

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

Official School Name Klondike High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2911 County Road H
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lamesa State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 79331-4945

County Dawson County

Telephone (806) 462-7332 Fax (806) 462-7333

Web site/URL http://klondike.esc17.net/ E-mail danielle.therwhanger@klondikeisd.net

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. Steve McLaren E-mail steve.mclaren@klondikeisd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Klondike Independent School District Tel. (806) 462-7332

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. Kenny Ferguson
(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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 1 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	9	10	19
K	11	14	25
1	10	12	22
2	14	12	26
3	8	10	18
4	6	9	15
5	15	8	23
6	8	11	19
7	8	11	19
8	6	11	17
9	8	11	19
10	6	7	13
11	10	5	15
12 or higher	9	3	12
Total Students	128	134	262

*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):
- 0.7 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.4 % Asian
 - 0.8 % Black or African American
 - 33.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 62.9 % White
 - 1.9 % 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: ≤1%

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

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

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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	271
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

Spanish, German

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
13 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 21 %

Total number students who qualify: 55

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %

14 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>0</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</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: 3

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.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 12:1

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	98%	97%	97%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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	14
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	78%
Enrolled in a community college	15%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	7%
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. 2015

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

In order to lead children to their personal best, we have to first win their hearts.

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.

Klondike ISD has been open as usual for the 2020-2021 school year.

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

Klondike ISD's reputation for academic excellence places the needs of students first. The district's philosophy embraces the words of Flip Flippen, "If you have a child's heart, you have his head." Thus, a rigorous curriculum is incomplete without also teaching leadership, service, and accountability.

Surrounded by cotton fields twelve miles south of Lamesa, Texas, Klondike is a rural 1A public school that houses pre-K through 12th grades in a single-campus. Admissions below 160 threatened closure in the early 2000s, but the community resisted. Bonds passing in 2008 and 2012 increased enrollment through major renovations, including a new library, computer labs, additional classrooms, new agricultural education facilities, and a new gymnasium. A November 2020 bond funded further campus and athletic facility upgrades, with construction currently underway.

By August 2020, approximately 720 people reside in the district, though almost half KISD's 264 students are transfers from neighboring districts. Three bus routes traverse 600 square miles, making KISD one of Texas' largest rural districts by land area. A staff of 46 and average class size of 20 allow a student to teacher ratio of 11:1, facilitating individual student needs. The graduation rate is 100%; the dropout rate is 0%; and the attendance rate for the campus is typically at 97% or greater. Parents support this result through an active booster club, teacher appreciation, campus involvement committees, and concession stand work. Volleyball, track, cross country, golf, and basketball are offered, while youth baseball, basketball, and football are entirely funded and coached by parents. Tradition is strong, with pep rallies still held in the refurbished 1931 gymnasium.

The Texas Education Agency awarded Klondike ISD with all "A's" and an overall grade of 99% in 2019, which is the highest accountability rating of any non-charter school in the state. This A-F grading system for school districts presented Klondike with accolades in all seven distinctions, including Academic Achievement in Science; Top 25% In Comparative Academic Growth; Academic Achievement in Math; Post-Secondary Readiness; Academic Achievement In English Language Arts/Reading; Top 25% In Comparative Closing The Gaps; and Academic Achievement In Social Studies. Klondike ISD earned all "A's" in 2018 and 2017 as well, and was one of seven Texas public school districts named to the Educational Results Partnership Honor Roll for the 2017-2018 school year. The program, sponsored by the institute for Productivity in Education (IPE), is part of a national effort to identify higher-performing schools and districts improving student outcomes.

Demographics include Caucasian and Hispanic populations, with many mixed-ethnic families and fewer than three percent African Americans. A large Mennonite population in the area adds religious diversity, and brings both Spanish and German language learners. Some are children of migrant farm workers, and all are reached by an adaptable curriculum and ELL supports.

STEM courses like forensics and anatomy and physiology engage analytical thinking. Living Skills and Personal Financial Literacy classes target real-life, including insurance, banking, investing, budgeting, job seeking, and family dynamics. Movie History relates the entertainment industry to past and current events. Pre-K through 12th grade music and art classes reach tactile and emotional senses. Robotics offers seventh graders competitive programming skills. Agricultural Sciences for upper grades teach applied skills through projects with shop tools, live animals and plants. Membership in Future Farmers of America (FFA) allows students from grades 3-12 to learn entrepreneurship and responsibility through statewide livestock exhibitions. Klondike FFA leadership and career development teams have produced four national championships, 15 national finalists, and almost thirty state championships from 2003 to 2021. Academic University Interscholastic League competitions have produced three state qualifying high school UIL math and science teams, and a state championship in science in 2019.

As a 2015 recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School award, the school displays a larger than life National Blue Ribbon seal outside. Inside, a banner-size photo captures every student and staff, all wearing National Blue Ribbon t-shirts. This honor inspires Klondike's continued tradition of excellence, and proves that distance from a large urban center cannot thwart the district's ability to offer a rigorous curriculum

which promotes higher learning within a conservative atmosphere, while encouraging leadership, respect, and accountability.

New protocols were introduced to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. More parents began transporting their students, reducing the number riding buses. New tables enabled distancing in the cafeteria. Staggered dismissal times by grade level reduced hallway traffic, and parents now wait outside instead of inside as before. Water bottle filling stations replaced water fountains. Desks are arranged for maximum spacing and sanitized between classes, and student temperatures are checked twice daily. Individual supply boxes replaced shared supplies.

Klondike ISD was recognized by the Children at Risk organization as a top ranked school in their 2020 pandemic edition based on the consistency and resiliency of schools and districts before COVID-19. Indicators measured achievement, performance, growth, racial equity, and college readiness. Klondike was ranked 3rd among Texas elementary schools, 2nd among middle schools, and 3rd among high schools.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Klondike’s single campus facility enables teachers to reach across traditional campus divisions to devise a school-wide core curriculum approach. At Klondike, teachers and the principal evaluate and vertically align curriculum to meet 100% of the TEKS.

Klondike’s current operating schedule is 100% face-to-face instruction. Remote learning was only given as an option to students with documented COVID exposure or positive cases. Because our staff anticipated students going remote at any point during the school year, careful planning was implemented. Lessons were taught face-to-face for the students in the classroom and simultaneously recorded, so that the video and related assignments could be uploaded to our virtual platform, Google Classroom. This made the transition for students when forced to quarantine seamless. Assessments were given to quarantined students with the assistance of Google Meet and parental support. Students were also able to join classes via Zoom, so they could take advantage of synchronous instruction. Elementary and junior high computer lab times offer programs utilized at home during times of remote learning.

The ELA curricular approach was chosen to help students achieve success with historically weak areas in reading and writing as identified by data from state assessments and benchmarks. Elementary students acquire foundational skills by watching the teacher model; then, students practice in small groups according to reading level. In junior high and high school, the ELA curriculum incorporates a cross-curricular approach ensuring multiple lessons on each reading and writing objective. Junior high and high school features uniqueness by eliciting creativity through online media to connect understanding to text.

The mathematics curriculum is vertically aligned from elementary through junior high and was chosen because it incorporates technology and challenges students. At every grade level, teachers present engaging lessons to students using interactive white boards and remote answering devices. Another advantage of the mathematics curriculum is the ability to have online grading and instant data analysis, enabling teachers to individualize instruction. Students in high school have the ability to solve randomly generated homework problems and access video help as a form of a flipped classroom.

Elementary chose an all-inclusive curriculum to help self-contained teachers of all disciplines better teach science TEKS through laboratory experiments along with reading. Junior high and high school curriculum engages multiple learning styles using various tools such as graphic organizers and manipulatives, in addition to a consumable textbook with an online component. High school science varies per discipline, but every subject area focuses on each reporting category as a unit and then interweaves the separate TEKS into successive units, accomplishing a spiral review of the TEKS. In both junior high and high school, assessment incorporates formal tests and projects. In addition, videos of real world and current science research are used to incite student interest.

Social studies/history curriculum were chosen because all influential historical events and individuals within the TEKS are covered. In elementary the curriculum addresses the TEKS using a cross-curricular approach with math, reading and writing, and provides colorful, engaging newspapers online. These students also learn through presentations and role play. In junior high and high school, the curriculum presents the TEKS with real life application in mind and builds bridges from one key idea or event to another. In junior high and high school, students acquire foundational skills through independent research and a learning environment that encourages student inquiry.

In all core curricula areas across grade levels, teachers practice similar strategies to improve the skills of students performing below grade level. All teachers offer tutoring before school for small group or one-on-one instruction as well as peer tutoring during the class period and remediation on computers. Other teachers occasionally pull out students during the day to give extra instruction. Teachers at Klondike stress that making the curriculum exciting and relevant to the student is vital. Thus, most teachers choose or design lessons that use real life applications.

Klondike strives to add value to every student, including those performing above grade level. Enrichment activities are provided such as computer programming and robotic competitions for advanced students in grades three through twelve. In elementary and junior high, teachers use self-paced computerized programs that challenge learners while providing virtual rewards. Additionally, high school math and science teachers work cooperatively to engage scholars in real settings outside the classroom.

Klondike teachers utilize formative assessments in pre-K through grade 12 to monitor student learning and adjust their instruction based on data collected. They also use that information to provide timely feedback to students. Summative assessments are taken at the conclusion of each semester, and benchmark assessments are administered in the spring. Teachers use that data to individually analyze student learning and provide interventions and enrichment, as well as report those scores to the principal and school board. Because Texas releases past STAAR tests, Klondike gives the most recently released test as the benchmark assessment. This gives teachers valid and reliable data on student performance and gives students a chance to practice the test format before the actual administration.

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

In junior high, students take an Investigating Careers course which helps them decide an endorsement for their freshman year and a program of study they would like to pursue. All students at Klondike are put on the Foundation Plus Endorsement graduation plan which requires students to complete 26 credit hours. Klondike High School offers endorsements in Business and Industry with a pathway in Agriculture, Public Service with a pathway in health science, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) with a pathway in Science and Math, and a Multidisciplinary Endorsement. Distinguished Level of Achievement is a status all students are informed of and heavily counseled to pursue; this is like “gold star” on your transcript in which students must have four credits in science, as well as math (must include Algebra II), and meet curriculum requirements for at least one endorsement. High school students have opportunities to become compliant for the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (designed to help colleges or universities determine if a student is ready for college level course work in reading, writing, and math) on campus in order to take dual credit courses; however, due to COVID, that requirement has been waived for the 2021-2022 school year. Juniors and Seniors are able to take dual credit courses in English, history, math, computer science, and government, as well as some courses that will transfer in their college degree plan as an elective. High school students have the opportunity to graduate with 27 college hours. Career and Technical Education courses are offered to students in robotics, agricultural science classes, forensics, anatomy and physiology, technology applications courses, and health science courses through Texas Virtual School Network. Students have the opportunity to work in the technology department in the summer and several leadership opportunities are available to students through our agriculture program.

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

Klondike offers pre-kindergarten. Through core curriculum, students are exposed to many concepts preparing each child for success in the primary grades. Pre-k students participate in a full day program, learning about all core subjects, as well as physical education, music and art, and computer time. Teachers lead instruction through the gradual release model to ensure comprehension. Throughout the school year, students cover letter and sound recognition, blending sounds, number recognition, comparing and contrasting, social and emotional development, and language communication. Pre-K follows state criteria to be considered a high quality program, which aligns with TEKS to prepare them for upper grades. One assessment used is CLI Engage progress monitoring. Others include daily observations conducted through one-on-one assessments, flashcards, and homework. Pre-k students utilize several different research based computer programs during their computer time. All of these programs emphasize phonics, fluency, literacy, and essential elements to be a successful student in primary grades. Students who complete our pre-K program, versus students who enter in kindergarten, perform better on the beginning of year assessment. Letter knowledge and sound recognition skills taught in pre-K also allow the kindergarten teacher to begin at a more rigorous level.

COVID-19 presented a few challenges for our prekindergarten program. Klondike distributed iPads to our pre-K students, so they could continue to work on the academic programs used at school during their time at NBRS 2021

home. Students also had daily assignments they had to complete, along with videos, slideshows, and recorded lessons by the teacher during our school closure to ensure our pre-K students would be kindergarten ready. Daily calendar activities and routine songs about the days of the week and months of the year were also included in work completed at home. Additionally, several staff members were asked by the pre-K teacher to record read-alouds that were sent to students to enjoy.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Klondike ISD offers a wide variety of courses in addition to those required in the core curricular areas. Pre-kindergarten through 4th grade, 7th, 11th, and 12th grades take art as part of their course requirements. The students in art and music are exposed to the four strands that comprise the TEKS for each area. Spring and holiday music programs are organized and performed. Recently, all performances are recorded and live-streamed, to accommodate COVID limitations.

Physical education is a daily requirement for pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. Junior high and high school students have the choice of participating in athletics or physical education. In addition to competing in athletic events, the students participate in physical fitness activities. The elementary science TEKS address health and nutrition and are taught throughout the school year. Health is a one semester academic requirement in 8th grade, paired with Investigating Careers. Living Skills is an elective offered to grade 10th-12th grade students that reinforces health and nutrition taught in elementary and junior high, as well as applied math skills they will use as independent adults. Personal Financial Literacy is also a requirement for seniors. In this course, students complete projects and assignments designed to help students learn by examining the financial values and money management techniques practiced in their own families.

Klondike ISD offers Spanish as the foreign language requirement for high school graduation. Students take Spanish I their freshman year and Spanish II their sophomore year. Klondike offers Spanish III to students their junior or senior year and approximately 99% of the student body completes the course. This program, facilitated by an off-campus instructor who covers the foreign language TEKS, including components on speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish, as well as the history and culture associated with the language.

Journalism is a high school course offered at the beginning of their sophomore year. Students take photos at games and other school events, then upload the photos into the school's yearbook program. They use software to create and design yearbook pages and work collaboratively to design the cover and inside artwork. They also write and edit sports and feature stories for the school newspaper, as well as any text portions of the yearbook. To fund the yearbook, students make a yearly visit to community businesses to sell ad space.

Klondike uses technology in a variety of areas. Recently, because of the implications of COVID and the need for virtual learning, Klondike became a one-to-one campus. This has allowed students to have the flexibility to use their devices here at school for in person instruction or use them at home when in a mandatory quarantine to avoid lapses in learning. Technology plays an integral role in the secondary student's day. Keyboarding is a daily required class for students in 5th and 6th grades. The students are taught basic computer skills that prepare them for more advanced computer usage, such as computer programming used in the STEM class, Robotics. The core curricular courses taken in junior and senior high school that rely on laptops, afford these students access to and usage of technology throughout the day.

Robotics is offered daily to seventh grade students as a required course. This class is computer-based and employs math and science concepts, and delves into computer programming. Forensics is another science elective offered to high school students that supports mathematics and Biology TEKS.

3. Academic Supports:

At Klondike, interventions are carried out through different avenues. One is to have mandatory morning tutorials for students with an average of 75 or below. When the student reaches a satisfactory level of achievement, the instructor has the option to exempt the student from mandatory attendance or keep them in tutorials. Alternatively, at teacher requests, students can also

be placed on the tutorial list if the student is struggling with specific concepts or skills within the unit of study. The rigor of instruction at Klondike encourages students to be high achieving, and based on individual student performance, teachers continue to raise rigor and expectations for excelling students. Teachers are English as a Second Language certified in grades pre-K through 5, and content based instruction is given based on English Language Proficiency Standards for those students. Teachers differentiate instruction based on the difficulty of the materials or processes used. For example, an English Language Learner may have to use a dictionary or picture cards to complete a task containing unknown words whereas, a high level student working with the same concept would have to do research, make a brochure, or commercial for their finished product. These are examples of tiered instructional processes practiced at Klondike.

Students identified with a learning disability are served through our special education program, which provides a variety of services dependent upon decisions made by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee. Our ultimate goal is for every student to have access to the general education curriculum. Services can include content mastery time with a special education teacher, resource time where students are taught grade-level TEKS at an individualized level, or an inclusion model. Students identified with dyslexia complete a systemic program built into their schedule. Once completed, the student continues to have accommodations to ensure their success in the general education classroom based on committee decisions and individual needs.

Klondike is equipped to serve migrant students. A migrant coordinator works with the students specifically and also engages their families to meet their needs. Family outreach is very important with this particular population. Routine checks and home visits are coordinated as needed.

At Klondike, students cannot fall through the cracks. Teachers are willing to give up conferences, stay after school, or will host lunch study groups if needed. Academics are a priority over extracurricular activities and athletics.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

A program called Character Counts meets students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Monthly, the school counselor goes into every classroom and teaches lessons on the five pillars of character and social emotional needs. This promotes students' emotional growth through responding to real-life situations, encourages writing through a means of expression, and promotes mindfulness in students by giving time for reflection, teaching strategies students can use when they anticipate or find themselves in an upsetting situation, and providing mindful moments in the classroom at the beginning or end of a lesson. College and career readiness development conversations begin in 7th grade. The counselor takes 8th grade students to the Educational Service Center for career day where students explore career paths, what it would take to get into that line of work, and potential salaries. They also go through a budgeting workshop to determine how much money it will take to get through college and then take care of a family and everyday life expenses. These discussions continue with the school counselor from their freshman year through their senior year. During the school closure, the counselor met with every student individually through Zoom to plan out their course work and career pathways. The principal had several meetings with students through Zoom to check in on students and their emotional needs, as well as stayed in contact with students and their families through email. Also, the principal organized and managed each drop off and pick up that was held to distribute student work and throughout the closure, and was easily accessible for students during this time. For students struggling during the closure, the principal and counselor made home visits to check on students and provide any support needed. The principal also made several videos leading up to the new school year to provide information for students who may be nervous about returning to school face-to-face. These videos included showing each staff member with a mask on, the new cafeteria layout to accommodate social distancing, and how to use the automated thermometer at the main entrance, among many other things.

Student empathy and teacher morale are two cornerstones of a successful school. The emphasis on character development has helped create a climate where students encourage excellence among one another and has helped the school to become bully free. As a result, students are better able to focus on their academic growth when they are confident that social issues outside the classroom will be addressed in an appropriate way.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Klondike is unlike most schools in the fact that the community is a family. On several occasions, staff and students have raised money for families in the school struggling with different diseases that have affected our students. Every year students participate in a canned food drive to help families in need within the community and donates toys to Lights of Love to provide Christmas gifts for needy children. The local FFA chapter joins in with yearly service projects as well as Student Council and National Honor Society members. Our Student Council hosts service projects such as the Pet Palooza, that has students bring any pet supplies that will be donated to our local adoptable pet association. Klondike's Fellowship of Christian Athletes meets every Friday morning in the library where students are able to come together for a student-led devotional, prayer, and donated breakfast.

Parent participation and support is another contributing factor for Klondike's success. Active booster club members sponsor school dances and decorate the cafeteria and hallways for various activities. Parents organize the annual book fair, which encourages reading among students. Proceeds from the book fair are also used to help buy children glasses who cannot afford them. The school hosts a harvest festival that brings the entire community together to raise money for each class. The school started having an academic rally after the second and fourth six weeks to celebrate student achievement with the community. The rally is designed to promote academics in reading, applaud academic success and reward them for their diligence.

Klondike partners with several businesses that help build strong relationships within the community. A local restaurant sets aside one night each semester as a Klondike night, where the school receives twenty percent

of all sales. A great relationship with a local junior college exists which allows students to earn dual credit in many higher education courses at a discounted price. Students are able to graduate high school with over 27 college credit hours. Klondike has truly become part of a network linking families, communities, local businesses, and higher education together for the benefit of all students.

Due to COVID 19, Klondike has had to make some changes to parent engagement for the safety of our faculty and students. Programs have been made available through Facebook Live, so families still feel like they are able to participate, reward programs have been conducted with social distancing guidelines. During the school closure, the counselor live streamed read-alouds to help keep students involved in literacy.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Staff appreciation is celebrated each six weeks, rather than just one week during the school year. Two classes collaborate and provide meals, decorate the lounge, and leave encouraging notes for all staff to enjoy. During the month of December, the principal organizes a schedule to watch groups of students while the teacher is allowed to leave two hours early to go Christmas shopping or attend to personal business. The principal also provides a snack and drink cart every Friday afternoon, which is personally delivered to each staff member. The Klondike ISD school board also has shown generosity to staff when blessed with additional funds. This type of gift is a way to show the Klondike faculty how much the community supports Klondike.

Professional development is not only encouraged, it is expected. During the teacher appraisal process, teachers develop individual goals, which professional learning is a requirement. This year, many of these have been done remotely, and substitutes were hired for staff to complete their virtual training on campus. Teachers who teach subjects tied to a state assessment typically attend content training for TEKS updates throughout the year through the educational service center. Even with many staff having 15 or more years of experience at Klondike, teachers are always wanting to deepen their understanding of their craft. In Texas, literacy has been a big initiative the past few years. All kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers, as well as the principal, will have completed an intensive reading academy by the end of 2023. This type of professional development will align literacy skills in all foundational grade levels, and the principal will also be able to support teachers in implementing the training in their classrooms. Student data will be tracked over the next few years using the beginning, middle, and end of the year reading assessments.

School closures had a positive impact on staff capacity at Klondike. With a very experienced staff, capacity was built by improving teachers' knowledge and expertise in technology, online classroom platforms, and video conferencing. Due to the extremely limited options for professional development for remote learning, Klondike relied on its own experts to help each other through this difficult time. The technology director trained staff on using newly purchased document cameras. Teachers who are Google certified stepped up and provided training on Google Classroom and other online learning platforms. Klondike's remote learning was successful because of our teachers' continuous dedication to making themselves better and supporting each other in doing the same.

4. School Leadership:

Klondike serves all students on one campus, with one superintendent and a principal. The superintendent generally manages the school's overall budget and supervises the office staff, maintenance department, and food service. The principal manages the teachers and students. Some of those duties include discipline, teacher appraisals, managing instructional funds, and curriculum. The superintendent and the principal work together with a common goal of having the best school in the nation.

Most of the administrators' time planning and preparing for the new year was spent on new policies and procedures that focused on keeping our staff and students safe. Making the decision to return 100% face-to-face was the right decision, but it made it imperative all stakeholders felt confident coming back to school. The principal developed a return to school plan, along with a network of other principals in our area, as well as with the input of staff. Some of the changes included adjusting dismissal procedures, rearranging classrooms, purchasing new cafeteria seating, mandatory temperature checks, face coverings, eliminating

unnecessary visitors to campus, among many other things. After school started, managing COVID cases and remote learning took priority because Dawson County had an influx of cases. Klondike was committed to maintaining as much normalcy as possible for our students, which includes the traditional face-to-face classroom model. Our priority was keeping students in school, without compromising the health and safety of any individual.

Careful budget planning also guarantees that teachers and students have everything needed to be productive and successful. The principal does not believe in micromanaging staff. Rather, the philosophy is to empower them to be the best they can be, offering support in any way possible.

Teachers at Klondike are stakeholders in their own success due to the rigorous testing required by the state. Allowing teachers to have a voice in choosing curriculum has been a large contributor to the high test results the district has seen. The principal's presence in the hallways and classrooms helps with discipline and supports teaching staff. As a result, people in the community have often commented about the excellent student behavior they observe when Klondike students represent the school in public. Students have learned that their actions reflect upon the school, and this has produced self-motivated positive behavior.

The superintendent and principal believe students will rise to meet any challenge put before them. Communication with parents is another reason Klondike thrives. To be successful in public schools today, it takes everyone in the community, from administrators, teachers, custodial staff, students, and parents.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Klondike is faced with unique cultural differences and student populations, but ensuring equity is a top priority. In our community, we have a large Mennonite population. Some of their beliefs include traditional dress; female students not allowed to go beyond 5th grade, to learn how to be a homemaker; males dropping out to work with their family, no internet or technology at home; many times not having the option for post-secondary education; and missing school for cultural holidays. Our teachers are aware of these cultural differences. This culture has been a part of the community for a very long time, and our staff and students are accustomed and sensitive to the differences. The Mennonite students also have a very high work ethic and are often avid readers; our teachers are also aware of this and ensure to provide enrichment and plenty of print-rich resources for them to take home. Other students belong to other religious affiliations that prevent them from taking part in things such as traditional holidays like Christmas, birthdays, or competition. Special consideration is taken for these students to respect their religious beliefs in the classroom, as well as in all extracurricular activities, while not making them feel left out or segregated from their peers. Teachers are especially sensitive when choosing activities for their lesson plans. Also, cultural awareness is addressed in our guidance curriculum. Klondike also has students with families that are undocumented immigrants. These students could be considered at a disadvantage because of some of the challenges their families face, such as not being able to open a bank account. However, Klondike staff ensures that these students have the same opportunities and experiences. Klondike also provides German and Spanish translators to help families and students feel comfortable with their communication with the staff and in the classroom. Our students know there is a zero tolerance policy for disrespectful behavior to anyone for any reason. This expectation has been passed down from generation to generation here, and it has been a norm of the Klondike culture among staff, students, and in the community. When one Mennonite family was deported and experienced severe hardships, our school made sure the family had all the necessities from food, to bed linens, to toiletries. If any student and his or her family are struggling, Klondike staff and community will do anything possible to lessen the burden. Cultural differences among students and staff are appreciated and mutually respected and makes Klondike so unique and successful.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that Klondike implemented since school closures that has been most instrumental is the decision to return to school in August 2020 without offering the option for remote learning. After the school closures in March 2020, the administration felt strongly students needed to come back to school for face-to-face instruction. Remote learning was academically purposeful, but school is about much more than academics; meeting students' socio-emotional needs, providing a loving environment, and having human contact is imperative. Health and safety measures were implemented to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. New procedures and policies were outlined in Klondike ISD's Return to School Plan, which was posted on our website, our school Facebook account, and through our district communication system. Parents were encouraged to transport their own children each day to prevent crowding on buses. If students were riding the bus, they had their temperature taken. After arriving at school, students used a no-touch thermometer system before entering the doors. In order to maintain a sense of normalcy, students were still served and fed in the cafeteria. Students were also seated by class at new tables, so contact tracing was more manageable. Teachers were provided with a disinfectant to clean desks during transitions, and students brought a personal water bottle from home. All students were sent home with an extra charger for their school-issued device in the event of a mandatory quarantine. Before lunch, all students' temperatures were checked, and they were required to wash their hands. Teachers provided instruction on proper hand washing in the classroom, with frequent hand washing breaks throughout the day. Dismissal times were staggered to prevent overcrowding of parents and students outside the building. Face coverings were mandatory per Governor Abbott's mandate, and after this mandate became optional for schools, anyone that wanted to wear one was encouraged to do so. Looking back, after being in school for 30 weeks, going back to school in August was the best decision Klondike could have made. The school operates in a family-like atmosphere and being apart for many months was extremely difficult. Our students deserved the familiarity, the continuity, the safety of school. As the pandemic has evolved and restrictions have been lifted, some of Klondike's policies have evolved. With the recent availability of the vaccine, the principal organized a vaccine drive with the local hospital held at school, so staff could take advantage of the convenience of taking their vaccine. The only things that have not changed are Klondike's passion and dedication to our students' learning.