

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

Official School Name John F. Kennedy School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5 Cherry Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Somerville State MA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 02144-3203

County Middlesex County

Telephone (617) 629-5440 Fax (617) 776-8224

Web site/URL <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/> E-mail clegaski@k12.somerville.ma.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Ruben Carmona E-mail rcarmona@k12.somerville.ma.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Somerville Public Schools Tel. (617) 629-5440

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. Andre Green
(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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
0 Middle/Junior high schools
2 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 10 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	18
K	45
1	43
2	42
3	51
4	42
5	39
6	51
7	50
8	56
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	437

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6.8 % Asian
 - 4.3 % Black or African American
 - 14.5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 67.6 % White
 - 6.6 % 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: ≤1%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	0
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

Spanish, Portuguese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %

6 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 22 %
Total number of students served 97

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>0</u> Autism	<u>22</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</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: 3 %
Total number of students served: 13

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 2

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	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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%	96%	96%	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.

The Kennedy School goal is to provide all students with the academic, social, and emotional experiences to learn and practice the knowledge and skills necessary for future success.

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

<https://somerville.k12.ma.us/non-discrimination-policy-file-ac>

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 John F. Kennedy School (The Kennedy Tigers) is driven by the goal of providing all students with academic, social, and emotional experiences necessary for future success. The school places a strong emphasis on educating all students, ensuring that all students thrive in this community.

Impact, Innovation, and Relationships are the frameworks for Kennedy. Along with our Tiger Habits (Teamwork, Integrity, Growth mindset, Empathy, Respect) to help develop social emotional skills.

Community building, social justice practices, history, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) play prominent roles in a Kennedy students' learning experience. Kennedy students at all grade levels have opportunities to learn the value of making a positive difference in their community. Kennedy School was the district's first school to develop a Makerspace/Innovation Lab that all students and teachers are able to use to enhance and support what students are learning daily and to further stimulate student inquiry and engagement. A rich menu of out-of-school-time activities and programs provide students with additional enrichment and academic support. These include Art club; Current Events club; DJ club and Newspaper Club.

The Somerville Public Schools is committed to providing the least restrictive setting possible for children with special educational needs. The SEEK (Social Emotional Education at the Kennedy) program serves children in grades K-6 who exhibit emotional and behavioral challenges that prevent them from accessing the curriculum. A highly skilled staff of teachers, clinicians, and support staff serve the children in multi-graded classrooms. Opportunities for inclusion in general education classes are provided with the active support of SEEK staff.

SKIP (Specialized Kennedy Intensive Program) provides services to students with severe physical, cognitive, and medical disabilities and related challenges. This program offers an individualized program in very small class settings with staff-to-student ratios of up to one to two, along with one full-time nurse and related clinical specialties. While students spend a considerable amount of time in small classes, each program strives to provide appropriate 'inclusion' opportunities based upon individual student needs.

Our Life Skills programming currently has three classrooms that are multigraded. Students in the Life Skills Program spend a majority of their day engaging in a range of learning to develop their functional life skills with a long term goal of vocational skills. Students are developing and building skills related to communication, social skills, personal/time management, personal hygiene/self-care, self-advocacy, and functional academics. The Life Skills Program is individualized to address each student's goals and objectives in order to best develop each student's skill sets.

As the Kennedy community moved from the challenges of last year that included pandemic obstacles and administrative changes this year seemed like a do over year. The start of the year brought staff changes which included the retiring of long time staff and new staff entering. This was an exciting time to examine our practices and a call to return to the joy of the profession and of experiencing community.

Our school values of "Impact, Innovation, and Relationships" still aligned with what the community felt was important as a framework for all we do. The school committee has tasked the schools to examine academics, equity and social emotional wellness. Our focus areas cover these categories as does our professional development.

Teaching all students is the theme for our professional development. Our instructional leadership team has developed professional learning for the entire year around various important aspects of this theme. Our rationale for choosing our focus areas uses the teaching of all students as an umbrella for what we strive to do at a high level here at the Kennedy school.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The ELA curriculum instructions and assessment is composed of many components in PreK- 8. The curriculum follows a scope and sequence that ensures students have fundamental skills in the younger grades to develop higher order thinking skills by the time they graduate in eighth grade to make a successful transition to high school and have a foundation for the future.

The foundational years the reading curriculum is composed of explicit phonics instruction, phonological awareness, sight words, readers and writers workshop, and hand writing. Students are explicitly taught phonics skills through the Foundations curriculum which is paired with hand writing and spelling activities. Students are also supported with phonological activities to further support foundational reading. These skills are then transferred to both reading and writing through readers and writers workshop.

As we transition to the older grades, focus is shifted from foundational reading skills to text comprehension and analysis. In grades three to five, the readers and writers workshop is continued through a district level curriculum that consists of independent reading, discussion opportunities, small groups reading and read aloud. Once students get to the middle school level the students focus on close reading texts and using evidence to support reasoning through discussion and writing. All the curriculum consists of culturally responsive texts that reflect the diversity of Somerville.

In order to assess students in light of the new dyslexia legislation, Reading Specialists have extensive assessment requirements for the students they serve, and it also helps produce more students-targeted and successful interventions.

For students in kindergarten to grade three, DIBELS Eight Edition is administered three times a year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Kindergarten teachers use the KESI in place of DIBELS in the Fall, but use DIBELS 8 probes in the Winter and Spring. Reading teachers administer the DIBELS to students in grades one to three who are candidates for reading services, while classroom teachers administer it to the rest of their students. A reading teacher or MTSS team might decide to do further diagnostic assessments based on the results of the DIBELS to determine the proper course of instruction (e.g., PAST, Sight Word Inventory, Quick Phonics Screener, Listening Comprehension Probe, Rapid Object Naming Assessment).

The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment is used only for students to provide more in-depth information. Since the Fountas &Pinnell Benchmark assessment is so time intensive, it is not a district requirement that classroom teachers administer this to all of their students.

Additionally, common End of Unit Assessments for grades one to eight are used. Our district coaches along with some teachers have developed and refined common end of unit assessments that align to our curriculum and the MA Frameworks. It is required that these assessments be administered at the end of each unit to all students. The data from these assessments is to be used in a formative way (not evaluative or summative) to help inform what student's instructional needs are and what re-teaching needs to happen during class time or x-block.

In grades six to eight ELA, these take the form of quarterly Close Reads which have a Culminating Writing Task as the form of assessment, is done independently, and scored on a rubric

STAR Assessment is being paused in 2022-2023 as we explore a new standardized/normed assessment program ELA in grades three to eight 3-8. A new system will be implemented for 2023-2024 school year.

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

The Kindergarten math core curriculum for 2022-2023 will be a mix of the Investigations Curriculum used in the past and the daily Lesson Slides the coaches created. The sequence of Investigations units has been rearranged to allow for more number sense and place value work to happen earlier in the year. More details and the updated sequence are in this document. It is suggested that they are used as a 10-15 minute warmup at the beginning of the lesson before moving into the daily Investigations lesson.

The daily Math Lesson Slides used will continue to be used for the first 20 minutes of each lesson and have been adapted for in-person learning. From there, students will engage in two 20-minute centers of playing games, independent workbook work, or working in a small group with the teacher. This will allow teachers to address the wide range of needs of students and give them the in-person hands-on experiences that they need. The first month of school will be a slow ramp up to the full center model, as kids learn routines for game play and transitioning between centers. Teachers will receive student workbook packets for each unit and we are purchasing all the materials for the centers for each classroom (e.g., Dice, sheet protectors, number cards).

The daily Math Lesson Slides have been adapted based on feedback we received in the Spring and will be our core math curriculum for 2022-2023. The student packets have also been adapted. Teachers will receive student packets for each unit just like they did this past year. Investigations Books should have all been removed from the schools in the Spring and should no longer be used.

Illustrative Math will continue to be our curriculum. We realize that in some middle grades schedules it will be difficult to ensure the 60-minute daily block of math. We will continue with our subscription to Zearn in grades six to eight. We believe it is aligned well with how concepts are taught in Illustrative Math and can be a powerful tool to help individual students address specific gaps. Students who have mastered the day's skill, can work on the "Are you ready for more?" extension questions included in the curriculum.

Common End of Unit Assessments for grades one to eight are used for math. Our district coaches and some teachers have developed and refined common end of unit assessments that align to our curriculum and the MA Frameworks. It is required that these assessments be administered at the end of each unit to all students. The data from these assessments are used in a formative way (not evaluative or summative) to help inform what student's instructional needs are and what re-teaching needs to happen during class time or x-block. STAR Assessment is being paused in 2022-2023 as we explore a new standardized/normed assessment program for math in grades three to eight. A new system will be implemented for 2023-2024 school year.

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

In grades K-5, we are continuing with our rollout of units that have been developed by SPS teachers in conjunction with Eve Manz's team. In these grades, especially in grades K-4, it is customary to alternate social studies and science units (e.g., Science in September/October, Social Studies in November/December, etc.), which is why we are not setting any daily time parameters. However, there is a designated daily block in the elementary schedule each day dedicated to "Science/Social Studies." Any consumable materials will be distributed before the start of a given unit.

The unit sequence for science in grades K-5 includes What Is A Scientist? and Force and Motion for kindergarten; Light and Sound, and Birds/Adaptations for grade one; Plant/Seeds (aka Corn Unit) Matter (aka Cake Unit) Landforms for grade two; Force and Motion, Weather/Climate, Adaptations (aka Squirrel/Dinosaur) for grade three; Landforms, Energy, and Waves for grade four; and Matter, Decomposition, Solar System, Water Filtration for grade five.

In grades six to eight, the core curriculum for science is StemScopes. Students have a daily block of science of at least 40 minutes. As an alternative, students can get a longer science block three times a week, but the overall weekly time for science is the same.

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

In grades K-5, we are continuing with our rollout of units that have been developed by SPS teachers in conjunction with Eve Manz's team. In these grades, especially in grades K-4, it is customary to alternate social studies and science units (e.g., Science in September/October, Social Studies in November/December, etc.), which is why we are not setting any daily time parameters. However, there is a designated daily block in the elementary schedule each day dedicated to "Science/Social Studies." Any consumable materials will be distributed before the start of a given unit.

Our district coaches and some teachers have developed and refined common end of unit assessments that align to our curriculum and the MA Frameworks. These assessments are administered at the end of each unit to all students. The data from these assessments are used in a formatively help inform what student's instructional needs are and what re-teaching needs to happen during class time.

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

Our Life Skills programming currently has three classrooms that are multi-graded. Students in the Life Skills Program spend a majority of their day engaging in a range of learning to develop their functional life skills with a long term goal of vocational skills. Students are developing and building skills related to communication, social skills, personal/time management, personal hygiene/self-care, self-advocacy, and functional academics. The Life Skills Program is individualized to address each student's goals and objectives in order to best develop each student's skill sets.

The Maker space/Innovation Lab will be a resource-rich space that takes a multidisciplinary approach to help develop Kennedy School students' 21st century skills, - information and communications technology (ICT) literacy, and ultimately prepare students to respond better to a future that is yet to be defined. Through collaborative, creative, problem-solving activities that include technology, robotics, and kids' natural passion for hands-on learning, the Makerspace/Innovation Lab will connect learning to life outside the classroom.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

The Kennedy School strives to provide a diverse and comprehensive visual arts instructional program that encourages all students to integrate the arts into their core curriculum and their social and emotional well-being. The Visual Arts Department endorses the research that shows that students who participate in a Visual Arts program develop basic skills that encourage visual awareness and is fundamental to intellectual growth and creative self-expression.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Being physically fit and healthy for all grade levels has a direct effect on the social, emotional, and mental well-being of a child. The Health and Physical Education Department provides students with 21st century health and physical education that encompasses contemporary concepts and rich experiences in a collaborative environment.

Along with a strong core health and physical education curriculum, we also offer additional programming to support the physical and social-emotional wellness of our students, including adventure education programming such as hiking, rock climbing, kayaking, snowshoeing, and ropes courses funded by The Cummings Foundation. These courses focus on teamwork, persistence, and resilience.

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

The Kennedy School is devoted to the understanding of other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages. Our World Language program is built on the cultural and linguistic diversity of our students and their families. We believe that students who learn another language reach higher academic performance, display greater cognitive benefits, and develop a more positive attitude toward the target language and the speakers of that language. Our seventh and eighth graders thrive here.

2d. Technology/library/media

The Library/Media department is committed to providing both space and resources for all Somerville students to become future ready members of the community. We strive for all of our students to grow to embody a lifelong love of reading, innovative thinking, competent research skills, and collaborative work relationships. We help all students develop the skills to become informed library users, critical thinkers, effective and ethical users and producers of ideas, information, and technology. Our libraries provide exposure to books and media representing diverse viewpoints and cultures.

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

The Maker space/Innovation Lab will be a resource-rich space that takes a multidisciplinary approach to help develop Kennedy School students' 21st century skills, - information and communications technology (ICT) literacy, and ultimately prepare students to respond better to a future that is yet to be defined. Through collaborative, creative, problem-solving activities that include technology, robotics, and kids' natural passion for hands-on learning, the Makerspace/Innovation Lab will connect learning to life outside the classroom.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

The Kennedy school has continued to show strong achievement in MCAS results in general as a school. However we need to continue to focus on our students with disabilities and high needs. In looking at the data we can see that there is a higher percentage of students receiving a category of "needs improvement" or "not meeting expectations" than "meeting expectations" or "exceeding expectations." We are exploring what root causes might be by examining stamina and identifying the subject and standard areas that most need addressing.

As stated earlier, our theme this year is teaching all students. Last year we had 30 students who were referred to the MTSS team for an evaluation by the special education department. Some of them were parent referrals. This is carryover from the pandemic period and the forecasted loss of skills. Students carried the weight of the social emotional needs and the academic deficits that became evident, especially noticeable in students who had never actually been in a school setting.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Multiple strategies are used to help students performing above grade level. Each strategy is tailored to meet individual student needs.

3c. Students with disabilities:

The Special Education Department is responsible for ensuring all students who require special education services in order to maximize their learning are identified and their individualized learning needs are met in the least restrictive environment possible. Special Education Department staff work with teachers, administrators, and families to ensure Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students are implemented with integrity.

3d. English Language Learners:

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

As the Kennedy community moved from the challenges of last year that included pandemic obstacles and administrative changes this year seemed like a do over year. The start of the year brought staff changes which included the retiring of long time staff and new staff entering. This was an exciting time to examine our practices and a call to return to the joy of the profession and of experiencing community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

As we continue to move forward from the Pandemic mentality and the challenges of the last few years, the Kennedy community continues to believe in the importance of Wellness and social emotional skill building. We have seen the increase in the need for connection to a community and are striving to meet that need. We know that supporting students, families and staff is critical in bringing us to our overarching goal of teaching all students. Some areas being addressed are attendance, access to counseling support and social emotional programming as part of the schedule.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our school values of, “Impact, Innovation, and Relationships” still aligned with what the community felt was important as a framework for all we do. The school committee has tasked the schools to examine academics, equity and social emotional wellness. Our focus areas cover these categories as does our professional development.

Teaching all students is the theme for our professional development. Our instructional leadership team has developed professional learning for the entire year around various important aspects of this theme. Our rationale for choosing our focus areas uses the teaching of all students as an umbrella for what we strive to do at a high level here at the Kennedy school.

4. School Leadership:

At the Kennedy school, we have our TIGER habits. Teamwork, Integrity, Growth Mindset, Empathy, and Respect. While these are things we try to use with students, our administrative team uses this with staff as well. A multitude of professional development opportunities are always available. We have an open door policy and support is readily available for anything any staff member could need. Working together is a very strong trait here.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As the community reflects on the work we endeavor to do through our professional development (PD), teaching and reaching all students, equity is a lens that is imperative for us to see things through. The purpose of an equity lens is to be deliberately inclusive as an organization makes decisions. It introduces a set of questions into the decision that help the decision makers focus on equity in both their process and outcomes.

We are all decision makers daily that in turn affects processes and outcomes for our classrooms, the students we work with, and the community as a whole. We showed the Kennedy demographics for students at one of our PDs and staff demographics at another PD. It is important to understand that the staff demographics represent what our students see everyday. We are a majority white and female identifying staff. Most students will have a white identifying female teacher in front of them, especially in our younger grades. The administrators of this building are white, as are our counseling and support staff. This is something that has to be acknowledged as we do this work.

What this means for the work is to not forget who the students see in front of them and who we as a

community interact with and what beliefs, values, assumptions and biases we bring with us. We need to build a commitment to not let these go unchecked, unchallenged, and stretched to make us better.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Among the many strategies that have contributed to the success of our school, the most important strategy is team collaboration. From our Special Education Department to General Education, everyone works hand in hand to support each other. Regardless of grade level or department, all teachers and staff see all students as their own. In addition, communication with families and community partners also plays a huge role in helping our school be as successful as possible.