

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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 Ms. Kayla Hamilton
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 913 7th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Cawker City State KS Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 67430-9620

County Mitchell

Telephone (785) 781-4911 Fax (785) 781-4861

Web site/URL <https://les.usd272.org/en-US> E-mail kayla.hamilton@usd272.org

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. Jesse Janssen E-mail jesse.janssen@usd272.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name USD 272 Tel. (785) 781-4328

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. Brandi Duskie
(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 signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2022 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 Students
PreK	44
K	23
1	24
2	16
3	19
4	11
5	22
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	159

*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 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93 % White
 - 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 7%

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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	149
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 57 %

Total number students who qualify: 90

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 18 %
Total number of students served 28

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 with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>8</u> Developmental Delay	<u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %
Total number of students served: 0

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 5

11. 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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	8
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

12. 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 20:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	94%	98%	97%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. 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.

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

The mission of Waconda USD #272 is to provide responsible, competent graduates who are well-adjusted, productive citizens, respecting themselves and others. They will be lifelong learners in a rapidly changing society. Waconda Schools will provide a progressive and caring staff that uses a well-balanced curriculum in a safe and positive environment. Graduates from Waconda USD #272 will be well-educated and socially-productive citizens.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.usd272.org/en-US/waconda-usd-272-student-handbook-f5d6c227>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The teachers, administration, and staff at Lakeside Elementary School (LES) cannot wait to share with you what makes our rural school one of the best. As a school we focus on the whole child and meeting their needs. The students of our three-year old preschool through fifth grade live within a 411 square miles area which serves the communities of Cawker City, Downs and Glen Elder. The collective average population of these rural communities is 1,600 citizens. LES is located in north-central Kansas within the Waconda Unified School District #272. Our communities' economy is based on agriculture and related industries.

Twenty years ago our district reorganized. It did not matter the building nor even the school name, mascot, or colors to be chosen. What mattered was the love and passion of educating our students. Through this reorganization the elementary schools in Downs and Glen Elder closed and became a preschool through fifth grade building in Cawker City. The junior high moved to Downs where they house sixth-twelfth grades. These changes made the focus on the education our students receive even stronger.

Our staff understands the significance of educating the whole child. Our focus is not only on the academic rigor but also on social/emotional skills. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is at the forefront of our decisions in regards to supporting students and determining the changes we need to make to positively impact students. To educate the whole child our staff realizes the value of setting aside the first thirty minutes of every school day for students to greet each other, share something about themselves, engage in a social skills group activity, and read a morning message which sets the tone for the day. This is being accomplished through a staff book study and discussion on morning meetings. Our objective is to effectively implement morning meetings so our students know they are valued.

If you choose to visit on a Wednesday, we suggest you join us from 8:05-8:35 for Whole School Wednesday. During this time, we have 21 school families ranging from giraffes to hamsters. Each student is placed in a school family which consists of a staff member and an average of six students ranging from 3-year-old preschoolers through fifth graders. The staff members who head these families consist of all staff, including classified as well as certified. Students remain in their same school family throughout their elementary years to build acceptance and trust. The focus of Whole School Wednesday is to foster healthy relationships between students and staff while learning about social/emotional skills.

Certified staff at LES identified a key piece to educating the whole child including using common language when working with students in the area of social/emotional learning. While exploring how to enhance our approach to teaching social skills, this team also recognized a need to expand upon the regulation strategies we teach students. We embed these components into morning meetings, Whole School Wednesday, and weekly social/mental health lessons. Implementing a common language schoolwide helps students identify the zone in which they feel they are, and, more importantly what tools they can apply to help them return to a state of regulation. These skills are essential in our mission to prepare our students to become productive members of society.

If you were to visit us, you would also see a strong home to school connection which is strengthened through the Three by Thursday initiative. This is where certified staff contact at least three students' guardians by Thursday to tell them something positive about their student. This initiative focuses on creating positive relations with parents and students which can be seen through a parent-teacher conference attendance rate of higher than 95%.

Our focus on educating the whole child resulted in staff noticing a significant missing link between recommending students to outside mental health counseling services and guardians accessing these essential services. We observed that the barriers were often; completing paperwork, missing work to go to appointments, and lack of transportation. Therefore when the opportunity to partner with High Plains Mental Health through the Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT) became available, we seized it. Through this program a school liaison helps families with the paperwork and makes appointments. As a result we have seen an increase in communication among the team in regards to concerns and the implementation of evidence-based strategies. Therefore we now have therapists seeing students in person at our school and

through video conferencing. This program results in a reduction of the amount of time students miss school. In addition we have seen an increase in the number of students accessing these key services, owing to the fact that parents are not having to take off work to transport their child to therapy. Guardians may even come to our school to join the video conference therapy sessions when requested by the therapist. This program has made a significant, positive impact on our students and their families in accessing essential mental health services.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Professional educators at LES use the Common Core Standards to drive curriculum in all subject areas by daily use of content vocabulary and utilization of evidence-based teaching strategies.

When selecting a text curriculum, staff go through an extensive process in reviewing material options. Within this process we assess how the material matches the state standards and the needs of our students. We examine evidence-based practices and employ those with a high level of effectiveness. The majority of our staff have been teaching a minimum of 30 years and have taught varying grade levels. This experience aids educators in understanding the scaffolding of the standards. Through experience and our data, we know what works best and how to supplement our curriculum so students meet expectations.

Instruction consists of different modalities depending on the level of understanding of the students and their needs. Whole group reading is implemented to introduce students to the lesson and standards. Small group instruction is utilized within reading groups. Students are placed into flexible groups in order to target standards and skills not mastered. Cooperative learning is implemented within these small groups to build upon ideas and to give students the opportunity to implement newly-learned skills.

Phonological awareness and phonics are taught from preschool through second grade via explicit instruction using supplemental programs in addition to our textbook curriculum. Third through fifth grade educators build upon these skills using the reading series curriculum and supplemental activities.

Throughout the year all of our students are engaged in lessons where they express their ideas through writing. Students then use technology apps to create a video of themselves presenting their written ideas. The students publish their work to others, including their guardians, through various platforms such as SeeSaw. Educators also use peer review and collaboration within the writing process.

We understand the impact individualized instruction has when targeting the standards students have not yet mastered. Therefore we implement online-computer based programs in addition to our direct instruction to give students additional practice in unmastered skills.

To identify standards and skills that have not been mastered, we utilize both formative and summative assessments. We make use of two different benchmark assessments three times a year to monitor reading progress. These assessments help to identify students who are in need of intervention services along with the standards to be retaught. Formative assessments are also implemented through progress monitoring to identify the skills students have mastered within a reading unit. These assessments are essential components in helping us adjust instruction and intervene when necessary.

Our aim is to support our students to develop a love for reading. The emphasis on reading begins in preschool with students learning to listen to stories read aloud and then to retell the stories as they look through books within learning centers. Reading to students at a higher reading level is emphasized throughout all of the grade levels. During lunch time, we even seize the opportunity to read aloud to all of the students to get them interested in different genres of literature.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The mathematics curriculum we implement is chosen through a staff-driven process to review curriculum options. Within this process we assess how the material matches the state standards and the needs of our students. We examine evidence-based practices and employ those with a high level of effectiveness. In addition to teacher-led instruction, the teachers find daily opportunities to supplement and differentiate the curriculum to meet the different learning styles of the students.

Mathematics instruction begins in preschool utilizing hands-on activities. Quantitative discrimination, for example, is taught through play-based instruction within the kitchen center by having students identify if six muffins are more than two. Teacher led instruction is applied when introducing new skills and concepts with the utilization of manipulatives and visual supports. As students progress through the grade levels, these manipulatives continue to be implemented so students can experiment with mathematics through a tactile approach.

As students continue to work on mathematical skills, practice moves to performance-based activities where students create a finished product to demonstrate their understanding. Through this process cooperative learning is implemented in order for students to apply what they have learned by working together as a team to develop group processing in order to master mathematical skills.

Small group and individualized instruction are also utilized through “What I Need” (W.I.N.) sessions built into the schedule to provide reteach and review opportunities for students. W.I.N. sessions are an additional time to provide differentiated instruction to meet diverse learning needs. Daily review and practice are essential for students to retain mastery of mathematical skills. These daily review activities are a supplement to the text curriculum in place. This is one example of how our educators execute data-driven reflection to impact instruction.

To give students additional individualized practice, we choose to utilize online programs and activities for students. These programs assess the students and identify the specific skills upon which they need to improve. Supplementing engaging games and activities in addition to the online math programs, gives students the opportunity for additional drill and practice on the standards.

Formative and summative assessments are also used within our mathematics program. We implement a benchmark assessment three times a year to help identify student performance in regards to the state standards. These assessments help us to identify students who need additional support along with guiding classroom instruction. Adapting instruction is essential in providing time to review and revisit standards the students have not mastered. It is through the administration of benchmark and unit assessments that teachers make adjustments to our curriculum to determine what we are missing and how we can improve upon our instructional methods to meet the diverse educational needs of our students.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Lakeside implements different learning tools, such as hands-on activities, videos, field trips, and guest speakers to instruct students on the science standards. Educators also utilize a weekly cross-disciplinary curriculum program that promotes student-driven learning, supports wonder and literacy, and incorporates learning and fun.

Cooperative learning and inquiry-based instruction are a few of our favorite instructional methods to apply, especially in the area of science. LES educators build in activities to aid the students’ implementation of higher-order thinking in order to question, discover, and explore.

To determine the level of mastery of the state science standards, educators utilize unit assessments and student projects to assess student learning, kindergarten through fifth grade. The fifth graders also engage in the summative state science assessment that guides our staff in making changes to our science curriculum and instruction.

Educators actively seek out educational opportunities to excite our students about science. One example is that our students recently experienced the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) lab. This learning opportunity took the standards the students were learning about in science and expanded upon them. Our students even extracted DNA from a strawberry!

Our mission within teaching science is for students to understand that science is everywhere. Residing in a rural community means taking advantage of learning about science within agriculture through Kansas Ag NBRS 2023

Day. This is only one example of how outside resources are utilized to make learning meaningful for our students and to increase student engagement.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Who are the heroes within your community? LES students know and understand the sacrifices the veterans within our communities and families made for them. It is through activities, such as the Veterans Day activities and the Wall of Heroes the students created, in which we engage our students in learning about their history and what it means to be a citizen. This is just an example of how our educators bring our social studies curriculum to life for all of our students.

The educational staff uses various instructional methods and tools in addition to a weekly cross-disciplinary curriculum program that includes the humanities. The social studies standards are incorporated into our reading curriculum and our school culture as we emphasize the importance of being a productive citizen.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students engage in assessments at the end of each instructional unit. These assessments are often performance-based where students demonstrate their understanding of the standards through a range of projects. Our fourth graders participate in the social studies Kansas state assessment which is project-based. Within this project students research a state of their choice and create an informative brochure to entice people to visit or move to that state.

Students love to expand upon what they have learned in social studies through field trips. One meaningful trip our second and third graders go on is to an old log cabin where our state song, “Home on the Range” was composed. Our fourth and fifth grade students visit Abilene to learn about our former president Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Focusing on civic engagement our students learn how they can make a difference within their communities. One small but very important program in which our students participate is creating monthly themed door decorations for the residents at a local nursing home. Our students love seeing that something they created can help brighten the day of someone else.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

Early childhood education is essential in equipping students for success. LES offers both three- and four-year-old preschool programs to anyone who meets the age criteria. The three-year-old preschool program was a new addition five years ago and we could not be more proud of the impact this program has made.

Both preschool programs are aligned with our elementary grade levels. These programs focus on kindergarten readiness and preparing students academically and socially. The three-year-old program stresses play-based instruction. The focus is on learning socially appropriate behaviors such as being kind to others, sharing, turn taking, and following instructions. Students engage in fine motor activities to strengthen hand muscles to prepare them for writing skills.

Three-year-old preschoolers engage in hands-on-learning activities in and outside of the classroom. This year they visited a local depot market and participated in making apple cider. They also journeyed to see a beekeeper and to learn how bees make honey. These are just two of the experiences our students engaged within to bring learning to life.

Our preschool programs tie in explicit instruction in social/emotional skills. They also implement a prosocial behavior program that focuses on using positive behavioral supports. Both programs utilize a curriculum that focuses on pre-academic skills that prepare students for kindergarten.

LES partners with Mitchell County Partnership for Children for both preschool programs. This partnership provides training opportunities for staff, consultation, and assistance in assessing students. To monitor student learning, staff implement the myIGDIs (Individual Growth and Development Indicators) assessment three times a year. This assessment helps to identify students who need additional instruction and/or support.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

LES students, kindergarten through fifth grade, are able to attend art class five days a week where they scaffold skills and concepts to produce a work of art. Students work with various mediums in art, including clay which they transform into pottery.

Students incorporate their beliefs and values into making personal and artistic decisions through their ideas from observations of the world. Students work to implement mastered skills to produce a piece of art for our annual art show for the community.

Our students attend music class two days a week and three times every other week. In music they learn about musical instruments, notes, terminology, and so much more. Our fifth grade participates in band five days a week. It is amazing to see and hear the growth these students make in only one year of instruction. Students then perform the skills they have learned in band and music at our annual performance.

Staff also look for outside art experiences for our students. One example of this is that we bring in a traveling theater each year. This performance inspires our students to put on their own production for our school. Each year we are fortunate enough to also attend the Kansas Storytelling Festival where our students witness the art of storytelling through performing professionals.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Kindergarten through fifth grade students attend physical education class five days a week. During this time students engage in activities that scaffold gross motor skills. Students also learn about the importance of daily exercise. The target skill that is a focus throughout all of the grades is the importance of being a team player and a good sport.

Nutritional values are administered during science classes within the classrooms. “My Plate” information is taught in hopes for students to understand the importance of proper weight management, risk factors of disease, and overall well-being. The school nurse uses direct instruction to teach our students about dental health, hygiene, handwashing, and sex education (fifth grade only). The school nurse along with classroom teachers accesses outside agencies to speak with the students in regards to these topics.

Lakeside students have the opportunity for well-balanced meal plans for both breakfast and lunch meals. Students in preschool, kindergarten, and those who attend the after-school program receive daily well-balanced snacks including milk.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Kindergarten through fifth grade students engage in technology instruction that is implemented throughout the day in addition to computer skills class, which they access through explicit instruction one day a week every other week.

second and third graders frequent the shelves in search of that book which holds a certain appeal to them. The chapter books and picture books are all Accelerated Reader (AR) books which help them reach their teacher-set goals each month. The non-fiction choices are both AR and non-AR. This gives them more choices for information and exploration. Because they generally read longer books and their classrooms are in another building, the fourth and fifth grade students do not check-out as many books. They use the school library when looking for books that are different from what is on their teachers' classroom shelves or if they need another biography, for example, other than the choices in their classroom. After spring break, the first grade students who are ready for chapter books might be sent by their teacher to choose one from the LES library. That is a thrilling adventure for them! They are quite proud and excited to have that opportunity. All staff members are welcome to use the library for their classroom needs or for their own reading pleasure, as well.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

In an ever-changing, increasingly complex world, it is more important than ever that our students are prepared to bring knowledge and skills to solve problems, make sense of information, and know how to gather and evaluate evidence to make decisions. We want our students to be critical thinkers and to be capable of solving real-world problems. Therefore, kindergarten through fifth grade attend STEM class once every two weeks for fifty minutes in addition to STEM activities being incorporated into classroom activities.

The STEM teacher collaborates with the classroom teachers to expand upon the concepts being taught in the classroom. Activities are created that promote students to create, investigate, measure, calculate, and redesign thus overall increasing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

LES has also developed a robotics program that is available to all fifth grade students. Robotics is an asset to our school because it teaches logical thought processes with coding and building/design skills. The robotics program builds off of coding skills learned within the lower grades during STEM and classroom activities in addition to computer lessons. This program also facilitates teamwork and helps students improve their communication and collaboration skills. Through this program our students apply what they have learned by attending a robotics competition each semester.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

The Waconda School District is beyond committed in supporting our students. One opportunity the district funds is our after-school program for students in third through fifth grade. This program runs four afternoons a week, and gives students opportunities to receive additional assistance with homework and reteaching of skills from two certified teachers. After-school runs from 3:35-5:00 p.m. and each student who attends receives a drink and snack. Transportation is also provided back to the student's home community.

LES also offers a free summer program "Power Up" for students performing below grade level. At the end of the academic year, classroom teachers refer students for the summer program and identify the state standards within which the student needs instruction. Three certified teachers then use the information and assessment data to design instruction to target the skills each student needs. As a result, "Power Up" provides students with a jumpstart to the next academic year.

The Title 1 program at LES helps to meet the needs of students performing below grade level. Through this program the educational team creates a Student-Centered Plan to address the area(s) of concern within reading, mathematics, and/or social/emotional. Baseline data is used to drive interventions and supports. Through this plan inclusion and pullout services are provided. Additional assessments are also used to target specific skill deficit areas. Research-based interventions are then used to close the achievement gap. Progress monitoring is utilized to determine if the interventions in place are helping students in meeting their rate of improvement goals.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Just as we work to meet the needs of students performing below grade level, we also strive to push our students who are performing above grade level. Within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports, staff also meet to develop a Student-Centered Plan for students exceeding grade level expectations.

Differentiated instruction along with higher-level questioning is implemented to meet the learning needs of these students. One example of how LES educators differentiate instruction for students performing above grade level is to provide reading material that matches the student's independent reading level. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in peer tutoring. Teaching other students leads to a higher level of mastery for the student who is teaching. Individualized digital learning programs are also in place to allow students to advance their learning. Students identified within the special education program as gifted also have these opportunities which are outlined on the student's Individualized Education Program.

Within the gifted program students meet weekly with the gifted facilitator who implements research-based practices to meet student needs. Through this program students also engage in outside-learning educational opportunities to expand upon their learning.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Students with exceptionalities are an important part of our school family. Identified students receive special education services through our local special education cooperative. The provided services are outlined within the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and are designed to assist in closing the achievement gap.

Identified students within our school have a range in exceptionalities. Our staff help to ensure that our students receive appropriate accommodations and modifications in and outside of the classroom. Progress monitoring is implemented to gauge if the interventions in place are effective for the student. If the student is not making progress, then the team convenes to analyze what changes need to be made to instruction so the student can succeed.

Students with disabilities receive additional research-based strategies. One example is an alternate reading strategy that utilizes a multi-sensory approach. Students learn to visualize the letter/syllable, air-write the letter while mouthing the sound, and say the letters. Tactile approaches are also implemented as students use different mediums to trace and create the letters.

Understanding the importance of sensory and mental health, a sensory room was designed to assist students. This is one example of how the administration understands the importance of putting the right supports and programs in place to accommodate students. The use of the sensory room has acted as a replacement behavior. The students, for example, are encouraged to access it instead of running out of the building. This room is also used with counseling services when play therapy is needed. The sensory room has become a cornerstone for our students with sensory needs which gives them an opportunity to regulate and return to their school day.

The educational staff is a team which collaborates to meet the needs of all students. Communication among staff and guardians creates a team aimed at meeting the needs of the student with exceptionalities.

3d. English Language Learners:

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Strong healthy relationships foster trust. When students feel safe and secure, they are willing to try new and difficult tasks. Within these relationships students are encouraged to find their “grit” and not give up. Establishing strong relationships begins with setting time out of our busy days to connect with students in a way that makes them know they are an essential part of our school family. To foster these relationships we have implemented morning meetings and Whole School Wednesdays.

Within Whole School Wednesday we celebrate students’ academic and social accomplishments. Students are individually recognized for achieving academic targets such as: passing a level in our reading program, making the “10 Books Club,” counting to 100, etc. Socially, students are recognized for following the “Knight Way” by being a good citizen of our school and communities.

Positive behavioral supports are in place within every classroom as well. These supports are centered on praising students for meeting classroom expectations. Focusing on giving students specific verbal praise helps to ensure that our praise to correction ratio remains on track for promoting positive behavior. These research-based practices are essential components of our educators in creating an effective learning environment.

In addition to classroom praise and recognition, students are also recognized for their hard work and ability to meet school expectations through positive office referrals. Within this program students are called to the office to receive a certificate. Their accomplishments are then shared via social media.

Our newest program is our Knights’ Book Nook which began as an idea from a teacher. She became concerned as she saw reading fluency decline with her students and noticed that her students were not reading outside of school. We know that our students have busy schedules yet they often choose video games and watching television instead of reading. The staff at LES however wants to encourage students to develop healthy reading habits as well as to inform guardians of the importance of reading outside of school. Therefore the LES bookstore was created to encourage students to read at least 15-minutes outside of school per day. Each day they accomplish this task, they get a point. Once they have earned 15 points, they earn the privilege to come to the bookstore to select a book to take home as their own. This program has been made possible through community donations. The key element of this program is informing guardians of reading tips and ideas so they will be successful in helping their family establish a healthy reading routine.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families and community members is essential in creating a team whose focus is on preparing our youth to be the next generation of productive citizens. To engage families we promote a friendly environment that makes family and community members feel welcome in our schools.

Communicating with guardians and community members in regards to school activities, initiatives, and what students are learning has been our first step. Staff have used technology applications and other platforms to communicate directly and frequently with parents to showcase what their child is learning in school. Local newspapers, radio stations, and social media are also utilized to highlight the accomplishments of our students along with informing the public about what makes LES exceptional.

LES has several family and community engagement nights. One example of this was a literacy night that centered on the author Laura Ingalls Wilder and the days of the pioneers. Community members came in to give presentations and host activities to engage the whole family. We have also promoted literacy through the annual Read Across America Day where community members volunteer to read to students throughout the day.

To educate and rally our communities in regards to childhood trauma, staff have hosted a community

training and forum on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and what we can do to support families and students.

LES has the backing of a supportive Parent Teacher Community Organization (PTCO) who works with the school to fund learning opportunities for students. This organization is also a way in which parents and community members can voice ways in which they would like to make a difference within the school. In addition to PTCO, the school district also has a site council composed of community members, business owners, and parents. It is through this organization that we are able to collaborate with community organizations, parents, and business owners as to what we can improve upon to prepare our students to become productive members of our communities.

Grant funding is another way our staff engages the community in efforts to provide a high quality education for our students. One such grant funding opportunity that was sought after and organized by staff on their own time was the creation of our Robo Knights. Staff saw that our students needed access to this 21st century robotics program and therefore found a way to make it possible.

One example of how our communities and school work together is that the local city librarian expressed her desire to increase foot traffic into the library. Our art teacher worked with her to create an opportunity for students to display their art work within the library. Students then hosted an event at the library where the public was invited to attend to learn about their projects. This has been an exceptional collaborative program that has benefited both our students and community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

As professional educators we are committed to a lifelong journey of learning. It is our commitment to be lifelong learners as we set the example that we are never finished learning. We understand that we will never know everything in regards to improving how we teach students. Education is continuously evolving as are our students. Therefore it is our obligation to engage in evidence-based strategies in order to effectively teach our students.

To ensure that we are continuously learning, our staff engages in professional development that specifically meets their individual goals along with the needs of our students. Data is reviewed in order to identify the needs of our students so informed decisions can be made regarding the implementation of effective strategies. LES also utilizes surveys completed by students, parents, and community members to address areas in which to improve. All of these sources drive the professional development of our educators and staff.

Through the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) our educators have come together to review data to make informed decisions to set building goals and identify evidence-based strategies to help us achieve those goals. These goals have also driven our professional development opportunities.

The key to effective professional development is the ability to reflect upon our weaknesses and come together to find learning opportunities that will strengthen these weaknesses. As a result our staff has engaged in numerous technology trainings as a result of the COVID pandemic in order to teach in a format none of us dreamed we would. The pandemic also impacted the families of our students financially and as a result staff engaged in a poverty simulation to help better understand how we can improve our support for our students and their families. Through this opportunity staff saw that it is not about placing blame on parents but instead about empathizing with their struggles and understanding what they can do to support them.

Differentiation is an element that we use in the classrooms and also within professional development. Our leaders understand that educators have different goals and weaknesses so time has been set aside for differentiated professional development through webinars that focus on the individual goals of the educators.

It is through the combination of group-focused professional development and differentiated webinars that

we have supported our staff in their journey of being lifelong learners to inspire them to be the best professional educators they can be.

4. School Leadership:

Leaders are to lead with integrity. Our leaders communicate and collaborate with others to gain insight when faced with difficult situations. No single person can do everything on their own. It is a great leader who realizes that they can draw on the strengths of others to strengthen the team as a whole.

The leadership structure for Lakeside Elementary is a single building principal who is supported by the district superintendent and board of education. Stakeholders voice their input and thoughts to leadership through the Parent Teacher Community Organization along with the USD 272 Site Council.

Democratic leadership is exemplified through our building principal who strives to involve others in a manner that allows them to feel valued and an essential part of our school family/team. Our leaders incorporate the servant leadership style. Simply put, this means that our leaders strive to support educators, students, and guardians in a manner that results in high student achievement and well-rounded students.

Fostering a high level of student achievement is possible by supporting teachers, staff, and the families of our students. When families are thriving, our students flourish. Our administration aids families in order to support our students through visits with families seeking assistance. One example of this support has been helping families, who were financially limited, connect to Internet services during the pandemic so those students could receive the same quality education as their peers. This support has also been in the format of offering assistance to families in accessing essential services for the family. When guardians feel as if they have nowhere else to turn, they feel comfortable coming in to meet with the building administrator for encouragement and emotional support. This level of trust and support is made possible through strong relationships.

Our leaders support the achievement of students by supporting educators in receiving targeted professional development in order to better meet the needs of their students. After the pandemic, our leaders saw that extra support was needed for students to close the achievement gap and, as a result, the district has hired additional support staff. The leadership continues to see the benefits of offering an afterschool program to third through fifth grade students. Supporting this program helps to ensure that students receive additional instruction and academic support from certified teachers. A “Power Up” summer educational program is also offered to help transition students to the upcoming academic year. This has been an impactful program that helps to reduce the learning loss over the summer.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Celebrating diversity within our school, students learn that it would be a boring world if everyone were exactly the same. At Lakeside Elementary we teach our students that diversity is essential in our communities for them to grow and flourish.

Our educators highlight our students’ customs, characteristics, experiences, and perspectives when planning the instruction of our curriculum. Highlighting the culture of students makes lessons more personal and meaningful to the students. Utilizing this interest in the lesson is an essential component for students to gain insight.

Administration and staff work to ensure that the educational materials not only reflect the diversity within our own communities but also that of the world. We continuously explore ways in which to bring different cultures and customs to our students. We aim for our students to be productive citizens who are culturally aware, which requires our attention to broaden their horizons. One way in which this has been implemented is through inviting diverse play productions to perform for the students. These performances expose our students to other cultures, customs, and languages.

Educating our students on what makes each of us different along with our similarities is essential. Disliking

or avoiding others because of differences is often due in part to a lack of understanding and ability to “walk in their shoes.” Another social component we target is teaching our students to agree to disagree. Through this explicit instruction we work with students on understanding that everyone has different ideas and opinions and that it is okay to disagree. We want students to understand that they can still be friends with those with whom they disagree and they can respect each other's differences.

Lakeside educators also use many different kinds of communication styles to enhance responsive teaching. The teachers implement: face-to-face communication, written reports, group discussions, listening, and presentations. Within these communication styles, prior knowledge and cultural experiences are incorporated with new knowledge gained.

Our communities work together to help the school meet the diverse socioeconomic needs of the students. Within our school every child receives free school supplies made possible through community support. Local community groups also work with the school to make sure students have adequate clothing. When students require glasses or hearing aids and the family is financially unable to buy them, the staff seeks aid from community organizations to ensure that every child has what they need to succeed.

Our professional educators expect all students to achieve academic success validating their cultural identities.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The one practice that has made the biggest impact within our school is educating the whole child. We choose to not only address the academics but also focus on the social/emotional health of our students along with their families.

We understand that students do well when they feel safe and cared for. When we notice that a student's academics are dropping and/or their disruptive behavior increases, our team jumps into action. One example of educating the whole child is that when we see a student exhibiting attention-seeking behaviors, staff meet with the student before and/or after the school day to give them that special one-on-one time they are showing us they need. We wholeheartedly believe that negative behaviors are a form of communication in which the students are telling us what they need. As a result we have focused not only on the academic well-being for our students but also the social/emotional health.

Educating the whole child means that we set aside time every single day to listen to our students and find ways for them to feel a part of our school family. We focus on ensuring that students have multiple peers and adults in which they feel connected. The programs we implement are centered on caring for the social emotional wellbeing of our students. These programs include Whole School Wednesday, morning meetings, explicit social emotional instruction, 3 by Thursday, the Mental Health Intervention Team, positive office referrals, positive behavioral supports within the classroom, and the list goes on.

Accessing mental health services is an essential piece in educating the whole child. When we observed that the students were not receiving the mental health services they needed, we did not blame others. Instead our mindset was, "How can we change the view of mental health and assist our families in accessing these services? What do we need to do to help families who have only one working car or who can not miss work to get their child these services?"

Educating the whole child also means caring about their parents and establishing strong healthy relationships with them. Our families know that we want the best for their children and that we are here to help them succeed along with their families.

At Lakeside Elementary we understand that we are here to educate the whole child. This does not mean merely academically. Our students need so much more and we have risen to the challenge of meeting these needs above and beyond their academic needs. We are invested in the whole child.