. New families are moving into our school zone so their children can learn in a diverse community with high learning expectations.

The mission of Hall-Kent Elementary School is to educate and empower all students to maximize their unique potential. Our goal is to provide a challenging, nurturing environment where everyone learns to value themselves and others' uniqueness. Our vision is an inclusive school of learners who embrace a growth mindset; teachers who are dedicated and invested in students; and a joyful learning environment utilizing innovative and best instructional practices. This vision guides our purpose to support students' academic growth alongside their emotional and social wellbeing. As we strive to help students maximize their unique potential, personalized learning is a vital component of our instructional program. The daily schedule allows for whole-group instruction, small groups, and individual instruction as needed. Our focus has shifted from a deficit model to a growth model. Teachers are committed to creating an engaging learning environment where every child makes academic progress.

To serve the needs of our diverse population, teachers understand the power of communication and collaboration. Our HSSP (Homewood Student Support Team) comprises administrators, counselors, regular education teachers, and special education teachers. This team assists teachers in planning and implementing strategies for general education students experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties in the classroom. This team aims to help the classroom teacher develop and implement an intervention plan in the general education classroom. Accommodations, modifications, and collaborative efforts of both general and special area teachers afford exceptional education for all students. The Covid-19 pandemic brought new challenges for our school staff. As research has shown that the teacher is one of the most influential factors in student learning, our goal was to provide a school-based teacher for our virtual classrooms. We offered two learning options during the first semester: virtual and traditional. Despite a mask requirement, socially distanced classrooms, and distance learning environments, our school community worked together to meet our high expectations for quality teaching and learning.

Although academic achievement is vitally essential to students' success in life, we strive to support students' well-being. A school-wide positive behavior support system, Junior Patriot Pride, was created to provide a common expectation for the school community. Students display Patriot Pride by being responsible, respectful, and safe. In 2019, Hall-Kent Elementary School adopted a student advocacy program, Junior Patriot Pride House System. Every student, instructor, and staff member at Hall-Kent belongs to one of eight houses: courage, honesty, kindness, respect, leadership, friendship, integrity, and strength. A house system helps promote positive relationships, promotes a sense of belonging for all students beyond the classroom walls, and establishes long-term connections between students and teachers. Hall-Kent offers students multiple opportunities to participate in school-wide activities such as Homework Club, Chess Club, Book Buddies, 3:07 Club, and Preschool Partners.

Our school is committed to the character development of student leaders. We have created unique programs and initiatives that allow opportunities for students to serve the school and community. Hall-Kent Student Ambassadors are fifth-grade students nominated by the school faculty. They must embody the seven Junior Patriot Pride house traits: friendship, kindness, honesty, strength, integrity, leadership, courage, and friendship. After reflecting on ways to move beyond just tolerating to celebrating diversity, our school formed a global community committee dedicated to global education. A student service club, Hall-Kent Helpers, provides student leadership opportunities for service in our community and across the globe. For a

couple of years, this service group raised money for a Water Project to build clean water wells in Africa. Hall-Kent Helpers also volunteered service hours to construct an outside sensory classroom at the school.

The school community strongly supports Hall-Kent. The school holds fond memories for many former students. Some of our parents today were former Hall-Kent students. We also have several teachers and staff members who are alumni of Homewood and Hall-Kent. Our PTO supports the staff through academic enhancement grants, school programs, and community events. They volunteer many hours of assistance throughout the year to the librarian, art teacher, classroom teachers, and the school grounds' upkeep. Support from our PTO and the community is one of the contributing factors to Hall-Kent Elementary School's success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

At Hall-Kent, the instructional philosophy centers on how to impact student learning. Teachers use personalized instruction to take every student from where they are and move them to higher achievement levels. Much research supports the importance of being clear to students and their parents regarding the learning path. The emphasis has shifted from averaging tests and grades to aligning targets, curriculum, and assessments. Using the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards as a framework, Hall-Kent assesses student learning with standards-based grading. The learning path for each grade level contains 8 to 12 learning targets for reading and math. Learning targets ensure consistent expectations in teaching, learning, and assessing mastery. Teachers in the district have collaborated to develop kid-friendly “I Can” statements, so students may also assess their learning along the way.

Hall-Kent strives to create a learner-centered environment. The master schedule is designed to allow large blocks of time for explicit whole-group instruction, strategic small group instruction, and intensive individual learning. Hall-Kent structures the language arts block to provide students many opportunities to read, write, speak, and listen. During the reading block, teachers use a workshop approach that allows time for mini-lessons, small groups, and individual conferences. This flexible model allows time for differentiated activities based on ability levels and student choice. Grounded in the science of reading, we use a multisensory approach to increase reading comprehension through word recognition and language comprehension. In response to dyslexia research, most of our teachers are trained to implement multisensory strategies with students at varying levels. Research has shown the importance of daily reading in academic achievement. Teachers seek ways to encourage and motivate independent reading. We believe it is essential to provide a range of texts to understand various experiences and diverse populations. Students participate in independent book challenges, book clubs, and author studies.

The math instructional goal is to develop students’ capacity to use multiple problem-solving and mathematical reasoning strategies. Teachers model the purpose of productive struggle to solve problems through real-life problem-solving situations when possible. To strengthen students’ number fluency, teachers provide lessons in number talks, counting collections, and fact fluency practice. Teachers use math manipulatives and games regularly to engage students and promote collaboration. Math menus provide differentiation, provide choice, challenge learners, and encourage independence in learning. Teachers monitor student learning through pretests and formative assessments and adjust our instruction as needed to meet all students’ needs. All skills are spirally reviewed in small groups throughout the year until achievement mastery.

In social studies classes, instruction helps develop responsible citizens who understand the local and global community. Teachers utilize diverse literature, hands-on materials, and digital tools to encourage active student exploration of the world around them. Reading and writing tasks are embedded in the social studies instruction. In interdisciplinary studies, students read various informational texts to form connections and gain a deeper understanding of the topic. In Alabama History, our fourth-graders complete an extensive study of the Civil Rights Movement. Students take a field trip to historic sites in Montgomery, AL. Assuming a researcher and presenter’s role, students share the story of a Civil Rights personality in a Live Wax Museum.

As an Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative (AMSTI) school site, our classroom science units consist of hands-on activities, scientific research, experiments, presentations, and projects. Teachers serve as guides and facilitators for student inquiry, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Beyond students’ regular classroom instruction, students attend our STEM classroom weekly, integrating engineering, math, and technology into scientific learning units. Children also need opportunities to learn science outside of school, so teachers plan for real-world science applications by visiting the school’s outdoor classroom and sensory garden. To view the world as scientists, students attend field trips at the McWane Science center, Bud’s Best Cookies production assembly line, and the Environmental Center at Camp McDowell.

At Hall-Kent, we seek to recognize every student’s knowledge, skills, and interests to personalize instruction

to the greatest extent possible. Individualized feedback is critical in this process. Teachers assess students using formative, summative, formal, and informal assessments to differentiate instruction appropriately, including benchmark and diagnostic when appropriate. However, formative assessments are a critical component in our standards-based grading system. Teachers can identify students' strengths and weaknesses to design instruction to meet their individual needs. This continuous process is a cycle of teaching, assessing, and modifying instruction to ensure mastery of learning targets.

Even during a global pandemic, our virtual teachers were firm in their commitment to personalized learning. As we believe that students learn best with differentiated instruction, teachers made adjustments to the learning environment. The daily schedule still provided whole-group, fluid small-group, and individual instruction to maintain our expected level of rigor. Virtual teachers incorporated new technological tools to assist with classroom management, instructional methods, and assessments. The technology specialist and virtual teachers collaborated to locate resources for formative assessment, such as Nearpod, SeeSaw, and Flipgrid. Schoology and G Suite for Education allowed teachers to design and use assessment data to drive future instruction.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

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

All eligible students, ages three to five, attend preschool at Hall-Kent for the entire school district. The program aligns with the Individuals for Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Our school attempts to locate and provide appropriate educational and related services to all disabled children as early intervention through Child Find. In line with the community's value in inclusiveness, all of our preschool classrooms invite typical students as role programs. The preschool curriculum aligns with the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children. With a school of school readiness, the standards serve as a natural progression to the kindergarten standards in the Alabama Courses of Study. Hall-Kent teachers modify and accommodate the learning approach for children with disabilities to meet individual students' needs. Through a thematic approach, monthly and weekly themes focus on the five development areas: language, social, adaptive, cognitive, and motor. The learning environment provides an opportunity for students to engage through play, choice, and exploration. The preschool teachers are committed to preparing students to enter our community Kindergarten classes. In preparation, the classrooms follow Hall-Kent's master schedule, allowing a consistent model for transitions during lunch, physical education, Unified Arts, and carpool procedures.

Although Covid-19 safety precautions presented unique challenges for a preschool classroom, our teachers were committed to providing an optimal learning environment. Teachers made adjustments to allow for social distancing and to minimize contact tracing during the school year. Instructional materials were only for individual usage and time allotted to sanitize the learning areas frequently. Teachers tracked student movement throughout the classroom, and students had an assigned seat at the table and on the carpet. Teachers were strategic about student grouping as well. Students, teachers, and instructional assistants rotated together to minimize the potential for contact tracing large numbers of students.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As a school that aims to honor the whole learner, student creativity is encouraged through unified arts classes. Students in all grades attend music, art, writing, STEM, and LINKS class for fifty minutes each day. Music education holds high regard in our community. For ten years, Homewood City Schools has been named one of the Best Communities for music education by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation. We believe that our music program plays a vital role in this accomplishment. In music, students are involved in singing, playing instruments, reading, and analyzing musical pieces. Students showcase their musical talents during grade-level performances for family and friends at a program throughout the year. In art, students are involved in activities to increase their knowledge and creative expression through drawing, painting, sculpting, and studying famous artists, paintings, and art forms. Our writing class provides students

additional opportunities for creative and expressive writing. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) classes are engaging, project-based activities where students create, design, and experiment.

Students also participate in LINKS classes for three weeks on a rotating basis with the librarian, counselor, and reading coach. The library is an integral part of the instructional program at Hall-Kent School. The doors are always open for classroom and individual visits for lessons on library use and research skills. Our librarian encourages current resources to supplement the curriculum, provide enrichment, and connect with our diverse student population. Our counselor teaches weekly lessons to promote student leadership and character education. The reading coach allows students additional opportunities to practice reading skills and strategies.

Physical fitness is a priority at Hall-Kent. All students spend thirty minutes daily in an organized physical education program. The curriculum design is to enhance the cognitive, motor, and physical fitness of every child. Students are also offered physical education opportunities outside of the typical school day, including a before-school morning club, Mercedes Kids Marathon, Girls on the Run, and the Homewood Elementary District-Wide Track Meet. To prepare students for a global society, our technology specialist assists and encourages students and teachers with various technology endeavors. Teachers meet weekly with the technology specialist during embedded staff development times for technology training. The goal is to integrate content areas with 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, or global awareness. Every March, third-graders invite their families to participate in Unified Arts Night. This celebration allows students to showcase their accomplishments with a musical performance, art gallery, coding, and robotics.

Our teachers agreed that Unified Arts must remain a part of the daily schedule for virtual students. Unified Arts teachers collaborated with the Technology Specialist on ways to creatively use G Suite in their instruction. Teachers created interactive videos with VidGrid and Screencastify. Others joined live virtual meetings to read or teach a lesson to students. Our art teacher created individual art kits so that students could complete activities along with their peers. Teachers utilized Instagram as a shared space to showcase student work.

3. Academic Supports:

Hall-Kent meets the needs of all learners through a tiered instructional approach. Teachers tailor instruction by differentiating within their Tier I core instruction, which is provided within the classroom. Formative and summative assessments are used to determine each student's individual needs, including gaps that need to be addressed and students who need to be challenged. We use Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, DIBELS, and Star Math as our diagnostic tools. For students performing above grade level, teachers collaborate with the gifted teacher to create challenging learning opportunities. When a student has needs not being met through Tier I, they are pulled for a Tier II intervention group by their classroom teacher. Students in Tier II are progress monitored at least once a month in reading and math using the assessment tool most appropriate to monitor their specific areas of deficit. Tier II intervention for reading includes Orton Gillingham multisensory strategies, Recipe for Reading, and Classworks. Tier II intervention for math includes Classworks and small groups using research-based strategies to build number sense and foundational skills. Teachers meet with their grade level for Student Focus Meetings biweekly to discuss students, document their progress, share strategies employed, and determine the next steps. If Tier II has been implemented for at least eight weeks and is not sufficiently closing the gaps, teachers may refer a student for Tier III intervention.

Our Title I Reading and Math teachers provide Tier III intervention, in addition to a contracted tutor. They create a multi-criterion matrix to rank-order students by need. All data meetings include grade-level teachers, administrators, reading specialist, counselor, enrichment teacher, EL teachers, and Title I interventionists. The entire team considers the whole child's needs to determine which

students need further academic or behavioral support.

Once a student qualifies for Tier III intervention, the thirty-minute pull-out time is built into our master schedule so that the students are not missing any core instruction. Tier III reading instruction includes Orton Gillingham strategies and SPIRE. The programs used for Tier III math include Do The Math and Transmath. If Tier III interventions have been put in place for a minimum of eight weeks, student focus strategies have been implemented, and the student is still not making progress, our next step is a referral to the HSSP (Homewood Student Support Plan) team. Our assistant principal of instruction leads this team to determine any next steps to put in place for the student. Some next steps may include after-school tutoring, change in current intervention, vision/hearing tests, behavioral accommodations, possible retention, or a special education referral.

The academic support provided at Hall-Kent ensures that we meet various student needs. Special education students are served in their least restrictive environment and are serviced by their case manager, classroom teacher, and any additional services they require (OT, PT, Speech). Our EL (English Learner) students receive assistance from one of our two EL teachers. Students who qualify for the gifted program are serviced by the enrichment teacher, in addition to differentiated instruction from their classroom teacher. Our mission is to maximize the unique potential of each of our students. The procedures we have to determine and meet our students' needs at Hall-Kent ensure that we accomplish this goal.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Hall-Kent holds students to high expectations and provides academic, behavioral, and social support as students strive to achieve those expectations. We seek to create a safe, positive learning environment, including the accurate detection of students who need additional support. Our school Hall-Kent adopted a comprehensive, integrated, three-tiered (Ci3T) model of prevention. This Ci3T model seeks to address our students' academic, behavioral, and social needs using a continuum of support, including a proactive approach for addressing students' needs in all three areas. Hall-Kent Elementary School has the Junior Patriot Pride program that is a part of the Ci3T. It is to cultivate a positive learning community that promotes cooperation, independence, productivity, and innovation.

The faculty and staff use the Patriot Pride framework to establish school-wide expectations for all students. Students show Junior Patriot Pride by being respectful, being responsible, and being safe. As the year progresses, teachers model and teach students about expectations. They use positive reinforcement in the form of Patriot Pride slips. All faculty and staff are encouraged to give a Patriot Pride slip to a student for meeting or going above and beyond the expectations. Patriot Pride slips are put into our Junior Patriot Pride box and sent home to show their family. Drawings take place daily during the morning announcements to recognize students demonstrating Patriot Pride.

As we serve a diverse population, student needs range among many ability levels and learning styles. Our classrooms strive to engage students by providing choice, movement, student dialogue, and positive behavior support. Scheduled brain breaks occur throughout the day, so students have time to decompress before returning to instruction. Many of our teachers have attended professional learning about student engagement for diverse student populations. On a Saturday, we had 26 teachers request professional funding to attend Hope and Wade King's "Get Your Teach On" virtual conference. After attending, teachers signed up to join Rock Your School Day. Much time and effort went into completing room transformations with Pizza Parlor, Rock n Roll, Glow Day, and Fear Factor themes.

Our virtual classrooms continued to provide academic, behavioral, and social support to help students maximize their potential. Teachers found creative tools to establish a positive, engaging learning environment. The structure of the daily schedule aimed to build a community of learners. Each day started with the pledge and a morning meeting. During whole and small groups, teachers encourage student participation with tools such as the chatbox, equity sticks, and digital cheer shakers. As distance learning can feel isolated, teachers conferenced with individuals, plan birthday celebrations, and recognize Patriot Pride winners. At the beginning of each school day, our virtual classrooms listened for Patriot Pride winners' names on the morning announcements. Parents received emails with digital Patriot Pride certificates.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Hall-Kent relies on support from families and community partners. Before the pandemic, we welcomed visitors into our school for musical performances, Grandpals' Day, parent-teacher conferences, guest reading, and volunteer opportunities. The school gathers for PTO-sponsored events throughout the school year: Talent Shows, Family Fun Nights at the community park, Color Fun Run, and Spirit Nights at local restaurants. We are in the 88th year of our annual Fall Festival. In collaboration with community sponsors, teacher volunteers, school service clubs, this event brings in thousands of dollars that go right back into our classrooms.

Teachers understand that parental involvement is critical in student achievement and overall well-being. As we serve a transient population, relationships are a top priority. Teachers seek ways for students to form connections in our community. The Risk-Taking Individuals Striving for Excellence (RISE) is a literacy and math summer program designed to decrease the summer learning loss for at-risk students. The entire program is supported with grant funding and provides summer camps for students with working parents. RISE sponsors collaborate with community organizations to provide resources for the whole family

throughout the school year. Partners such as the YMCA, Kiwanis Club, Homewood City Schools Foundation, and multiple religious mission groups support the program with clothing, food, and volunteer hours.

Students have numerous opportunities to serve others by volunteering for community projects. They have participated in Relay for Life, funded clean water wells, and constructed an outdoor sensory garden. Each December, our fifth-graders choose a new cause to support during the holiday season. Students have rolled newspapers for the Humane Society, collected toiletries for the homeless, and made cards for Children's Hospital.

At Hall-Kent, one of our goals is to build a community of learners, which relies on strong student relationships within our school. Students are encouraged to give back within the building as well. They volunteer for safety patrol, book buddies, peer tutoring, and student ambassador. Transitions can be challenging for some of our students, so we partner with our middle and high schools to prepare students for the secondary level. Our middle school peer helper program visits the school to provide support for students. The middle school service club, Trendsetters, works closely with our Hall-Kent Helpers service club.

Even with Covid-19 restrictions, we were committed to communicating and partnering with families. Teachers utilized digital tools for parent conferences, guest readers, and learning progress reports. To give parents a glimpse into the classroom, many teachers used the social media platform to share student learning pictures and videos.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

A school environment that supports and encourages teachers and professional staff is a top priority at Hall-Kent. Each year at Hall-Kent, teachers and professional staff participate in a continuous program of professional learning. Our Professional Learning Plan (PLP) is a collaborative effort among grade levels and special area teachers that consists of a goal statement, an action plan, status checks throughout the school year, and a final summary of its impact. Time is embedded each week for grade-level teachers to have a common planning time to work together and take necessary steps to carry out their plan. At the end of each school year, the Hall-Kent teachers complete a professional development survey to give feedback on personal interests and learning needs. Administrators use the survey results and student data to guide and direct future professional development.

During the transition to distance learning in the spring of 2020, Hall-Kent provided extra support to its teachers. Administrators provided weekly curriculum and instruction meetings with each grade level to guide and direct the teachers during unprecedented times. During these weekly meetings, teachers prioritized learning targets to ensure students learned the critical standards. It was also a time for teachers to refine new best practices and reflect as a team about distance learning. Another professional development opportunity provided to teachers and professional staff at Hall-Kent during the transition to distance learning was weekly virtual meetings facilitated by our technology specialist. These meetings are typically a part of our ongoing professional development but were particularly crucial during the abrupt change from in-person learning to distance learning. The shift to distance learning created new challenges for our technology specialist. She helped teachers navigate a virtual learning platform, digital resources, student device distribution, and various technological complications along the way.

With the knowledge that a significant percentage of our population would begin the 2020-2021 school year in a remote setting, teachers at Hall-Kent showed interest in learning more about distance learning. Our administrators created a professional development opportunity with a virtual book study, *The Distance Learning Playbook*. Teachers participated in weekly readings and discussions to reflect and collaborate with discussion questions via an online platform. This book study sparked amazing conversations, allowed grade levels and special area teachers to share ideas, and built a good foundation for teaching in a remote environment.

4. School Leadership:

Our school leaders understand their ethical duty to ensure growth in students' academic, social and emotional well-being. To achieve this goal, the administration works to collaborate with stakeholders in creating a shared vision. The administration emphasizes life-long learning, and it pushes staff to continually reflect on their own practices and beliefs to grow as an educator. The principal communicates weekly with a "Friday Forecast" to all staff. In the "Friday Forecast," the principal will share a quote or current educational research followed by the question: Why do we do what we do? The principal's answer starts with "because kids deserve it." She uses this question and statement frequently when thinking through situations and making decisions. It is a perspective to ensure our focus remains on the best interest of students.

Shared leadership is a goal at Hall-Kent Elementary School. The administration provides guidance, but it is a collaborative effort among all staff. Hall-Kent has a school leadership team devoted to reviewing and amending school policy and procedures. This team consists of the principal, assistant principal, grade-level teachers, EL teacher, special education teachers, reading coach, and counselor. Weekly curriculum and instructional meetings encourage discussion about student assessments, review data, and school goals. Even during the school closure in March of 2020, the assistant principal held weekly virtual grade-level meetings. As teaching during a global pandemic was new for all, the sessions were a welcomed time to ask questions, share ideas, and plan for instruction.

As we transitioned into a new school year, safety was a significant priority. The principal adapted the district's Covid-19 plan to address issues specific to our school. The Hall-Kent Covid-19 plan explained safety guidelines in these unprecedented times. Virtual back-to-school faculty meetings provided time to answer questions and make plans for a socially distanced traditional school setting—all students in traditional classrooms utilized facial coverings, social distancing, and enhanced hygiene measures. To assist our virtual teachers, administrators frequently met to answer questions and problem-solve new approaches to continue supporting, educating, and empowering all of our students, teachers, and staff as we navigate this unprecedented and changing time in our world. Hall-Kent administrators believe in the power of collaboration, trust, and relationships.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Respect is a primary tenant of our school culture. More accurately, honoring dignity is a tenant of the school culture. This includes accepting others for who they are, making sure everyone feels included, acknowledging and recognizing everyone's contributions to our school community, and treating everyone with fairness. The characteristic of honoring dignity fits with Hall-Kent's holistic view of learners. Educators at Hall-Kent recognize that though culture, prior experiences, and home life contribute significantly to a student's identity, it would be a mistake to make assumptions about the student's preferences and needs-based solely on a single aspect of their identity.

Hall-Kent faculty and staff have engaged in numerous professional training to build their repertoire of resources for addressing the needs of diverse learners. These have included nationally-renowned material provided by Understanding Poverty and Teaching Tolerance and empathy-building experiences facilitated by colleagues. These trainings have encouraged teachers to reflect on their own cultural background and consider any implicit biases that may result from their own formative experiences. With this foundation, our teachers build personalized learning plans that honor and incorporate students' individual experiences and preferences to ensure that all students are engaged and see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

Hall-Kent celebrates its multicultural and multilingual student and teacher population. Every winter, the kindergarten classes take an imaginary trip around the world in which winter celebrations from multiple countries are highlighted. Families and community members are invited to enrich this learning by sharing their personal experiences. Hall-Kent has bilingual employees that support communication with families in Spanish and utilizes both a national

service and community translators to ensure that families who speak other languages can communicate and connect with the school community. Students are encouraged to use their home languages at school, and visitors can often hear English monolingual students express interest in learning the languages of their classmates. Hall-Kent has numerous teachers who have spent extended periods of time in other countries and incorporate their experiences into the curriculum. For example, in 2018, a Hall-Kent teacher traveled to Morocco as a part of the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classroom Program. Her participation in the year-long professional learning grant sparked the beginning of a global community project at our school. The project's goal is to increase students' global awareness by highlighting countries represented in our school population and increasing global connections within our curriculum.

Our district leaders and school administrators provide guidelines to help teachers determine age-appropriate responses to current events and social movements. Teachers address these topics within the classroom according to their comfort level. Our school counselor is always equipped and available to meet with students to acknowledge and support them as they confront personally or socially challenging times. The counselor collaborates with community organizations to support students and families in a myriad of circumstances.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Hall-Kent's mission is to educate and empower all students to maximize their unique potential. Our diversity results in extreme academic ranges in individual classrooms and a vast extent of potential. Teaching to the whole class will meet the needs of only a small percentage of the students. The ONE practice that has been the most instrumental to the school's continued ability to educate and support students successfully has been challenging students in small flexible groups. Our faculty and staff have been committed to obtaining data constantly through pre-assessments and formative assessments and using that data to form fluid, small groups and design lessons to maximize learning.

Teachers understand the role of continuous assessments to establish learning gaps. Small group and individual sessions require spiraling back to teach learning targets not mastered in previous grades. The daily schedule allows for ample time for reteaching and guided repetition. As we build relationships with our students and get to know the whole child, teachers form groups based on learning styles and student interests. We are also committed to supporting and challenging the students who have already mastered the current skill by extending and challenging them beyond the grade-level material.

Along with everyone else, we were not prepared for a pandemic. However, our virtual teachers adjusted and modified our practices to continue fluid small groups. The daily schedule consisted of whole-group mini-lessons and small groups informed by formative assessments. Teachers have been intentional in developing relationships with our virtual students and families in a holistic way. Although students were virtual, our teachers invited students to attend individual sessions at school, including Special Education classes, English Learner classes, and Gifted Ed classes. We continued to make small groups a priority during the pandemic and developed strategies for handling them virtually that improved over time.

Teaching differentiated lessons in each subject while keeping the students engaged and independently learning requires much planning for a teacher. While we value autonomy, most teachers within a grade level work together closely to collaborate on best practices. Our instructional program, learning targets, and standards-based report card are the foundation of our personalized learning approach. These key factors support our commitment to know our learners and design learning experiences that meet their specific needs.