

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Heather Stukey

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

Official School Name Nashua Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 221 N.E. 114th Street

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

Kansas City MO 64155-1105  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Clay

Telephone (816) 321-5160

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Web site/URL

<https://www.nkcschools.org/page.cfm?p=1944>

E-mail [daniel.clemens@nkcschools.org](mailto:daniel.clemens@nkcschools.org)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Daniel Clemens

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail [daniel.clemens@nkcschools.org](mailto:daniel.clemens@nkcschools.org)

District Name North Kansas City 74 Tel. (816) 321-5000

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 Dr. Jan Kauk

(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, write N/A in the space.*

## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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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. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. 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 and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 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.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
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.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

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

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	23	18	41
<b>1</b>	33	38	71
<b>2</b>	34	37	71
<b>3</b>	39	27	66
<b>4</b>	28	40	68
<b>5</b>	30	32	62
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	187	192	379

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 80 % White
  - 7 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 8%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	22
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	31
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	412
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 20%  
Total number students who qualify: 76

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %  
29 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>1</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>7</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. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

The Nashua Community fosters inspiring relationships, sets the foundation for life-long learning, and guides independent thinkers to achieve excellence.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Welcome to Nashua Elementary, home of the STARS! Nashua Elementary School is one of 21 elementary schools in the North Kansas City School District (NKCS D) in Kansas City, Missouri. Our current enrollment is around 393 students, 20 percent of whom qualify for Free and Reduced lunch. Six percent of our student population are identified as gifted and 8 percent of our student population receives Special Education services. Last year, Nashua’s APR (Annual Performance Report) was 100 percent according to the Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary Education. We traditionally have the highest attendance rate in the NKCS D, with last year’s overall 90/90 percentage being 98.1 percent. Our mission reads, “The Nashua community fosters inspiring relationships, sets the foundation for lifelong learning, and guides independent thinkers to achieve excellence.” The established vision for Nashua Elementary is “Nashua Elementary: Cultivating character in an innovative global community.” We are committed to developing our STAR learners by establishing a vision and mission we can articulate and emulate every single day.

Community plays a large part in the success of Nashua. Our tight-knit community of mostly working class families supports the work of our school through many different avenues. Whether it is volunteering for a family event, attending monthly Parent Teacher Association meetings, or serving as a parent member of our Site Base Council, our community members are ever present. Our community support comes from local businesses as well. Volunteers from the local community can be seen working with both teachers and students throughout the school day. Finally, our community contributes to the success of our students through the shared values between school and home.

Nashua has many rich traditions that have contributed to a strong culture of family. We honor our first responders annually during our Patriot’s Day ceremony. Fall festivities culminate with an all school costume parade in which all staff and students participate. Community service is a huge tradition at Nashua, as well. Whether it’s collecting box food items for a local food pantry or collecting donations for a care center down the road, our Nashua Stars all contribute to help meet the needs of others. As our surrounding neighborhood has changed in the 66 years since Nashua was built, one idea has remained the same: we take care of those around us. This mindset has contributed to maintaining the feel of a small town neighborhood school right in the middle of the fourth largest school district in the state of Missouri.

Along with the many traditions at Nashua, the dedication to the community around it, and the concept of family, Nashua maintains a laser-like focus on student achievement. All students participate in 60 minutes daily of reading, writing and math instruction. In addition to the 60 minutes of reading, students also participate in 30 minutes of Guided Reading daily. Students have 45 minutes of Science and Social Studies instruction as well. Students have at least 30 minutes of support classes each day. Finally, students participate in 30 minutes of recess every single day.

Quality curriculum and strong instruction play a huge role in the success of our students. The NKCS D has taken the initiative to write all of the curriculum teachers deliver in all 21 elementary schools. The delivery of this curriculum is provided through the workshop model. This model allows for students to become empowered and own their personal learning. Choice is a staple of the workshop. Daily, students have choice in what they read, write about and in the mathematical strategies they use. In addition to choice, workshop has allowed teachers to fully differentiate learning for all their students. During the independent work portion of the workshop model, teachers meet one-on-one with students, providing focused instruction to students on their level of learning.

In addition to the workshop model, students who are reading below grade level have 30 additional minutes of more intensive instruction with a certified reading teacher. Students who have been identified as gifted travel outside of the building once a week to the Northland Innovation Center where they participate in wholistic gifted instruction from certified gifted teachers. Finally, all of our students have the opportunity to work with iPads through our district’s 1:1 technology initiative. Students have many opportunities for practice, reteaching, and enrichment through the use of these devices.

Nashua is a true family that reaches beyond the walls of the actual school. A dedicated community, a strong curriculum, and built-in supports all contribute to the success of the Nashua Stars. In addition, consistent expectations and high standards for behavior and learning set the foundation for student success. For the past two years, Nashua has been recognized on the Bronze level for the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) by the state of Missouri. As we say every morning on the announcements, “Be a STAR wherever you are!” It is clear that our students shine in a multitude of ways.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

At Nashua Elementary School, all content is taught with a tight alignment to the Missouri Learning Standards. North Kansas City Schools has worked continuously over the past six years to create its own Instructional Alignment Guides (IAG's) and Units of Study for all content areas. The Units of Study were created by teams of teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators, based upon the Missouri Learning Standards. The units define the scope and sequence for the entire year and are built around instructional ideas for established teaching points. The units provide teachers with possible strategies and instructional approaches, teacher and professional resources, student mentor texts, and links to additional resources that will be helpful in the delivery of the content.

Reading and English/Language Arts are taught each day through literacy workshops using the district-created IAG's and Units of Study. Reader's Workshop allows students the opportunity to learn and practice reading skills within many texts in a variety of genres, at a level that is appropriate for each individual. Writer's Workshop provides students with the chance to craft narrative, informational and opinion texts on the topics of their choice. Student choice is a key component in the Workshop Model for literacy. This means that whenever possible, students are able to choose what they are reading (as long as it is at the appropriate reading level) and writing about. This element of choice increases student engagement and ownership of their learning.

Math is also taught daily through the Workshop Model using district-created IAG and units. The primary resource the district uses is Everyday Math. The curriculum focuses on strategies to work within mathematical operations, and builds understanding of essential mathematical concepts through situational contexts or scenarios. In addition to the work of Math Workshop, teachers are also using Number Talks to solidify strategic mathematical thinking and number sense through mental math strategies. This is another opportunity for teachers to build in multiple opportunities for student discourse as students talk through their solutions and engage in discussions related to possible strategies.

The Science content is driven by district-created IAGs and units based upon the Missouri Learning Standards, which are grounded in the Next Generation Science Standards. The year-long scope and sequence is established in the units, which include instructional ideas for both the content standards and the Science and Engineering Practices. Teachers plan using the 5E Instructional Model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate), so the Science learning that students are doing involves highly engaging exploration of science content, as well as student and teacher explanations based on scientific observations and evidence. Many of the explorations that students participate in involve designing or developing a solution to a real-world problem, where students must collaborate with peers, communicate effectively, evaluate their design, and propose modifications or improvements based upon observations or feedback.

Social Studies is taught through a district-created IAG and units based upon the Missouri Learning Standards. The K-5 units include content that covers local, state, and national government, economics, American history, and geography. Teachers work to make real-life connections to the concepts through hands-on activities such as Google Expeditions, and the use of primary sources and documents. Connections are made to students' lives through research of chosen topics related to Missouri history and civil rights leaders. Civic learning is solidified through realistic processes such as building-wide votes for student council and mock elections. Students also participate in community service projects such as coat collections and canned food drives.

Since our district recently implemented a 1-to-1 technology initiative, every student has a device which can be used during instruction and independent work. Teachers are intentional about their choices to incorporate technology in a variety of ways, guided by the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) for technology use. This is another way that teachers can create engaging instructional activities and differentiate instruction for students.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

There are several curricular areas offered at Nashua to support the students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge.

Kindergarten through fifth grade attends an hour of art weekly. At the end of each project, the students have a gallery walk where they are given the opportunity to look at others art and give critiques, shout-outs, and helpful tips. Each student has their artwork displayed throughout the year. When they walk away from art class, the teacher wants them to feel validated by their own likes, dreams, passions and aspirations. A fifth grade art club is also offered each year. Everything that is used is recycled. The students learn how to be resourceful, environmentally friendly and creative with individualized materials.

Students participate in a 30 minute music class twice a week. They learn to sing, keep time, interact with others, speak in rhyming patterns, kinesthetic skills and different timbres. This provides the foundation for creating lifelong musicians. Kindergarteners learn through a "Royal Story" in which they share with each other, greet each other like "royalty," and learn how to kindly interact through simple songs. Students in fourth and fifth grades begin independent learning on recorders where they compose their own songs for performance tests. Skills established during this process are: self-reliance, establishing a routine, performing, and reflecting to determine personal goals.

Physical Education is scheduled twice a week for 30 minutes. Students complete the Fitnessgram testing, which assesses students' cardiovascular endurance, upper body strength, abdominal strength and flexibility. Lessons are created and designed to increase students' fitness levels. Students in Physical Education also work on skills such as hand-eye coordination by participating in archery, tennis and lacrosse. Students develop teamwork skills through our floor hockey unit and various exercises/relays in other units. Another physical education skill is the development of gross motor skills. This is taught in younger grades by skipping, hopping, and leaping. Good sportsmanship is taught by being a team player and following the rules of the game. At the end of class, students are awarded by their peers through the Super Star Student Nomination. Any student can nominate another student who exhibits good sportsmanship during class.

A 30 minute health class is provided once a week. Through projects, students develop the understanding and importance of a healthy and active human body. Topics such as hygiene, body systems, nutrition and risk assessment are essential skills needed to develop the students' knowledge about living a healthy life.

Each grade level attends a 30 minute, bi-weekly library lesson. Children learn to inquire, collaborate, curate, explore, and engage. Nashua's library houses a collection of 7,500 books and several research databases. Nashua has a partnership with Mid-Continent Public Library that allows complete access to print and online sources. Through the library curriculum, students learn literacy skills such as: using research databases, evaluating websites, and creating citations. In the library learning is done collaboratively. Students may inquire about the same topic or may work together to create a project, like a video. In addition, students learn how to curate information, determine important information and gather sources to synthesize.

Each grade level receives a 30 minute, bi-weekly counselor lesson. The curriculum includes: life and social skills, discovering personal interests, and exploring careers. Lessons focus on culture and appreciation of their own uniqueness. The counselor offers a variety of small groups that address issues students are facing and coordinates responsive services to help with financial issues.

Nashua has a fourth and fifth grade honor choir. They meet once a week for 45 minutes as an ensemble. Students are learning to read different symbols, words, and notes all at the same time and then deciphering what they mean. The students focus on creating a goal as a group so they can all be successful. They also learn songs in foreign languages from different cultures.

Fifty students attend STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) Club two mornings a week. Through collaboration and problem solving, students develop their science and engineering skills through activities such as Lego Architecture and Mindstorms, Snap Circuits, Coding, Bloxels, and OSMO. Through

these activities, students are learning about architecture, building circuits, robotics, engineering, and the use of technology.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

At Nashua, the first opportunity for differentiation is built into daily literacy and math instruction within the workshop model. This model offers a consistent structure that ensures every teacher provides students with extensive opportunities for independent practice of skills with immediate feedback to improve learning experiences. Classroom teachers are able to differentiate based upon reading level and book choice, as well as through adjusted expectations for writing. In math, differentiation is possible through alternative math problems or scenarios. Through the Workshop structure, classroom teachers are able to deliver explicit instruction by modeling and demonstrating skills within focus lessons with intentional teaching points but are also able to allow for inquiry learning and student-driven learning opportunities. Teachers ask strategic questions to encourage students to share their thinking, their evidence, and a justification for their response. An important component of the workshop model is to provide students with adequate time to actually read, write and think mathematically. This is important for student success. The more students read, write and do math, the better readers, writers and mathematicians they will be.

All students are assessed through district-built content area unit tests and periodic benchmark assessments, and also through formative assessments created by classroom teachers and grade level teams. Based on that formative data, teachers use small group instruction, tutoring opportunities and peer collaboration within the regular classroom to maximize learning for all students.

Students who are in need of more targeted support receive Tier 2 interventions that are provided in addition to core instruction. Examples of Tier 2 interventions include explicit small group instruction, guided reading, speech and language interventions, Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), and XtraMath. Tier 2 students receiving interventions are kept in their classrooms as much as possible, and students that display the most significant reading challenges receive additional small group instruction with our reading specialists. Tier 3 interventions are also administered by building specialists and interventionists, such as the Reading teacher and the Resource SPED teacher. Progress toward growth and mastery is assessed periodically, and intervention groups are often modified or adjusted based upon student needs and progress made.

We use the Academic Improvement Measurement System (AimsWeb) to progress monitor the growth of students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, which is a key component of the Response to Intervention (RTI) system. Data collected from administering AimsWeb probes help teachers determine whether students are making adequate progress toward goals and evaluate what measures need to be taken to meet each student's needs.

Each grade level meets in Professional Learning Teams (PLT's). They utilize the "PLT Cycle" to continually collect and analyze data and student evidence to check for progress and mastery. During step one of the PLT Cycle, teachers pre-assess for an upcoming unit, and then analyze the results in order to plan meaningful, targeted instruction. Then, during step two of the cycle, units are projected across long-term goals, prioritized and sequenced based upon the pre-assessment data. During the third step of the PLT Cycle, throughout the unit, teachers gather data and student evidence to monitor for class and individual progress, making adjustments or modifications along the way to meet immediate student needs. Finally, in step four of the PLT Cycle, grade level teams analyze summative assessment data. Student successes are celebrated and decisions about reteaching or remediation are made. Teachers are reflective about instructional practices, determining what worked and what didn't work. As a result, we can make instructional decisions in the future that will be more effective.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the percentages of students scoring advanced and proficient were as follows: compared to the state's score of 62.9% in English Language Arts (ELA), Nashua grades 3-5 scored 85.8% and the super subgroup scored 76.3%; compared to the state's score of 51.7% in Math, Nashua grades 3-5 scored 83.5% and the super subgroup scored 74.6%; and compared to the state's score of 45.7% in Science, Nashua grade 5 scored 58.9%, with no scores reported for super subgroup.

The successes that Nashua students achieve are the result of reflective instructional decisions made continually by Nashua staff. There are enrichment opportunities for many students, such as a Genius Hour and other student-driven research. Individualized student goal-setting combined with the use of standards based scales and learning progressions, creates an environment where students own their learning and are empowered to work toward their own definition of progress.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Nashua Elementary is built on a foundation of committed relationships. These relationships have pushed us to create the unfaltering success that shines through in everything we accomplish. Vertically, staff continually communicate with students and families. Our positive school climate allows students a variety of support systems from kindergarten through fifth grade. One hundred percent of Nashua's certified staff are YouthFriends. When a student is struggling academically or personally, we provide a supportive team approach. Students are encouraged to seek out any staff member they feel comfortable with to guide them through their day.

Nashua positively motivates students with PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support) through Starbucks (positive incentives), Silver Fork Awards, Weekly Star Students and Positive Behavior Ceremonies. As part of PBIS, students are individually awarded Starbucks based on positive behaviors seen throughout the day. Starbucks may then be exchanged for incentives from class created Starbuck menus. In addition, classrooms may earn Starbucks by working together as a team, encouraging a commitment of classroom community. Students from each class are given the opportunity to share about themselves on our weekly Star Student bulletin board.

I will be a STAR, I will Show respect, I will be Trustworthy, I will be an Active learner, I will be Responsible, and I will have a STAR day of learning! Be a STAR wherever you are! Each morning Nashua begins the day with the Nashua Pledge. We encourage students to reflect on the pledge and live it throughout their day. Nashua supports a stimulating learning environment. From reading challenges to career day, where students are allowed to explore a career of interest. Nashua Stars have the top-rated attendance in North Kansas City Schools. Ninety-eight percent of our kids are at school ninety percent of the time. It is evident that Nashua students enjoy school.

Nashua educators, and administration, embrace an open-door policy that encourages support from each staff member, allowing them to learn and grow together. This is witnessed throughout the building by teachers leading and having input on school-wide initiatives such as a Building Leadership Team, Education Camp facilitators, a Behavior Support Team and our Professional Learning Teams. Meaningful feedback is provided by administration through frequent walkthroughs, observations and positive notes. Teachers commitment to students and hard work is frequently acknowledged through Teacher-of-the-Month, Positive Padlet and Shout-Outs on administrative newsletters.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Nashua Elementary School uses many successful strategies to engage family and community members in student success and school improvement. We have a high level of parental involvement and believe that parents and community members are an important part of our continual success. We also believe that family engagement can have an extraordinary impact on student outcomes.

Student-Led Conferences are an example of how parents are involved and informed of student success. Students have the opportunity to share individual academic goals, what they are doing to meet their goals, and student work portfolios with their families. Our Kids and Parents Open Walkthrough (KAPOW) event also gives parents an opportunity to take part in the student learning. Students have a chance to show parents around their classroom, explore an educational game, and explain what they are learning.

Parents and business partners work with Nashua in creating our Career Day for students each year. This event allows parents and community members to bring their real life professional skills to the students and engaging them in meaningful learning activities. Our business partners also provide needed classroom supplies, operate the back-snack program, and help with financial needs for families.

Nashua has an extraordinary support system in place to ensure student success. There is a total of 36

YouthFriends, including both staff and community members, that spend time with students who need a mentor, a lunch buddy, or extra help with academics. Numerous parents are involved with PTA and help with such events as reading night, field trips, end-of-year carnival, and Family Fun Night. Teachers present periodically at our school PTA meetings, sharing what they are currently working on in the classroom with students. This proves to be a valuable way for parents to remain involved in students' learning.

Nashua Elementary School believes in including families and the community in the learning process. Strengthening the connection between home and school is important to each of us, every day. For example, the district's 1:1 technology initiative allows students and teachers to post on communication apps, such as Seesaw, throughout the school day. This app allows parents to view and leave comments on their child's work. We take great pride in how our families and community come together and work with us to support student learning.

### **3. Professional Development:**

At Nashua, educators work diligently to improve their professional practices on a consistent basis. Professional learning opportunities are designed to improve teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement.

Specific areas in which Nashua teachers and staff gain professional development through the district include: two-year program for new and beginning teachers and administration; grades K-12 cohorts focused on English Language Arts; grades K-12 cohorts focused on math; grades K-12 Vanguard teams specializing in technology integration; collaborative learning for all Administrators; and collaborative learning for all Teaching and Learning Coaches.

Through the North Kansas City Schools, Nashua teachers are given the opportunity to be mentored by some of the top professional development consultants in the country. We have direct access to Matt Glover (Writer's Workshop), Debbie Miller (Reader's Workshop), Sunday Cummins (Guided Reading), and Kate Roberts (Workshop Model). Having these connections allows teachers to increase effectiveness in skills being taught in our classrooms on a daily basis.

Nashua's approach in delivering professional development directly connects to district goals. Together, administration and teachers are trained on up-to-date research-based best practices. After reviewing school data, administration decides which area of improvement is needed. Weekly "early release" sessions provide staff with time for collaboration on the targeted skill.

Nashua staff helps take on the responsibility of presenting professional development to each other and around the district. Teachers facilitate at district cohort meetings throughout the school year, as well as present new initiatives and best practices to the building staff. Nashua believes in a collaborative culture where each staff member has the opportunity to grow and learn from each other.

Nashua teachers have gone above and beyond to provide what is needed for students to succeed in today's technology-driven classroom. Nashua staff are Apple Teachers and Seesaw Ambassadors, leading the way for innovation within the classroom. Nashua teachers also participate in the district provided Summer Academy, district curriculum writing teams and summer book study. Each year a select group of Nashua teachers participate in a week-long workshop through Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. All of these actions speak to the belief that learning is continuous and necessary for the success of our students. The adults at Nashua take pride in being role models for life-long learning and exhibiting these characteristics for our students.

### **4. School Leadership:**

Nashua operates with leaders who empower teachers and promote student achievement. Leadership is shared among the principal, Teaching and Learning Coach (TLC), and Building Leadership Team (BLT). The BLT meets monthly to collaborate regarding school-wide academic decisions and progress on action steps from our School Improvement Plan. Notes from BLT are shared by grade level representatives with

their teams during Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings. They gather input for the School Improvement Plan and academic decisions, including building professional development. Teacher leaders also take ownership of their own learning by providing building professional development to peers.

The building leader oversees classroom instruction, looking for best practices through frequent walkthroughs. Celebrations and opportunities for growth are shared with teachers following each of these observations. Teachers are encouraged to enhance their learning through peer observation, district demonstration classroom visits, or attending workshop sessions. All of these are supported by the building administrator and all staff are encouraged to participate. Formal observations are conducted annually using the Performance Based Teacher Evaluation (PBTE) system to document continuous instructional improvement for all teachers.

A teacher was overheard saying, “Supportive leadership leads to success for all.” Administration has created a culture in which teachers are empowered decision makers, driven by the best interests of students. This motivates staff to improve ongoing practices and procedures. Staff feels comfortable with an open-door policy, which encourages independence and creates a climate where teachers enjoy their job and feel valued. As a result, the culture of empowerment and positive climate permeates throughout the classroom and building, developing trusting relationships and a sense of belonging.

Students are empowered to be leaders and are recognized by serving on Student Council or as a member of the Kindness Leadership Committee (KLC). From a fourth grade member of the KLC, “I love how we work to help others in need.” Students help with building-wide initiatives such as United Way, Pasta Drive, numerous New Mark Care Center Drives and Coat Drive fundraisers. Within classrooms, students are given jobs and responsibilities to develop lifelong leadership skills. Classroom teachers practice the idea of gradual release of responsibility with students as a way to teach them to be productive members of society.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The teachers of Nashua Elementary value the importance of knowing each student as an individual learner. This focus on individuals has led to increased student success over the past three years. When surveyed, the majority of teaching staff overwhelmingly stated that the implementation of the Professional Learning Team (PLT) cycle is the number one practice that has led to high achievement for Nashua students.

Grade level teams continually participate in the PLT cycle during weekly collaborative meetings. At any given time, teams of teachers are working through the four stages of the cycle as they move through a unit of study. This process guides teachers through pre-assessment data analysis, planning, and post-assessment data analysis. All the work is centered on real time student performance data that teachers use to make strong instructional decisions.

The cycle starts at the beginning of a unit of study by evaluating pre-assessment data. Teachers analyze student performance on specific standards found within the upcoming unit, set SMART goals and determine one priority standard to track student progress during the entire unit. This priority standard is an essential grade level standard and one that the majority of students did not master.

The second stage in the PLT cycle is the planning stage. Teachers backward plan the units based on the data from the pre-assessment. Beginning with the priority standard that is being tracked, teachers collaborate on best instructional strategies for that specific skill. Teachers work together to model the identified strategies. In addition to highly effective instructional strategies, teams also create Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) and create standard-based scales to use within the unit.

The third stage of this cycle is the portion in which teams function the longest. Throughout the unit, teachers evaluate formative data in order to respond to student needs and progress. Collaborative conversations during this stage are centered around mastery of strategies which lead to mastery of the priority standards within the unit.

The final stage of the PLT cycle is the post data analysis. Teams evaluate the unit data to determine if students mastered the standards found within the unit, and if the teachers modeled and used the best instructional strategies in teaching the standards. Collaborative conversations center around next steps for students. Student and teacher celebrations are also part of this stage. As a result, the state of Missouri recognized Nashua in 2017 as an Exemplary PLC School. Nashua can attribute the work teachers do within the PLT cycle to increased and sustained success in student achievement.