Kings Manor Elementary

New Caney ISD

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Kings Manor Elementary Schools Transforming Learning Application
Nominated by Stacey Paine
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Video link: https://youtu.be/UVWmnQdLkNE

Overview and Background

Kings Manor Elementary was constructed in 2001 and is celebrating its 20th anniversary during the 2022 spring semester. It is one of 11 Pre-K through 5th grade elementary schools in New Caney ISD. KME is in the middle of the Kings Manor subdivision and currently serves 770 students. We educate a very diverse group of students who represent over 20 home languages including English, Spanish, German, Arabic, French, Urdu and more. Stacey Paine has been the principal on campus for the past five years alongside the assistant principal, Mrs. Christie Tolbert.Together they have worked to create a school where students and families are excited to attend and eager to return to each day.

During the 2017/18 school year administration began their work to make KME the greatest school ever. Three campus wide focus areas were declared for KME: Exceptional Instruction, Engagement for the entire school community, and safety in all areas. The leadership began right away modeling expectations for all teachers and revised the master schedule to maximize instructional time. The master schedule includes a daily Koala Time for all grade levels; this is a time when no new instruction is introduced and students can take part in intervention or extension activities. Writing across the curriculum was implemented and became an expectation in all classrooms. All students had access to Chromebooks and technology was used in the classroom daily to enhance the student's learning. All faculty were involved in a campus wide book study and read the book by Todd Nesloney, *Kids Deserve It.* This started the KME Legacy of Literacy initiative that continues today. Book nooks were implemented around campus for students and in the teacher lounge. Additionally, we set many procedures in place this year with teachers that included lesson plans that were completed each week with academic vocabulary and DOK leveled questions planned for each lesson.

The following year in 2018/19 the faculty were involved in a book study, but this time it was differentiated for the teachers and they could choose one of six books to read with their book club; each book club was facilitated by a member of the instructional leadership team each using a different platform to conduct the book study. i.e. twitter, flipgrid, Google classroom or traditional. All faculty chose one book to read and learn from during the fall semester and another of the 6 titles during the second semester, thus reading through 2 great professional books during the school year. Our morning welcome crew was created this year by our assistant principal and our counselor. The welcome crew consists of teachers who greet students and parents outside at student drop off each morning with loud music from a speaker, opening car doors with smiles and waves. This sets the tone for a great day of learning. It was this year that classroom transformations began around campus as a way to engage students and build excitement around their learning. We saw great gains in our accountability scores this year as TEA rated KME a B campus, but we knew there were additional processes and procedures we needed to implement to grow further.

The 2019/20 school year was a significant year in making KME the greatest school ever. This year the house system was implemented for all faculty and students. KME was also a pilot campus for NCISD to implement the now district wide social emotional curriculum, 7 Mindsets. Leadership worked together over the summer to weave the two parts together to create 7 houses at KME, each one representing one of the 7 Mindsets we are now teaching the students about. It paired together well and has been a big part of the great culture and climate that KME is known for. Instructionally we introduced additional expectations for all students and classrooms that included student goal setting with student goal folders and all classrooms utilize bell ringers and exit tickets to drive instruction and form small groups. We have continued our work through the last few years, although at times it looked different due to COVID - 19 and new safety protocols.

Focus Areas

During my time attending Cohort 10 of the Principal's Institute I was introduced to the Visioning Document. Many times I shared it and referenced various sections of it with my leadership team as we planned next steps for our school. When we made the decision to apply as a School Transforming Learning the Instructional Leadership team went through the Visioning Document carefully and we discussed the six articles and rated on a scale of 1-5 how well KME was doing in each of the areas. Collaboratively we decided that our focus areas are: Article I: The New Digital Learning Environment, Article II: The New Learning Standards, Article III: Assessments for learning, and Article V: Organizational Transformation.

Work

During the shutdown of school in March of 2020, all students in NCISD were issued a Chromebook to continue instruction and learning while at home. This was a great learning opportunity for all teachers and faculty on campus in how we can utilize technology to educate our students. We met with students daily through zoom, had school wide 'House Party' days virtually, virtual fire drills, virtual weekly storytime, small group and whole group lessons. What we learned after this immersion into virtual learning was incredible and now are able to utilize technology more effectively on campus. In the 2020/21 school year, once we returned to a hybrid environment, our teachers would zoom together. This meant 2 teachers in classrooms across the hall from each other would zoom together their whole group lessons. Virtual students would zoom in and have class discussions with two classrooms of students and two teachers on campus at KME. This was a powerful way to connect students during a different type of learning environment,

but also a way to truly implement a co-teach situation in which all students were learning from two different teachers. Currently, NCISD and KME are a true 1:1 district in which all students are issued a Chromebook that they use daily for instructional activities and may take home each afternoon. In class students regularly utilize programs such as Google Docs, Google Slides, and Book Creator to collaborate on assignments. Teachers utilize many technology based programs for collaboration as well including Canvas, which is our district wide LMS. Canvas allows parents to have a log in so they can view student work portfolios, grades, enrichment options for their students, and use it as an additional way to communicate with the teachers.

Students at KME are exposed to many exciting opportunities to learn and grow each day. We do a great job of taking care of the whole child with the implementation of our 7 Mindsets SEL curriculum and the House System. Teachers regularly create exciting classroom transformations to immerse students into a new learning environment that is fun and exciting when introducing a new concept. Examples include teachers providing lab coats for all students to wear to dissect fractions or compound words, reading classrooms transformed to a restaurant for a book tasting event, or a math classroom transforming into a medieval castle as students learn about polygons. Students regularly show their learning through effective use of technology. An example of this is students in a math class utilizing Book Creator to make a book explaining how to add and subtract fractions, thus showing what they know about fractions and integrating writing and grammar into the assignment. KME continues to utilize daily Koala Time for intervention and extension activities to ensure students are not missing core instruction while getting additional focused instruction in the area they need. These interventions and extension activities take place both inside the classroom and in small pull out groups with specialists (dyslexia, RTI, SPED teachers) if needed. The daily KT time is in addition to the expected small group instruction that takes place in the classroom each day.

Small group instruction at KME is where the magic happens! Teachers are experts in utilizing data to create, monitor and adjust their small groups to ensure all students get the tailored instruction that they need. Teachers use daily Bell Ringers and Exit Tickets to assess students' level of understanding of the current concept being taught or how they are doing in a particular skill. They then use this information to form their groups or to adjust the lesson for the day. Other students in class work on station activities that reinforce concepts taught and practice their application of their knowledge in that area. The station activities are differentiated for students as well so that they are working at an independent level and not frustration level. Many station choices focus on a particular TEK or skill. Students may choose one they are struggling with or need more practice in as evidenced in their goal folder. All students have a Goal Folder in which they choose their academic goals and keep track of their progress in the Essential Skills for their grade level. We celebrate student success regularly with our Goal Getter bulletin boards where we display student pictures as they grow towards their +10 goal. During parent/teacher conferences and open house students share their goal folders with their parents and discuss their progress on how they are doing in RELA, Math and Science.

Several processes and procedures have been implemented at KME to support its change into a great learning organization. We have committees that work together to ensure excellence is taking place. These targeted committees work together to ensure parents, teachers and the learning community have a voice in the way KME grows and improves. Teacher voice is appreciated at KME and is evident in many of the campus and community initiatives that take place. Many of these are apparent in our Legacy of Literacy created. This includes the KME Little Free library, Monthly Saturday Story Walks around campus and Summer Story Time at various locations in the community all of which is available to our students and community members. All faculty and PLC meetings begin and end with Bell Ringers and an Exit Ticket; teachers leave a note card at the end of each meeting with suggestions or additional questions they have. This helps the ILT to plan for meaningful and needed PD for teachers. Parent feedback and voice is important and Exit Tickets have been utilized during parent meetings as well to include their needs in future planning. Additionally, we have begun to invite parents to attend educational conferences with us to increase their knowledge and understanding in the work we are doing.

Results

There are many great learning opportunities taking place at KME for students, teachers and parents and it is truly a place they are excited to be a part of. Teacher turnover is low and student attendance is up. As we have focused on teacher and parent voice in our organization over the last few years and built many teacher leaders, we realize we need to increase the student voice opportunities on campus. Currently we have a student run Safety Patrol that assists the Morning Welcome Crew and helps students with different needs to their classrooms each morning, student goal setting for all students, reading buddies, and House Meetings that are multi grade levels. Areas that we have strategically planned to improve in are to highlight more student voice on campus through a Student Advisory Panel. We envision them working with each of our committees to drive future improvements and changes. We plan to continue to invite parents to our school, to learn with us, and have a voice in the direction and planning of our school. This will be our next steps in creating the greatest school ever.