

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

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

School Mailing Address 4365 Metropolis Lake Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City West Paducah State KY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 42086-9749

County McCracken

Telephone (270) 538-4060 Fax (270) 538-4061

Web site/URL
https://www.mccracken.kyschools.us/heathelementary_home.aspx E-mail laine.cooper@mccracken.kyschools.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* Mr. Steven Carter E-mail steven.carter@mccracken.kyschools.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name McCracken County School District Tel. (270) 538-4000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Melanie Burkeen
(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):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 11 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	22	19	41
K	45	23	68
1	32	42	74
2	32	33	65
3	38	30	68
4	37	41	78
5	39	35	74
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	245	223	468

*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
 - 0.4 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 2.6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 91.3 % 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	20
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	29
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	49
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	466
(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):

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 47 %

Total number students who qualify: 220

8. Students receiving special education services: 22 %

105 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>8</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>13</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>11</u> Developmental Delay	<u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>58</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</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.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

Our mission is to use our passion for teaching to provide a safe, family-like environment, where students will thrive and surpass their potential. We partner with our community and parents to promote a positive network of support for all students to achieve success.

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.

The preschool students began with virtual instruction from August 24th until September 14th. They began four days a week of in-person learning (two half day classes per teacher) on September 15th and continued that through November 6th. They participated in virtual learning from November 6th until December 18th. They resumed in-person learning January 11th and have maintained their four days of in-person learning to date.

Our Kindergarten through fifth grade students participated in virtual instruction from August 24th until September 14th. They began a hybrid A/B schedule (two days a week of in-person and 3 days a week of virtual) on September 15th and continued that through October 2nd. Following fall break, students began a new hybrid schedule (4 days of in-person learning and 1 day of virtual) from October 12th through November 6th. Students returned to all virtual learning from November 9th until January 8th (with the exception of December 19-January 3 which was winter break). Students returned to the A/B hybrid schedule (2 days of in-person and 3 days of virtual) on January 11th and continued this schedule until February 26th. From March 1st until the present time, students participated in virtual instruction on Mondays and attended in-person on Tuesday-Friday.

It is important to note that students have had the option to participate in virtual learning since August 24th and over forty students at Heath Elementary School have continued to participate in virtual instruction all school year as of March 2021.

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

Heath Elementary School (HES) is located in West Paducah, KY, a rural area in western Kentucky. Our school houses over 450 preschool through 5th grade students and is located near the city of Paducah. HES is one of eleven schools located in the McCracken County Public School District. McCracken County Public Schools is home to one high school (grades 9-12), three middle schools (grades 6-8), two intermediate schools (grades 4-5), and five elementary schools (three P-3 schools and two P-5 schools). HES, along with Heath Middle School, is the hub of the Heath community and plays a vital role in bringing the community together. Our community is made up of families who expect their children to succeed in all that they do. Together, HES students, staff, and families strive toward the goal of creating the best place for meet the needs of the whole child.

The primary focus of HES is building relationships with students. We believe that establishing genuine and authentic relationships with the students gives them the springboard needed to have high academic expectations. Our staff goes above and beyond to create life-long relationships with students and their families. HES is truly dedicated to helping students reach and surpass their potential with high expectations in all areas (academic, behavioral). We value each student's well-being, and want every student to succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally.

One small part of this success is the drive to build leaders within the classroom and across the school. Students are given classroom jobs and are also given the chance to apply for the Student Leadership Team. The Student Leadership Team gives students the chance to be leaders among their peers, and provides meaningful leadership opportunities such as school decision making, service projects, school tours, etc. Student leadership within the school couldn't be accomplished without the large emphasis on celebrating all student successes.

HES celebrates student successes through quarterly student celebrations where students are recognized and rewarded for meeting attendance, academic growth, reading, math, and behavior goals. These celebrations are school-wide assemblies where all students celebrate their personal successes during that grading period. Additionally, our school recognizes students with the designation of "Pirate of the Month" based on their display of a certain character trait (integrity, courageous, etc.) during the month earning the student a yard sign and other recognitions. We celebrate students in many ways, a notable recognition is "Reader of the Month." This award is based on earning different reading recognitions such as highest percentage of growth, highest Accelerated Reader points, etc. Our staff love to help students with goal setting, and love celebrating students when they meet or exceed their goals!

During the 2020-21 school year, HES continued to set goals and celebrate, but we had to make many adaptations to schedules, systems, and activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During the spring of 2020, these adaptations included delivering meals and student work to students' homes, hosting drive-thru or community parades to celebrate students, and mailing notes, postcards, and prizes to students. The fall of 2020 was the beginning of virtual learning for the school district, which included Google Classroom and many other online platforms that students and staff learned to use in a very short window of time. The changes continued as the school district used hybrid models of in-person and virtual learning throughout the 2020-21 school year. While changes continued, the values of HES never wavered or changed. The staff continued to be dedicated, the families continued to be connected, and the students continued to be successful.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

All learning activities in HES classrooms are grounded in Kentucky Academic Standards. The teachers support standards-based and explicit instruction with hands-on and collaborative (partner or team) learning. Our classrooms are overflowing with student discussion, hands-on projects, and real-world applications.

Teams of teachers review the standards annually and align learning outcomes to each standard. Additionally, an instructional sequence is also reviewed to provide common goals across all classrooms. The teachers meet quarterly through Professional Learning Communities and standard alignment teams to ensure that standards are mastered and the flow of content is not interrupted between each grade level. This process helps our teachers prepare students to succeed in their content knowledge ensuring vertical alignment.

In the area of reading/ELA, HES uses a variety of instructional programs, approaches, and strategies to best meet the literacy needs of our students. The primary grades use cohesive literacy programs for phonics, phonemic awareness, reading comprehension and fluency, handwriting, and language/writing skills. Students in pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade use Heggerty phonemic awareness curriculum, a multi-sensory approach to phonics called Orton Gillingham, and learn phonics through Visual Phonics as well. Students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade use Handwriting without Tears curriculum for handwriting and cursive handwriting, and they also use the Guided Reading approach for all literacy levels. Students in grades K-5 use an aligned writing sequence plan that is mirrored from the Abel & Atherton writing approach. In grades 2-5, the Journeys reading program is used as an additional reading comprehension resource. The Guided Reading approach is used in an effort to meet the instructional needs of all students. This leveled reading program is valued for its collaborative and hands-on approach, while also giving students the opportunities to increase their individual literacy skills.

In the area of mathematics, we pride ourselves in making math come alive for its students. We believe the math learning process should always involve "math talk and math application." The lessons are standards-based, draw from the Singapore Math method, and are grounded in collaborative, hands-on, and real-world experiences. Another key factor in our math curriculum is the emphasis on math fluency and "math talk and application." We've seen that when students become well-versed in talking about and applying mathematical processes to their own life, math comes alive for students. Teachers in grade levels K-5 utilize Primary Mathematics through direct instruction and project-based learning. TouchMath, Kagan instructional strategies, and Box Cars and One Eyed Jacks math games are additional strategies/approaches used for math instruction at HES.

In the areas of science, HES uses an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. Students spend time investigating or trying to solve content-based questions or problems. The process of solving these problems or questions is where the real learning occurs. It is the process of answering questions and solving problems where students learn the science content. Curriculum resources include Mystery Science, Project Lead the Way, and many other inquiry-based resources.

In the areas of social studies, we use an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. Students begin with a question or problem that they must solve. They use texts, primary sources from history, websites or other resources to determine how history can be used to answer the question or solve the problem. Teachers use a shared Google Drive to add/share resources so they can share social studies standard-based resources with each other. Resources for social studies includes iCivics, inquiry-based resources, social studies literature and informational texts, and many other primary sources from history.

Student assessment is key to our instructional process at HES, because data drives our instructional decisions. We use DIBELS reading and math assessments to determine reading and math needs of students. This data helps us determine what skills students need more assistance with, and which standards they've mastered. These assessments are given to all students in Kindergarten, and as needed to students in grades 1-5. We use STAR by Renaissance Learning to assess reading and math skills for students in grades 1-5. Based on this norm-referenced assessment, DIBELS is used to determine more specific areas of learning

needs for students. In addition to STAR and DIBELS, teachers and staff frequently use reading running record data, phonics/phonemic awareness screeners, and many standards-based assessments to determine student learning on specific standards/skills. Teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities to review data and determine the next steps and success rates of student learning. Teachers take ownership of the data for their own classrooms, which helps drive decisions made by the school leadership team and School Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council on a monthly basis.

In the spring of 2020 when the pandemic began, HES continued teaching our students through a traditional approach of choice board assignments. This was designed to keep students engaged in their learning and provide them with choice in completing their assignments. With less than 24 hours notice, teachers designed content-specific choice boards for the state-wide, two-week closure. This closure continued through May 2020, and staff continued using choice board assignments for all subject areas. Staff communicated daily by email, phone, Google Meet, Zoom, and home visits. Over the summer, school staff were trained in many online platforms, and transitioned students and families to a virtual learning environment until September 2020. The school district changed the schedules multiple times since September, but the top priorities of safety and learning remained.

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

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

We welcome our youngest learners at age three. Our preschool program is aligned to the Kentucky Early Learning Standards and Kindergarten prerequisites. Our school, families, and community work together to ensure all students have the solid foundation they need to succeed in school. Children must have developmentally appropriate experiences with lots of hands-on learning, be routinely exposed to print, and encouraged to think creatively, to ask questions, and to be curious of the world around them. Preschool teachers use a variety of supplemental curriculum including: Creative Curriculum, Orton Gillingham, Handwriting Without Tears, Heggerty Phonics, Visual Phonics, Expanding Expression Tool, Second Steps, MathRack, Erickson Math, and Marvelous Explorations Through Science and Stories, which are all aligned with the Kentucky Early Learning Standards.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning. Conscious Discipline empowers staff to be conscious of brain-body states in themselves and the students. It then provides everyone with the practical skills needed to manage one's thoughts, feelings and actions. With this ability to self-regulate, staff are better able to teach children to do the same. These programs and the pre-Kindergarten programs (Orton-Gillingham, Handwriting without Tears, Heggerty, Visual Phonics, and Erickson Math) support the developmental continuum that is needed for school readiness.

In response to the pandemic, HES has followed all state-level guidelines and reduced the class size from twenty students to ten. Preschool students began attending in-person on their regular schedule of four half-days each week in September 2020, and have continued that same schedule this school year. HES provided virtual instruction for those that requested it.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

HES gives students a variety of extracurricular opportunities while on campus. K-5 students have a weekly art class, music class, physical education (PE) class, and library class. Every quarter those same students have an opportunity to learn through dance, drama, and health rotations which occur each Wednesday. Students learn to repurpose objects to make something new in art, play a ukulele in music, apply the movement concepts of speed and force in a variety of activities in PE, and identify genres and authors in library. Students learn how to articulate ideas for costumes, props and sets in drama, explore a variety of locomotor and nonlocomotor movements in dance, and explain how healthy eating and sleeping patterns help the body grow and develop in health.

HES hosts a 21st Century before/after school program each day school is in session, and also hosts a summer camp. Through 21st Century students have the chance to learn about the culture and language of France through French club, participate in Youth Coding League (YCL) featuring coding challenges and competitions, science club (hands-on science), running club (also participates in cross country races), and art club. Additionally, students can participate in fitness club, lego club, basketball club, and cooking club through the 21st Century program. We also offers STLP (Student Technology Leadership Program), Academic Team, Future Problem Solving (FPS) Team, and Student Leadership.

At HES we believe all students deserve the chance to find something they are passionate about. We support this belief through the large variety of activities, clubs, and programs offered in our 21st Century program where students can explore their passions and interests.

3. Academic Supports:

One goal of HES is to provide each student with what they need to be successful. One of the unique ways the school meets student needs is through a period of intentional instruction time built into the master schedule. This intentional instruction time is known as "flex." We use the word "flex" because this time is designed to flexibly meet all learner needs. If a student needs interventions in the areas of reading or math, or if a student needs to be challenged in a subject area, this time is used to provide them with those remediation or enrichment opportunities. If a student needs specially designed instruction (students with disabilities, gifted learners, and English Language Learners), this time can be used to assist those students as well.

Separate reading and math flex times are set aside in the primary grades, since additional time is needed to meet the diverse needs of students. Flex time is built into each grade level's schedule, and because it occurs throughout the school day, most staff lead or at least help with flex groups. Intervention staff, instructional assistants, classroom teachers, special education teachers, speech-language pathologists, the guidance counselor, and school administrators all help with or lead flex groups to further differentiate instruction and meet students where they are in their learning progression.

The structure of the flex instructional period is based around the needs of the students. Teachers and administrators work through the data to set individualized learning goals and then create student flex groups accordingly. These groups are fluid, because the academic, social, emotional, and cultural needs of the students change over time, and often very frequently. Therefore, flex groups may change quarterly, weekly, and/or daily, depending on students' day-to-day needs. The flex instruction is used as a way to close the achievement gap for struggling students, extend learning for high achieving students and provide challenges for those on grade level.

We believe an intentional focus on the whole child is crucial to building a solid foundation in both academic and social emotional learning. Therefore, we offer interventions and assistance both during and after school through mentoring and expanded instruction. We collaborate with our Family Resource and Youth Services Center (FRYSC) and the Paducah-McCracken County United Way, we offer a "Reading Pals" program that aims to not only improve reading skills, but to promote and foster positive mentors for students.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

It is the belief of the school community that all are a part of the family, and everyone can achieve great things together. This shared belief inspired the 2020-2021 theme: HES is "One School, One Family." We engage students and promote a positive environment from the first to the last day of school. Students should begin and end the school year with that "best day ever!" feeling.

Engaging students comes naturally at HES, classroom lessons and learning activities always keep our students wanting more and inspire them to research and explore beyond the classroom. Students are even encouraged to share their independent learning with their peers extending the learning experience to public speaking. An inviting hands-on, collaborative learning environment is the key to the high engagement. It is not uncommon to see a 1st grade classroom turned into outer space as they study patterns/cycles in space, a 5th grade classroom turned into a bakery as they apply their learning of multiplying/dividing fractions, or a 2nd grade classroom turned into a castle as students determine the theme and moral of a story during their fables, folktales, and myths unit.

Throughout the year we have school-wide events and activities that keep our students engaged in the school community. Events such as Idiom Day (dress like an idiom during a study of figurative language) or Tournament of Books (students vote on their favorite book series each day and determine an overall school winner) create opportunities to provide authentic learning experiences.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the school maintained student engagement through weekly/daily Google Meets with students, home visits, yard signs showing love to students, and personal messages/rewards mailed to students. Additionally, the school held a virtual talent show and virtual field day in an effort to not only show off student talents, but to engage all students in annual school events. The staff also completed a parade through the community, where students and families stood in their yards, on their porches, and parked in vehicles so the students and staff could connect and show support for each other from a safe distance. In May 2020, fifth grade students were awarded special recognition with a drive-through awards event and the school held a backwards parade for students/families. Students and families stayed in their vehicles and paraded around the HES campus as socially distanced staff thanked students and families for a great school year.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

HES has deployed many different strategies to keep families and the community engaged and partnered with the school. A weekly eNewsletter, "The Pirate Press," is sent to all families each week by the school principal. This eNewsletter is designed to keep families up-to-date on school-wide information. Each teacher sends a weekly email to parents describing the instructional outlook for the week, plus reminders of tests and other classroom-based events. Families are given the opportunity to communicate with their child's teacher through different platforms including phone calls, email, Class Dojo, Google Classroom, and Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Staff use these platforms, plus Google Meets and home visits as needed.

Themed family nights are another way we engage families and the community. Multiple family nights throughout the school year provide adults the opportunity to learn alongside their children. Family nights typically include a family meal, multiple academic activities for the entire family. An example of a recent family night was a world culture theme: students participated in different world culture activities while their adults learned about budgeting and preparing healthy, nutritional meals. These family nights are supported, attended, and often led by community partnerships.

The Paducah Symphony Orchestra and McCracken County Public Library are great community partners. Both visit the school annually to inspire the creativity inside us all and hopefully inspire our children to pursue the arts. The McCracken County Public Library set up library cards for families at our school. This assisted us with breaking down a barrier for families who may not have the access to get a card in another

way. We also partner with the Rotary Club, the Downtown Paducah Kiwanis Club, and Bike World. West Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKCTC) and the McCracken County Extension Office, are long standing partners with our school community. Both provide meaningful and real-world experiences for students such as the Reality Fair which introduces 5th graders to the world of colleges, careers, and finances. Community academic partnerships include United Way of Paducah-McCracken County, The Challenger Learning Center, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, and McCracken County Sheriff's Office. These organizations provided our students with learning opportunities in the areas of reading mentoring, space exploration curriculum, conservation curriculum, and education on substance abuse and violence prevention. Finally, our school engages students in giving back to the community through events like an annual food drive and the Veterans Day program/collection. Those events are used to collect food for local food banks in the community and provide supplies to the local veterans clinic.

The Covid-19 pandemic required us to limit the number of community partners within the building. Thankfully, the partnerships continued and our students' needs were met, even if they were offered in an altered format or completed virtually.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our entire staff genuinely value and support one another. We call ourselves, the "HES Family" and just like family we maintain real relationships and recognize and celebrate each other's successes. Family members are rewarded for their hard work with little things like room service snacks/drinks and notes of encouragement, as well as big things like holiday meals, staff celebrations and multiple appreciation events. We celebrate life events such as weddings and births and we share in the mourning of the loss of an extended family member. Especially during the pandemic, these rewards have been a way to show support and appreciation to our HES Family during the tough transition to virtual and hybrid models of learning. For example, the staff was treated to a socially distanced luncheon to mark the one year anniversary of the pandemic. During the lunch, they played pandemic bingo and received notes of appreciation and a rubber duck to commemorate all they did during the pandemic transitions. The rubber duck was given as a way to say thanks for staying cool, calm, and collected on the surface, while paddling like crazy underneath - just like a duck.

Our HES Family is committed to growing and developing professionally. During the spring of 2020, over a third of staff completed training and passed the Level 1 Google for Educators certification in an effort to better assist their fellow teachers and the students/families they serve. All members of the HES Family completed training in Trauma-Informed Care practices. Instructional members were trained in Google Classroom, writing practices, and a new behavior management system, Class Dojo. Several attended the Murray State University Summit, where they attended professional development sessions covering resources for social studies, technology integration, and many other topics that have led to many new, creative, and innovative ideas for use during pandemic times and beyond. We also typically meet three times a year to share knowledge through break-out sessions, professional development led by teachers, for teachers.

The last year has been tough on the entire HES Family, but the flexibility and loving culture within the walls of our school has kept things positive and moving in the right direction, even during a pandemic.

4. School Leadership:

HES is led by one principal, one assistant principal, the School Based Decision Making (SBDM) council, and the staff leadership team. The SBDM Council is made up of three teacher representatives, one minority teacher representative, two parent representatives, and one minority parent representative. This council is chaired by the school principal and meets at least bi-monthly. The SBDM Council sets school policy and makes decisions to enhance student achievement. The staff leadership team is made up of one representative from each grade level team and special area teachers, special education staff, FRYSC, and classified staff. The staff leadership team makes decisions for school-wide events, changes in procedures, and even serves as the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team.

The philosophy of the leadership team at HES can be summarized with a quote from the Lead Like a Pirate NBRIS 2021

book by Beth Houf and Shelley Burgess. "As leaders our ability to do what's best for kids often lies within our ability to inspire, influence, and support the adults in our system." Therefore, the school administration (principal and assistant principal) believe their role is to inspire, influence, and support the staff so they can in return inspire, influence, and support the students. If staff have high expectations, build relationships with students, and celebrate their success, student achievement will take care of itself. Although it is a belief system of the leadership team, it is a shared belief of the entire school community.

During the Covid-19 crisis, school leadership had to modify or change established structures, practices, and schedules. It was amazing to see everyone work together to ensure that our students continue learning, and most importantly, stay safe. It's been an "all hands on deck" year for the HES Pirates, with school leadership and staff doing whatever work the day required. They became tech support experts, they delivered meals, and they miraculously transitioned all schoolwork to the virtual world when the moment demanded it. The HES Family rose to the challenge, always keeping student safety and learning as the top priorities.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

We believe that everyone deserves dignity and respect, regardless of abilities or background. Our staff is passionate about building individual relationships with students so they can know their strengths and abilities. We embed each student's experiences and interests into learning. Our staff learns each student's names and how to pronounce them. They take time each day to build relationships with all students. Our school encourages students to talk about differences between all students in the class, without making specific judgments. Additionally, we teach how to maintain positive interaction among all races and cultural backgrounds.

If any current event takes place that impact our students or families, we seek counsel from our district leaders that include our Community Outreach and Diversity Coordinator. As a school, we have planned a diversity awareness training for all staff members to take place in Fall 2021. The purpose of this training is to educate all staff members on their awareness of diversity and how to be responsive to the needs of our students and their families.

Our commitment to ensuring equity, cultural awareness, and respect can be seen in the above and beyond relationships that are built with students and their families, but we continue to find new ways to support the diverse needs and backgrounds of all students and families of HES.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought more challenges to the world of education than ever before. With less than 24 hours notice, staff prepared two weeks worth of virtual learning assignments and activities for students in March 2020. The main goal during the pandemic was to show students and families that school staff cared about them, and were there to help them learn at home. More than ever, we found that the relationships that we have established throughout the years, became instrumental to our success in educating and supporting our students.

Our school family delivered meals, assignments, activities, and even rewards to students at their homes. Instructional staff met with students virtually to check on their well-being and help them with their learning while classified staff had "masked" face to face food deliveries. Understanding the variety of schedules, families were given opportunities to ask for guidance and support, extra time to complete assignments, and access to teachers during the evenings and weekends. Teachers were hungry for interactions with "their kids" that included the emotional well-being of the child and their family.

The Heath community persevered through the spring of 2020, and staff spent their summer preparing for the challenges as they began a new school year during a pandemic. Teachers embarked on virtual learning, redesigned classrooms as well as the cafeteria to ensure socially distancing. Communicating the new school look and the new ways of learning helped ease our families fears and apprehensions. Staff focused on keeping students safe when they were finally able to return to in-person learning and shared the safety precautions through multiple social media and communication platforms.

It was an exciting day in September when students were able to cross the school's threshold for the first time in 2020-21. For families that didn't feel comfortable, a virtual option was available. However, 77% of our families chose to attend in-person. Moving into 2021, we continue to give grace to our families as they navigate virtual learning. We are there with families as businesses close and jobs are lost. We are there for families to meet basic needs. We are there for families through all the stressors of this pandemic. We are one school, one family. We are the Heath community.