

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Jill Hill

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

Official School Name Cassidy Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1125 Tates Creek Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lexington State KY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 40502-2297

County Fayette County

Telephone (859) 381-3018

Fax (859) 381-3019

Web site/URL https://cassidy.fcps.net

E-mail jill.hill@fayette.kyschools.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Demetrus Liggins E-mail demetrus.liggins@fayette.kyschools.us

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Fayette County Tel. (859) 381-4000

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Tyler Murphy

(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):
- 37 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 12 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 6 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 55 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	0
K	100
1	138
2	103
3	118
4	107
5	92
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	658

*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
 - 4 % Asian
 - 10 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 72 % 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: 10%

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	41
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	25
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	66
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	640
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

Akan, Arabic, Chinese, French, Hindi, Japanese, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Kurdish, Lingala, Malayalam, Nepali, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Ukrainian, Wolof, Yoruba

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 9 %
62 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28 %

Total number students who qualify: 184

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 9 %
Total number of students served 59

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>18</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>5</u> Developmental Delay	<u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>23</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 4 %
Total number of students served: 24

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 4

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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	46
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	32
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 14:1

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	95%	97%	95%	96%	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.

All students will leave Cassidy Elementary School as proficient learners on a path to graduate from high school prepared for college and careers, ready to excel in a global society.

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

https://www.fcps.net/cms/lib/KY01807169/Centricity/Shared/handbooks/nondiscrimination_handbook.pdf

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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

Cassidy Elementary School (CES) is located in one of the oldest neighborhoods in Lexington, Kentucky, and prides itself on a strong tradition of excellence and focus on the importance of education and good character for nearly a century. Cassidy Elementary opened in September 1935. The building was funded by the Works Progress Administration, and built on land that once belonged to Kentucky statesman, Henry Clay. The original red brick building contained six classrooms, a large kindergarten room, a library, an office, and restrooms. Cassidy was considered modern and progressive for the use of phonics in the teaching of reading rather than other methods. The school was named for M.A. Cassidy, who served as Superintendent of the Lexington City Schools and the Fayette County Schools from 1885 to 1928 and was among the most prominent educators in the Commonwealth. Mr. Cassidy published a book titled *Golden Deeds* in 1921. The premise of the book is that education without strong character is in vain. A copy of the book currently resides in the school library.

One reason CES is such a high-achieving school is due to strong partnerships with families and the community. CES was originally built on farmland though growth over time has placed us in the heart of Lexington. Generations of local families have attended our school and we are rich in tradition. CES families are active in daily learning and provide excellent support at home for both students and teachers. Our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a perfect example of our collaboration between families and staff. The PTA supports our school Variety Show, Spring Musical, Color Run, Alumni Night, and Reflections Contest each year. The PTA also supports our teachers with monthly tokens of appreciation to acknowledge their hard work.

Additionally, our families support our school by participating in fundraisers. We host one large fundraiser each year through an outside business. Because of our family support and their belief in our school, we have been able to purchase a leveled bookroom, an inclusive playground, and new cafeteria tables to enhance our instruction and overall student experience.

Another aspect that makes CES dynamic is the diversity within our building. With 28% of our population being ethnic minorities, our students bring a variety of perspectives and experiences to our classrooms. We have 25 languages spoken in our homes and students frequently have the opportunity to share their experiences and cultures. Our library is intentional about providing a variety of books for students of all nationalities and teachers incorporate cultural awareness into their lessons. Our hallways celebrate diversity with handprints of each student painted on canvas to honor our differences.

Cassidy Elementary believes in giving back to the community. Our school motto is “Work hard. Be Kind.” We live that each day and strive to instill that message in our students. Two times a year we collect non-perishable food items to donate to a local food bank. This past year we collected over 1,000 pounds of food during our first collection period. Each winter a group of teachers partners with the University of Kentucky in support of Kentucky Children’s Hospital Hematology/Oncology Clinic to raise funds that provide care and support to families undergoing treatment for childhood cancer. Additionally, students participate each year in giving back by selecting and supporting a local non-profit organization. This year, students collected donations for our local animal shelter. Students create advertisements, set up donation stations, and deliver the items to the shelter.

Creating a positive school climate for our students, staff, and families is vital to our success. Walking through the doors, you can immediately feel a sense of community and support. As you walk down the halls, you may see a retired teacher volunteering time to listen to a student read, or a parent helping teachers by creating student materials. The administration and staff have mutual respect and trust with families and students. All stakeholders understand that our focus is centered on what is best for our students as we work to develop the whole child. Our goal is for students and staff to feel comfortable each day as they come to school and know working hard and putting forth their best effort pays off.

The academic program at Cassidy is designed to educate and empower students to reach their potential. Teachers and students consistently use data from a variety of sources to analyze progress. One data source

used across our district is MAP (Measured Academic Progress) to determine student growth and instructional levels. Teachers use this information to plan strategic skill groups to ensure they are meeting all students at their levels. To enhance our core curriculum, teacher teams work collaboratively to create rigorous and engaging lessons that challenge students to meet and exceed standards. These lessons are vetted through discussions during our PLC (Professional Learning Communities) to ensure all students are being held to the same high expectations of grade-level standards.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

To ensure students at Cassidy Elementary reach their highest potential, teachers at Cassidy implement a rigorous curriculum based on the Kentucky Academic Standards. This curriculum is intentionally designed to develop students in all areas: emotional, social, physical, and academic. Teachers work collaboratively with their grade-level teams to create long-range plans that encourage cross-content connections.

All students receive a minimum of 90 minutes of daily reading instruction. Cassidy utilizes a variety of curricula to meet the needs of students. This combined curriculum includes, but is not limited to: McGraw Hill's Reading Wonders, Jan Richardson's Next Step Forward in Guided Reading, Fountas and Pinnell Select Collection book sets, Imagine Learning's Language and Literacy, Common Sense Education's iReady, and Curriculum Associates' iReady Learning: Magnetic Reading. Daily instruction using these curricula is standards-based and focuses on the five areas of reading; phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teachers use scheduled in-service and release days to plan instructional units. Teachers work to deconstruct standards and create kid-friendly success criteria, which allow students to master the expected standards at each grade level. Formative assessments such as exit slips, running records, and written responses are given weekly. Summative assessments are given at the end of each reading unit. Data are collected and analyzed during Professional Learning Communities meetings to track student progress and make instructional decisions.

Daily instructional strategies for reading vary by grade and day. However, all Cassidy classrooms use mentor texts and other read-aloud materials to teach standards. Educators also incorporate the use of anchor charts, visuals, graphic organizers, and strategies within lessons so students can work towards being able to comprehend independently and at a deeper level. Reading instruction is differentiated by teachers to meet the specific needs of each student. Educators at Cassidy are trained to create flexible guided reading groups that challenge students at all levels. This allows students to receive instruction at their level and encourages them to continue to grow as readers. A love of reading is fostered by allowing students to choose independent reading books that interest them. When students are differentiated into the primary levels of instruction, small group work includes learning and applying reading strategies, sight words, phonics patterns, and writing in response to reading. As students advance to the intermediate levels of instruction, small group work focuses on the application of skills and strategies through novel studies. Students focus on comprehension, vocabulary use and acquisition, and writing about their reading. All teachers utilize the schoolwide book room to assist when planning lessons for students.

Writing instruction is embedded in all academic areas. Each homeroom class also has a writing block that is a minimum of 30 minutes each day. The teaching of writing takes place in all grade levels using developmentally appropriate instruction focusing on narrative, expository, and opinion writing. Teachers provide students with comprehensive writing instruction, beginning with the writing process, which involves brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. To build independence and self-sufficiency, teachers model the writing process, using examples that demonstrate how to develop and structure a written piece. Educators encourage students to practice writing on their own and provide meaningful feedback as students develop their skills. Students are taught to use and interpret rubrics to improve their writing.

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

All students receive a minimum of 90 minutes of daily math instruction. This block of time is divided between whole-group instruction and small-group instruction. Cassidy utilizes a curriculum that best meets the needs of our students. Primary grades use Pearson's Investigations program and intermediate grades use Pearson's Envision program. Teachers use scheduled in-service and release days to plan instructional units. Teachers work to deconstruct standards and create kid-friendly success criteria, which allows students to

self-assess their mastery of the expected standards at each grade level. Furthermore, our students are then able to use a rubric to have conversations on where they are currently performing and what next steps they need to take to meet mastery of the standard. Cassidy's teachers follow and implement the common district-level assessments. In addition to the district-created common assessments, each grade level team works collaboratively to develop all formative assessments and summative assessments. Formative assessments such as exit slips, quick checks, and written responses are analyzed weekly during PLC (Professional Learning Communities) meetings to track student progress and make instructional decisions before the summative assessments. Each grade level intentionally builds in days after each summative assessment to complete an error analysis. Teachers then create flexible groups to reteach needed concepts and extend learning for students who displayed mastery of standards. Parents are kept in consistent communication about all student assessment scores, and teachers are consistently sharing feedback with parents on what they can do at home to help their child continue to show academic progress.

Daily instructional strategies for math are differentiated and tailored to student needs. Teachers incorporate mathematical practices into the standards focus to increase problem-solving, application, and rigor. Students in the primary levels of instruction focus on building fact fluency, solidifying number sense, identifying and describing shapes, creating and analyzing graphs, and learning and applying computation strategies. As students advance to the intermediate levels of instruction, the focus becomes on the application of skills and strategies, more complex computation, using writing to explain math thinking, and completing multiple-step problems with fidelity. All grades spend time reading, analyzing, and solving word problems that vary in complexity. Teachers at Cassidy use a variety of resources to complete a spiral review of skills throughout the year. This allows students to continuously practice previously learned skills to ensure mastery of the standards.

Educators use visuals, anchor charts, and manipulatives during lessons so students can work towards being able to not only solve math problems but show and explain their thinking. Students are encouraged to have autonomy over the strategies they use to solve problems and learn how to differentiate between which strategies fit best with the problem presented. Educators utilize various computer-based programs to enhance student learning, such as Imagine Learning Math, Imagine Learning Math Facts, Khan Mappers, and IXL (I-excel). Part of every math block includes differentiated instruction. Students are flexibly grouped based on assessments and classroom performance which helps best meet the needs of all students. Students receive remediation or extension of the skills being taught. Teachers use the MAP Learning Continuum as one resource to guide instruction for the flexible groups. This allows students to receive instruction at their level and encourages them to continue to grow as a mathematician.

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

Science instruction takes place daily in each classroom to teach the Kentucky Academic Standards for Science. Classroom teachers use the Amplify Science program and various resources to provide a well-balanced, hands-on curriculum for students. This instruction is student-centered, allowing them to create understanding and drive the instruction while the teacher supports and extends the learning. With this program, students are asked to participate in academic conversations with peers, read curriculum-rich texts, explain their observations and reasoning, and explore concepts through experiments and simulations. A main focus of the science curriculum is the focus on science and engineering practices to increase inquiry and rigor within the classroom.

Field trips are used as another way to create learning opportunities for students. Students attend field trips that enhance the science curriculum, participate in hands-on learning, and engage in rich conversations with leaders in our community.

Additionally, students receive science instruction through the science lab during a Special Areas class. Our science lab offers students an opportunity to engage in real-world, authentic learning. Students participate in problem/place-based projects that are relevant to them and can lead to projects that initiate change, or to engineering design challenges. We also use technology to carry out investigations and collect data. Some of these include drones, Ozobots, Lego Spike, Makey Makey, Hexbugs, and Hue cameras. In other projects, we have worked to increase air quality awareness and assisted with recycling, water quality, and litter

education during and after school. We recently implemented Rubicon's Trick or Trash program to keep candy wrappers out of our landfills as they turn them into pet waste bags.

Recognized as a Green Ribbon School, we partnered with a bio-systems engineer at the University of Kentucky to create an outdoor classroom. It includes a handicap-accessible raised garden bed, butterfly habitat, rain garden, herb and literature gardens, Kentucky native species area, a walkway comprised of two types of permeable pavement, and a section of animal tracks, fossils, infiltration station, and informational signage.

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

Social Studies instruction takes place daily to teach the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies to help students make informed decisions as a member of a diverse democratic society. Social Studies teaching involves an interdisciplinary approach that integrates various subjects such as history, geography, economics, and civics. To enhance learning, teachers use primary and secondary sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the content. Primary sources such as letters, photographs, and documents teach about historical events and periods. Secondary sources such as textbooks, articles, and journals are used to supplement primary sources and provide context. Including both sources allows students the opportunity to analyze a variety of resources to construct meaning.

To incorporate cross-curriculum learning, teachers use activities that involve other subject areas such as language arts, math, and science. For instance, students create graphs and charts to illustrate economic trends or use math to calculate distances between locations.

Field trips are used to enhance social studies learning by providing hands-on experiences that connect students to real-world examples. For instance, students visit historical sites, museums, and government buildings to better understand the content they are learning.

Writing is another valuable tool for learning and assessing understanding of social studies standards. Teachers assign writing assignments that require students to explain their understanding of historical events, analyze primary sources, or synthesize information from various sources. Additionally, students participate in research projects that require them to conduct independent research and present their findings to the class.

Savvas Learning Company's Savvas Realize is an online learning management system that enhances social studies learning by providing access to a variety of resources such as digital textbooks, primary sources, and videos. Teachers use Savvas to create assignments, quizzes, and tests that assess student learning and provide immediate feedback. Formative assessments such as quizzes, exit tickets, and group discussions provide ongoing feedback to both teachers and students. Summative assessments such as tests and projects measure student understanding at the end of a unit.

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

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Art and music are taught as separate 55-minute classes in a six-day rotation. In these classes, higher-level thinking skills are used and students engage the visual, auditory, and motor cortices of the brain, which transfers to their success in other content areas. Students learn to problem solve and work together by

playing instruments and creating art. Throughout the scaffolded music and dance curriculums, students explore music and dance in four different cultures and how they relate to those cultures and historical periods in their other subjects. Students have the opportunity to explore and learn to play instruments including drums, xylophones, ukuleles, keyboards, recorders, Boomwhackers, handbells, and many others. In art, students learn to be the “smARTist” they can be in all aspects of creativity. We value the process over the products students create; however, students also create some amazing products. Exploring and understanding the elements of art (line, shape, color, form, texture, space) and principles of design and how they build upon each other are essential to the foundation of elementary art. Students discover works by famous artists, learn how to use different art materials, and earn free choice time to help the inner artist blossom in a structured environment.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Students receive 55 minutes of physical education (PE) in a six-day rotation. In our PE classes, we use the Kentucky Academic Standards for Physical Education. Students do daily practices of non-locomotor movements (push, pull, bend, stretch, swing, twist, turn), and locomotor movements (walk, skip, hop, jump, leap, slide, gallop, run) to refine motor skills. These practices greatly affect students’ ability to perform any physical activity. It also gets the blood flowing to the students’ brains to help them focus and achieve for the rest of their school day in other classes. We teach healthy eating habits as a lifestyle choice during PE classes; emphasis is put on living a healthy lifestyle through nutrition to give our bodies the proper nutrients needed to function at their highest levels. Nutrition is also emphasized to help the body fight off diseases that can be caused by eating unhealthy foods. Our school has adopted a wellness policy to help assist in the positive promotion of healthy nutrition and fitness. Along with nutrition, health is taught in a way that shows students the importance of daily moderate to vigorous exercise in their daily lives. Students understand that this enhances their body’s fitness levels. Being in good physical condition allows for a better quality of life and it increases the longevity of life.

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

All students in, kindergarten through 5th grade, receive Spanish instruction for 55 minutes in a 6-day rotation. Lessons in this class follow the Fayette County World Language Elementary curriculum and offer language acquisition and cultural exploration opportunities. Students learn to celebrate different cultures and see the value in learning about and experiencing them. World Language content is tied to core content standards, which support classroom instruction while allowing students to enhance their essential skills like problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, and empathy. During Spanish instruction, a variety of learning styles are addressed through strategic lesson planning to include auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners. Our school’s population speaks over twenty-seven languages other than English at home. Because of this, in Spanish class, students are provided moments for sharing the languages they speak at home as well as any traditions and celebrations they may have that are different from those we have in America. These are excellent opportunities for our English Language Learners to lead and begin to feel like a part of our community. Cassidy also offers multiple Spanish clubs throughout the school year where they focus on the culture, food, music, and drama of Spanish-speaking countries. This allows students to dive deeper into the culture of Spanish-speaking countries than they get to during their regular 55-minute classes.

2d. Technology/library/media

Cassidy Elementary students are one-to-one with Chromebooks available both in and out of school. Kindergarten-1st graders have new touchscreen Chromebooks to use as tablets to help learn beginning technology skills. Every classroom has an Interactive Flat Panel that teachers and students use for instruction and student engagement. Our staff uses the Google Workspace Apps and other interactive activities, plus many specific web-based curriculums. In the Media Center(MC), students use Chromebooks for research by utilizing subscription databases that require students to evaluate the information for credibility and validity. Our MC also provides a digital citizenship curriculum for all students K-5 to help develop the essential skills to use technology safely. We have 11,000 books and 2,200 eBooks for our students. Recently, we focused on providing books written in a variety of languages to meet the needs of our population. We have books in 15 languages: Korean, Japanese Tamil, Tagalog, Chinese, Nepali, Hindi,

Bengali, Panjabi, Swahili, Arabic, Russian, Portuguese, French, and Spanish. We subscribe to the Mackin Via shared collection with access to hundreds of eBooks written in different languages. Student interests are always considered when titles are added to our collection. In 2022, around 250 multicultural books were added to represent a variety of students' cultures to build community through understanding.

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

Colts News Live is a daily morning show run completely by students and offers 96 3rd-5th graders opportunities to incorporate technology with public speaking skills. The students are responsible for writing the script, directing, filming, and anchoring the broadcast. The morning news show provides a platform for students to celebrate cultural diversity by spotlighting celebrations and events that occur in the school.

We have a Special Needs Awareness Program (SNAP), which is designed to increase student awareness of physical and hidden disabilities encountered by students/families. We provide students with activities to understand special needs and inspire them with a positive/empowered attitude towards inclusion and acceptance. We highlight that we are all different, yet connected by similar abilities, disabilities, and qualities so we can help each other achieve our full potential. Students experience presentations in specials about famous people in their fields who succeeded with disabilities as well. Students participate in simulation stations: hands-on experiences of the challenges many of their peers with disabilities face.

We are a Trout in the Classroom school, so we raise rainbow trout to learn about life cycles, habitats, needs of animals, structures, functions, and water quality. Being a Kentucky Environmental Plan Pilot School gave us the money for our outdoor classroom which is a backdrop for many lessons. We are recognized as a Green Ribbon School due to our cost-saving, health-promoting, and performance-enhancing sustainability practices.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

At Cassidy, relationships drive success in the classroom and beyond. Knowledge of students enables staff to put individual needs at the center of the school's efforts and students at the heart of the school's mission. A portion of the Fayette County Public Schools mission statement shares that our goal is "to ensure that all students achieve at high levels." These words echo the efforts in planning instruction and providing academic support to students.

A systematic Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) utilizing a collaborative problem-solving model depicts the structure and process characterizing efforts of staff for addressing students who are working below grade level or students who need behavior support. Classroom teachers, intervention teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators work as a cohesive team to quickly identify students needing support beyond core content instruction for academics or students needing support beyond normal classroom management procedures. The school screens for Tier 2 and Tier 3 services using multiple data sources. Data collection and analysis includes Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), FASTBridge Benchmark, classroom data, and any additional diagnostic data collected by teachers. Students qualifying for Tier 2 or Tier 3 services are provided small group or one-on-one instruction daily for approximately 20-30 minutes. Data are collected on a weekly or bi-weekly basis and monitored to determine if an MTSS team meeting is needed to make adjustments. Parents and guardians are important partners in this process, and the school team works with parents to bridge any gaps between home and school. The team identifies strategies to be implemented and monitored with the expectation that multiple data points will be collected by the teacher. Intervention efforts are clearly articulated to all stakeholders so students can move seamlessly between core instruction and Tier 2/Tier 3 services. The success of the strategy or the need to revisit the individual plans to make changes based on data. Communication is critical throughout the process to optimize outcomes. The goal is to reduce or eliminate identified learning gaps so each student can move forward in the learning process and feel successful in the Tier 1 classroom.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Gifted and Talented services are available for students in all grades. Cassidy follows state and district guidelines for screening and identification. Students at all grade levels are screened through the use of a sociogram. Kindergarten through third-grade students performing above grade level can be recommended for the Primary Talent Pool. All third-grade students take cognitive and achievement tests which are used for formal gifted identification which begins in fourth grade. The Cognitive Abilities Test and Iowa Test of Basic Skills for Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies are given to all students in third grade. Additional testing is available for older students that exhibit qualities of giftedness in any of the identification areas.

One hundred eighty-six students are currently identified for Primary Talent Pool (K-3) or Gifted/Talented (4th-5th) services at Cassidy. The gifted/talented resource teacher collaborates with teachers to support differentiated instruction in the classroom as well as provide enrichment and resource services for all eleven areas of identification: General Intellectual Ability, Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Creativity, Leadership, Art, Drama, Dance, and Music. Students identified in academic areas meet regularly with the gifted/talented resource teacher for inquiry-based instruction to enrich, extends, and accelerates the content from the regular classroom.

Acceleration and enrichment are the main instructional strategies used with gifted learners. Students identified for gifted services in math in fourth and fifth grade receive content one to two levels above grade level as part of their Tier I instruction. Students in all grades receive differentiation through small-group instruction.

Programs used with gifted/talented students include Jacob's Ladder from the Center for Gifted Education from the College of William and Mary, the Depth and Complexity Framework from Bette Gould and Sandra Kaplan, and the Social Emotional curriculum from Christine Fonseca. Differentiated instruction, acceleration, and enrichment allow students to grow as learners and achieve at high levels.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Cassidy Elementary is committed to educating all students within the least restrictive environment. We offer two different types of support for our students. One classroom services our students with moderate to severe disabilities, and we have four resource classrooms for our students with learning and behavioral disabilities. The staff at Cassidy Elementary foster a collaborative working relationship to develop appropriate programs and provide support for students who demonstrate significant needs.

If there is an achievement gap in any of our special education students of 10 or more percentage points between test scores, it is Cassidy's mission to support our students and families by using data to provide effective, evidence-based instruction and services to ensure growth and successful transitions. Our school utilizes supplementary aids and services to allow students to succeed in the regular classroom while simultaneously offering a continuum of service options for students. Cassidy Elementary has adopted policies and procedures that ensure that students with disabilities are included in general education programs to the maximum extent appropriate following an Individualized Education Program. Cassidy uses state assessments, and formative and summative data to target specific subjects and standards for each student in special education. Our regular education and special education teachers collaborate daily to use research-based strategies to teach the Kentucky core content to all students. We use the most effective co-teaching models including one teacher and one assistant, stations, parallel teaching, and team teaching. Our teachers work together to differentiate assessments and provide accommodations throughout the whole school year.

Cassidy offers a variety of services to its students including speech and language, music therapy, accessible furniture, a sensory room, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Our newly built playground is accessible to all students providing inclusion for all abilities. In addition, we have a Minds in Motion hallway set up to offer structured movement breaks and exercises to help self-regulate students' minds and emotions.

3d. English Language Learners:

Cassidy Elementary serves a highly diverse English language learners (ELLs) population. Cassidy students represent 27 different countries on five continents and speak 27 other native languages, bringing an abundance of culture and experience to the school community. Upon enrollment at Cassidy, families complete a Home Language Survey. Those who indicate a spoken language in the home other than English are screened using a universal screener to determine eligibility for English language (EL) services. Student English language proficiency (ELP) data from screeners and the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) assessments are analyzed. EL and classroom teachers collaborate to select appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations and to ensure effective strategies and scaffolds are implemented in the general classroom to allow equitable access to content instruction.

ELLs receive daily language instruction from the EL teacher in the form of co-teaching or small group resource instruction. Instruction is carefully planned using the English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework and the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) to support students' differentiated Tier 1 needs. Resources such as Wonders ELD and Newcomer, Imagine Learning, National Geographic, and Language for Learning are incorporated into instruction to support language, content, and vocabulary development

ELP and growth are measured annually using the ACCESS assessment, which measures listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency performance. Data is analyzed in Professional Learning Community by the EL teacher, classroom teachers, and administration to highlight student, grade level, and school-wide strengths and areas for growth. The EL teacher provides professional development in PLC to help classroom teachers incorporate strategies within the classroom to ensure necessary growth is achieved.

The school community supports ELs and their families, especially newcomers, through the use of interpreters, student language ambassadors, and a buddy language system. Our goal is to ensure students feel a sense of community and belonging and accelerates the learning of the hidden curriculum of the school.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

To create a positive culture and climate where students are excited to learn, Cassidy offers many extracurricular activities including choirs, Battle of the Books, Girls on the Run, Governor's Cup, Future Problem Solvers, Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP), Generation-Electric Vehicle (GEN-EV), and Science Clubs. Performance opportunities include Variety Shows, Musicals, Winter Performances, band, and orchestra.

We commit to developing leaders with our Colt Ambassadors program. This leadership team includes 4th and 5th graders who show leadership, good judgment, maturity, and integrity while upholding school responsibilities. Students interested in the program apply and complete an interview process. Once they are chosen, they must maintain a strong work ethic, and a positive and respectful attitude, take the initiative, and balance academic responsibilities. They give school tours for new and prospective students/families, greet students in the morning, coordinate events, assist teachers with tasks, and escort new students to class. Their favorite assignment is to push the celebration cart filled with goodies to classrooms and deliver a positive message and thank you to our staff.

Cassidy believes students need authentic opportunities to elevate their social and emotional skills. Teachers have protected time every morning to teach our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, Caring School Community. Every week, our Colts News Live has the "Caring Colt Chat" dedicated to the SEL concept being taught in the classroom. Once the weekly concept is taught, teachers recognize students exemplifying the concept. The library features rotating SEL books. SEL competencies are recognized in our school-wide management system, Dojo. Our school counselor teaches lessons throughout the year going deeper into SEL competencies. These competencies are monitored by staff and students every quarter through questionnaires provided by the district. For students needing more support, the counseling department offers rotating small groups focusing on traumatic experiences, divorce, social skills, conflict resolution, managing emotions, etc. Each classroom has a "Peace Corner" where students may choose from various materials available for some time to themselves for their SEL well-being.

We promote positive student behavior in our classrooms and common areas including the cafeteria, playground, hallways, buses, and bathrooms through our solid implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). We use Class Dojo for monitoring individual student behavior and class behaviors. Individual students can earn positive Dojo points to cash in for prizes, lunch bunch, extra recess, etc. We have a monthly competition where classes earn positive points for following expectations throughout the day. Every month the winning class earns an event such as a glow party, an ice cream party, a hot chocolate party, or a dance party. These incentives motivate the students to make good choices to earn rewards.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We have many community partners including White, Greer, and Maggard Orthodontics; Jenkins, Morrow, and Gayheart Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery; Besten & Dieruf CPAs; the Kentucky Science Center and our local news. Other professionals present their areas of expertise for Discovery Day. The Kentucky Refugee Ministries and Journi Hope Program provide wrap-around services for our refugee students and families, give books to students in English and their language, and help with food insecurities. University of Kentucky (UK) International Club partners with us to work with our international students to create a sense of community. Kentucky's 4-H camp provides opportunities for our students to experience things outside of school.

Our musical theater department (MTD) partners with the MTD at our feeder middle and high schools creating props and scenery for performances. Our foreign language department partners with the University of Kentucky for foreign language students to come to observe and teach. We have partnered with the Lexington Salsa Center to host dance workshops.

Our Science Department (SD) enlists the help of professionals including the local 4H, city government, professors and student teachers from local universities who are involved in a scientific field, and National Honor Society students from our feeder high school to judge our science fair experiments. The SD also organizes and recruits volunteers for Garden Helper Days, Earth Day, and Tree Week from local churches, arborists, and district energy and sustainability coordinators/groundskeepers. Other partners of our SD include UK's Center for Applied Research, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Illumina, the Kentucky Division of Air Quality, the Bluegrass Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Bluegrass Greensource, Toyota Kentucky, and Quantrell Subaru.

Our bi-annual Book Fair could only take place with the partnership of our PTA and parent volunteers who set up, sell, and manage the book fair. The PTA leads our associated Family Night to bring families into the building and is also a performance opportunity for our choirs. Our Media Center (MC) has a strong partnership with all families to ensure students are developing a passion for literacy. One of our largest partners is the Lexington Public Library. All students are given Student Success Cards to be used at the public library. Information explaining eBooks, databases for research, links to newspaper articles, and other resources are highlighted by the Lexington Public Library. Our MC also partners with the Kentucky Shared Collection, allowing our students access to thousands of eBook titles, KET Education, and PBS Learning Media.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The primary goal of professional development at Cassidy Elementary is to develop a curriculum that enhances learning for all students. Professional learning is focused on increasing instructional expertise to efficiently design both curriculum and assessments aligned with Kentucky Academic standards, ultimately increasing student achievement. Student data are carefully analyzed to establish school-wide, grade level, and individual goals. Once goals are determined, professional development opportunities are determined by leadership and staff to best meet the needs of all students.

Staff members completed book studies on *The Teacher Clarity Playbook* and *The Success Criteria Playbook*. Teachers used these books to analyze and implement practices that have high effect sizes, therefore accelerating student achievement. After examining the four dimensions of teacher clarity (clarity of organizations, clarity of explanation, clarity of examples and guided practice, and clarity of assessment and learning), grade-level teams, along with administrators, move through a process of systematically analyzing standards, building curriculum, determining best teaching practices, and designing assessments. This became the foundation for teachers to effectively collaborate to improve the process of creating and implementing high-quality and high-impact success criteria for any given learning intention.

Additionally, staff studied the books *PLC Plus* and *The PLC Plus Playbook*. This study allowed grade levels to effectively collaborate to make data-driven, high-impact decisions about what content is being taught and how it's being taught. During the academic year, teachers participate in weekly professional learning communities with the focus of intentionally reflecting on instructional methods, analyzing assessment data to plan for future instruction, and addressing the individual social, emotional, and academic needs of each student. Grade-level teams are given release days throughout the school year to plan curriculum and instruction with purpose and intent, using these research-driven practices to accelerate student learning and fill educational gaps. These release days give classroom teachers the necessary time to use the knowledge gained from professional learning to create learning guides with clear learning outcomes and success criteria for instruction, along with formative and assessment assessments that strongly align with each standard.

With a schoolwide focus on creating an academically rigorous literacy curriculum, teachers have also been given additional professional learning opportunities. All teachers complete at least 24 hours of professional development, which has included training with Scholastic Leveled Readers, Jan Richardson's *Guided Reading Program*, and *Get Your Teach On*. Cassidy has been equipped with a Scholastic leveled book room allowing access to a variety of resources and opportunities to apply multiple instructional methods during differentiated instruction.

4. School Leadership:

The administrative team at Cassidy Elementary School (CES) strives for all students to become empowered through education. We engage and teach the whole child academically, socially, emotionally, and physically to reach maximum potential. The mission for our school is "All students will leave Cassidy as proficient learners on a path to graduate from high school prepared for college and careers, ready to excel in a global society." This mission becomes reality through the daily motto of "Work Hard, Be Kind." The staff is empowered to create and maintain an environment of high expectations for all students. We provide the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary for making effective decisions to be successful. We believe all children can learn and deserve an equitable education; that education should be designed to meet the unique needs of each child. Our school community provides opportunities for students to be successful, maximizing academic achievement and building social character to ensure success for the future.

The school leadership consists of one principal and one assistant principal. Both administrators work to assist teachers and students with the highest quality of education. CES administrators pride themselves on being visible in the classrooms, hallways, and cafeteria to create relationships with students, staff, and families. Our administrators love to recognize our staff through a variety of celebrations. School administrators actively participate in weekly teacher-led PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings and provide feedback on student data and lesson planning. Additionally, administrators recruit highly qualified candidates to fill open positions and strive to provide individualized support to retain and grow staff. CES teachers have autonomy in lesson planning to meet the individualized needs of their classrooms while maintaining the pace of long-range plans.

CES also has a school leadership team composed of a teacher from each grade level as well as a representative from each support department. As a group, we work on creating school-wide systems, professional development decisions, scheduling, and staffing. Team leaders are responsible for disseminating information and leading grade-level PLCs. Our team remains positive during difficult decisions and always keeps the interest of students first.

Cassidy also has a School-Based Decision-Making Council (SBDM) consisting of three teachers and three parent representatives. All members are determined based on nominations and voting. This group governs the policies, budget, staffing, and curriculum decisions for the school. This group meets monthly for updates on student progress and makes plans to continue to push our school forward.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As Cassidy serves students and families from many cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, it is imperative that our school seeks out and fulfills the diverse learning needs of our students. Teachers build class competency surrounding the cultural backgrounds of students. The schoolwide social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum teaches students to accept and value the ideas and unique aspects each has to offer. Teachers invite families into classrooms to share traditions, cultures, and stories deepening the understanding of both content and culture for all.

Teachers then leverage this competency to ensure students remain at the center of the learning. Teachers select diverse anchor texts and small group instructional texts to ensure that students can see themselves reflected in their instructional materials. This allows other students a window to see into the world some of their classmates live in daily. Third graders use trade books about holiday traditions to review content skills and expand their understanding of the ways their peers experience holidays differently. Fifth grade creates cultural books that reflect their cultural backgrounds and present these to families and their peers.

This ensures equitable access to content while challenging them to think deeply and critically as a priority. Teachers work from an assets-based approach rather than a deficit mindset, focusing on what our students can accomplish and what assets they bring to our school. Teachers increase equity and remove barriers to understanding by building and activating background knowledge and key vocabulary. Our library media specialist has carefully curated a dual-language section of the library where students can check out books in their native language to take home. Additionally, a grant allowed for the purchase of additional culturally

diverse books. These books offer students and families the opportunity to continue literacy in their home language, share literacy experiences with loved ones, and feel that their languages and cultures are valued in the school.

Teachers and administrators build partnerships with families, community members, and organizations. Families are invited into the school each year to participate in activities such as open houses, family nights, and conferences. Interpreters are scheduled to ensure all families have access to the information and benefits of the activities. In day-to-day operations, Cassidy teachers and staff utilize applications such as Class Dojo and Talking Points and leverage interpreters to ensure communication can flow freely between school and home. Community partnerships with organizations such as Kentucky Refugee Ministries and soccer mentorship programs allow us to build cultural competence and bridge gaps between cultural differences.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Identifying one instructional practice instrumental to Cassidy's success is a daunting task, especially when the school seeks to embed evidence-based practices that will leverage improvement in all areas of learning. However, as Cassidy maps out the journey to continuous school improvement, one would be remiss not to acknowledge the critical role of professional learning. It is with these ideas in mind that Cassidy identified the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process and how it interplays with the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as the practice that is key to the school's success.

The concept of PLC is a widely accepted practice within a majority of schools throughout the country. However, the philosophy and implementation of the PLC process are probably as varied as the number of schools that attest to this practice. At Cassidy, the Professional Learning Community represents a major shift in thinking and practice as educators collaborate and inform the practice of their colleagues. Unlike most schools where MTSS exists in a silo, Cassidy seeks to integrate MTSS as an integral component of the PLC professional dialogue. PLCs are an ongoing process where the Multi-Tiered System of Support for students lives and breathes. MTSS is inextricably linked to the basic tenets of the PLC's at-work process via (1) a focus on learning; (2) a collaborative culture; and (3) a results orientation (DuFour et al., 2016).

All grade levels participate in weekly PLCs where there is a collaborative and consistent cycle of data collection, reflection, and identification of next steps, including professional learning around successful instructional strategies. Each meeting begins by referencing data points for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. This allows grade-level teachers to interface with the MTSS Student Problem Solving Team and can adjust interventions based on what the data shows in real time.

Teachers use weekly formative assessments to determine mastery of the current standard being taught. Reflection is an integral part of the process as teachers share data and instructional strategies, and identify the next steps for groups of students. This process enables teachers to address any misconceptions or extend learning for students before the summative assessment.

Engaging in professional dialogue with teachers who have different strengths makes a team stronger. They become a collective resource for one another and can offer insights about practices supporting individual learners. Integrating MTSS efforts with the PLC process creates a culture of continuous improvement for all students and all teachers.