

U.S. Department of Education
2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) Elementary Middle High K-12 Other
 Charter Title I Magnet Choice

Name of Principal: Dr. Walter Cornell

Official School Name: Verde Elementary

School Mailing Address:
6590 Verde Trail
Boca Raton, FL 33433-7738

County: Palm Beach State School Code Number*: 50-1661

Telephone: (561) 218-6800 Fax: (561) 218-6850

Web site/URL: www.edline.net/pages/Verde_Elementary_School E-mail: cornnell@palmbeach.k12.fl.us

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Arthur Johnson

District Name: Palm Beach School District Tel: (561) 434-8000

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. William Graham

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

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals 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 and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:	<u>105</u>	Elementary schools
	<u>33</u>	Middle schools
	<u>0</u>	Junior high schools
	<u>23</u>	High schools
	<u>23</u>	Other
	<u>184</u>	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 7365

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 7200

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural area
 Rural

4. 5 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
K	70	51	121	8	0	0	0
1	49	62	111	9	0	0	0
2	70	50	120	10	0	0	0
3	74	50	124	11	0	0	0
4	66	59	125	12	0	0	0
5	82	81	163	Other	0	0	0
6	0	0	0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							764

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- | |
|---|
| 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native |
| 3 % Asian |
| 6 % Black or African American |
| 24 % Hispanic or Latino |
| 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| 58 % White |
| 8 % Two or more races |
| 100 % Total |

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting 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.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 22 %

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	88
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	81
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	169
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	763
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.221
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	22.149

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 9 %

Total number limited English proficient 69

Number of languages represented: 19

Specify languages:

Chinese, Czech, Fharzi, French, German, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Maharati, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Rissian, , Serbian, Spanish, Thai, and Turkish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22 %

Total number students who qualify: 167

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 10 %

Total Number of Students Served: 78

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>3</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>20</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>50</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>45</u>	<u>1</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>63</u>	<u>2</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	96%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	97%	96%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%

Please provide all explanations below.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	<u>0</u>	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u>	%
Found employment	<u>0</u>	%
Military service	<u>0</u>	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u>	%
Unknown	<u>0</u>	%
Total	<u>100</u>	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Verde Elementary School is a great place to teach and learn; a fact recognized by the Governor's Office by our listing as one of the Top 100 Schools in Florida in 2005, 2006, and 2007. The school is located in Boca Raton, Florida. It is a city populated by nearly 75,000 people of diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. The school population of 764 reflects that diversity in our students with 3% Asian, 6% African American, 24% Hispanic, 1% other Pacific Islander, 58% White, and 8% from two or more races. Approximately 10% of the students are in the Exceptional Students Education (ESE) program every year. The English Language Learner (ELL) program has gone from 25% five years ago to approximately 10% this year. In general, our students are positive, polite, and actively involved in their own learning. Our community, the parents, and the teachers expect excellence and Verde Elementary School delivers!

For the last eight years, Verde has been rated an "A" school by the Florida Department of Education. At the same time, we have also made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with respect to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. Our instructional program is robust and challenging. The core curriculum is established by the School District of Palm Beach County with consideration to the directives of the State Board of Education. The teachers, given that impetus, build lessons which incorporate individual, small, and whole group instruction. At each grade level, cooperative planning sessions help identify key components of the lessons. Additionally, Learning Team Meetings (LTM's) with the administrators assist in the disaggregation of data to keep a clear focus on instruction that works. The District's diagnostic assessments and the yearly Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) assess students' progress through the year. These indicators reflect the perseverance and hard work of the students and teachers.

Many teachers spend their careers at Verde including 4 teachers who have been here since the opening of the school in 1981. The most common reason for departure is retirement. All of the professional educators at Verde are licensed, certified, teaching in-field, and annually more than 96% are considered Highly Qualified as a function of the NCLB specifications.

Verde has a viable connection to, and works cooperatively with, the City of Boca Raton. The Chamber of Commerce helps fund our education programs, the Chief of Police assists with the installation of our Safety Patrol Officers, and students participate in programs sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department (Gumbo Limbo Nature Center and Sugar Sand Park's Science Explorium). We also participate in programs sponsored by the Boca Raton Historical Society. Together with the teachers, the City is having a positive impact on our children.

Our community demands excellence and expects results. However, this expectation does not come without commitment. Verde's parents volunteer more than 2,000 hours each year. We consistently have 67% of our parents at our yearly Open House. Our parents are active in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the School Advisory Council (SAC). The PTA sponsors events and raises more than \$25,000 every year (money spent on instructional materials or motivational issues only). The SAC helps oversee our progress toward our mission: "It is our quest to empower our learners with knowledge, confidence, responsibility and citizenship for success in a changing world". With the continued support of the parents and community, the unconditional dedication of the teaching staff, and the overall enthusiasm for learning by the students, our goal will be met!

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

The accountability system in the State of Florida measures compliance with state instructional mandates and with the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. To that end, the state has adopted the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT). This assessment measures proficiency with respect to the Sunshine State Standards proposed by the Department of Education for each grade level. [For additional information on the FCAT or the state-mandated curriculum see: <http://www.fldoe.org/>]. Each year the state publishes the results of these assessments on <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/default.asp>. Scores on the FCAT range from Level 1 to 5. Scoring at level 3 or better is considered proficient. Scoring at Level 4 or Level 5 indicates advanced achievement. Additional historical information about student achievement can be found in the Gold Report on the Department of Research and Evaluation page of the following site: www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us.

Data is presented over the next several pages that demonstrate a slow but steady growth in our students' achievement as measured by the FCAT at grades 3, 4, and 5. In general, Verde's students do slightly better in Mathematics than in Reading. Each year, more than 80% of our students are considered proficient in reading and mathematics at each grade level measured. In many instances our grade-level subgroups are small and comparison to the whole group or another subgroup may not be statistically appropriate. In general, the largest number of students are White (approximately 60%), followed by the Hispanic subgroup (approximately 25%). The other subgroups: Asian, Black, Indian, and Multi-racial vary from year to year, and comprise the remaining 15%. Our ESE population (students with disabilities) has remained relatively constant at approximately 10% and our English Language Learner (ELL) has dropped from approximately 25 % in 2004-05 to approximately 10% this year. Our Free and Reduced Lunch group has remained somewhat constant at approximately 22% for the past 5 years. The stability of our population and the consistency of our teaching personnel add to our continued success.

An acute look at the data indicates:

- a. Overall – number of proficient students remained relatively flat. However, the number of advanced students has increased slightly each year.
- b. White students out perform the whole group and all subgroups at both the proficient level and the advanced level.
- c. Black students' subgroup size is small. However, there is a steady climb in the number of advanced students in the subgroup.
- d. Hispanic students' proficiency peaked in 2005-2006 and has remained somewhat level thereafter.
- e. The Free/Reduced Lunch students' proficiency has remained between 65% and 75%. The performance of students in the third and fourth grade remains relatively flat and the fifth grade performance is somewhat sporadic.
- f. ESE students' population is relatively small at each grade level. Thereby, trends in the data may be misleading.
- g. The ELL student population is also relatively small at each grade level. Hence, trends may be heavily influenced by the results of 1 or 2 students.
- h. It should be noted that the data for 2004-2005 school-year shows an increase in performance in mathematics and reading that are above any increase for any other year. This was the inaugural year for Verde Elementary's after-school tutorial program. Similar results have not been seen each year thereafter.

One of the reasons that the students at Verde consistently perform at or above the proficient range might be that the students are accustomed to the testing process. Our District sponsors a fall diagnostic assessment (August) and a winter diagnostic assessment (November/December) in both reading and mathematics. At Verde we treat these diagnostic tests as if they were the FCAT. Students keep the same proctor in the same room throughout each year's testing cycle. By the time they take the FCAT, they have already "practiced" the process in a known

location with a known teacher. This helps lower their anxiety. The teachers and administrators subsequently utilize the results of these assessments to adjust instruction to targeted areas, to populate the pre-FCAT tutorial program and to predict success on the FCAT. Our high expectations and quality instructional program continue to yield positive results.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Assessment is an ongoing process. Whether it is the FCAT, the district diagnostic assessment, or classroom tests, assessment drives instruction! The results of the FCAT help facilitate the data analysis that establishes the goals for the School Improvement Plan. Teachers analyze the data for students in their classes and plan the subsequent modifications necessary to insure success. Grade levels also review the data in order to plan the instructional framework for the year. Teachers continue to review the data several times throughout the year in order to monitor student progress on various assessments and to modify instruction. The teachers use a variety of assessment results to identify strengths and weaknesses in students' knowledge and skills. The results are used to drive whole and small group instruction.

Assessment results also provide educators with meaningful feedback on how effective their teaching practices are and how they need to adjust their instruction in order to help students make learning gains. Data analysis also targets students who are in need of additional instructional and tutorial programs. After students have been identified as being in need of additional programs, educators take a more in-depth look at the data in order to pinpoint specific benchmarks students need to master. Instruction is planned around these results. Learning Team Meetings are devoted to facilitating educators in analyzing data and to providing meaningful collaboration on best teaching practices.

The District has developed an Educational Data Warehouse (EDW) that readily provides teachers specific information about assessment at their classroom computer. The data can be disaggregated by instructional strand, by subgroup, by performance (percentage or learning gains). Multiple reports exist that provide the students, their parents, and teachers exact and specific information about achievement. The EDW has provided the teachers with a real tool to help modify and adjust their teaching to target specific areas and get results!

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

For assessment to be meaningful, all members of the process need to be informed. At Verde we make every effort to keep the students and parents informed about progress. We also use the District's Electronic Data Warehouse (EDW) to help the teachers understand the results of the district diagnostic tests and the elements of the FCAT assessment.

The Department of Education (DOE) in the State of Florida publishes (hard copy and on the web) information about the results of the state's yearly testing. They provide interested parties with the Parent & Guardians: Look Inside for answers about the FCAT (located at <http://fcat.fldoe.org/aboutfcat/english/pdfs/english.pdf>). The DOE also publishes reports regarding each year's assessments (Florida Reads, Florida Writes, Florida Solves, and Florida Inquires). Teachers use these materials to clarify the contents of each year's test and help adjust their instruction to meet the needs of the student.

In the Palm Beach County Public School System, the Department of Research and Evaluation develops reports and maintains specific assessment information on the EDW. The teachers use the information to help pinpoint specific instructional areas that are commonly missed by the students.

If the assessment results are back at the school prior to the end of the year, we give the results to the students/parents. If the results are available at a later date, we make them available for the parents or provide them to the parents in the fall. We make every effort to inform the parents about the contents of the test as well as providing them with strategies to assist their children. Verde sponsors meetings at night to help inform

parents about the FCAT assessments in advance. In addition, we inform them at PTA general meetings and at one of the School Advisory Council meetings

The administrators at Verde meet with the small groups of students in the fourth and fifth grade to review their performance of the prior years. The information we discuss is reinforced by the classroom teacher as they target the specific strands for which the students needs to demonstrate improvement.

4. Sharing Success:

In the School District of Palm Beach County, all schools are encouraged to share insights with respect to student achievement. The superintendent sponsors monthly meetings where we review strategies and data about our progress. The area superintendents also sponsor periodic meetings where the principals discuss strategies and delve further into the data for each school. At the school level, the administrators review assessment results and instructional strategies at faculty meetings and grade-level Learning Team Meetings (LTM). The focus on progress is constant and pervasive.

The K-12 Curriculum Department sponsors meetings that focus on “best practices”. The District’s focus on Literacy for the past three years has provided the teachers and administrators at Verde multiple insights into new and emerging strategies in the many components of teaching reading. We share our results, and the steps taken by our teachers, that help realize growth in reading. The teachers and administrators also participate in other District-sponsored curricular meetings and trade ideas for student success.

The parents are also kept abreast of instructional strategies and assessment results using multiple vehicles. Both the principal and the PTA periodically publish newsletters that include pertinent information about testing and related instructional strategies and suggestions. Parents are also provided specific results of the assessments at the general meeting of PTA and several School Advisory Council meetings. We also have general meetings for parents to discuss the FCAT and assessment related issues: the Third Grade – First Time FCAT meeting, Fourth Grade – FCAT Writes meeting, and a Grade 3, 4, and 5 FCAT Mathematics night. We also send home materials produced by the State Department of Education about the testing process and results.

In the event that we are determined to be a Blue Ribbon school, we will continue to publish our results and share them with other schools in the area and in the state.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The high expectations set by Florida's *Sunshine State Standards*, the desire for students to reach their full potential, and Verde Elementary's "Climate of Excellence" are the driving forces behind our curriculum. Using data to identify the needs of our students, teachers in all grade levels individualize instruction to best teach the information necessary for the highest levels of growth and understanding.

Our balanced literacy program includes the core communication components of reading, listening, speaking, writing, viewing, critical thinking and presenting and is integrated into all areas of the curriculum. During the uninterrupted 90 minute reading block teachers provide instruction using multiple techniques; whole group, small group, shared and guided reading. Independent reading is encouraged using the Scholastic Reading Counts Program and a monitored 20 minutes per night at home reading requirement for students at all grade levels.

The writing process, taught through modeling, examples, rubrics and self assessment encourages students to use their skills, not only in classroom compositions but to communicate across curriculum areas. Daily journal writing, science and social studies reporting, explaining strategies used to solve math problems, and writing for our student newspaper are just a few examples.

Mathematics is taught to develop not only basic arithmetic skills but the thinking skills needed for true mathematical understanding. The Harcourt Math program used in grades K-5 implements the research on vocabulary development with direct instruction that incorporates a variety of techniques and strategies including word walls, word files, math picture dictionaries and a multimedia math glossary. Concepts of data analysis, measurement, algebraic reasoning and probabilities are taught in class and enhanced by interactive software programs such as Riverdeep and Brain Pop. Teachers also use manipulatives, games, hands-on activities and real-world problem solving to engage students in the learning process.

Science education integrates classroom instruction, computer software, hands-on activities, experimentation, demonstrations, collaboration and very special interactive field trips. Focusing on areas of physical, biological and earth sciences, our curriculum encourages independent thinking and participation in scientific investigation. Interactive learning is developed using streaming video clips as well as Brain Pop, student-made podcasts, and the annual Science Fair and Invention Convention.

Social Studies is integrated into daily instruction using periodicals, newspapers in education and content area books. Comprehension of current events as well as historical, civic, cultural and geographical information promotes understanding and tolerance among our diverse students. Adults model and teach behaviors of good citizenship while encouraging students to give back to our community through the K-Kids (a Kiwanis youth club) Food for Families program and a yearly holiday toy drive. Additionally, Verde's students gain insights into our representative democracy by participating in our Student Council program.

The Fine Arts wheel allows students to participate in Art, Music, P.E., and Media on an alternating schedule. In-class experiences develop skills, aesthetic and critical analysis, and encourage creative expression, physical fitness and sportsmanship. Exhibits of our students' art work are displayed at local venues and are always highly acclaimed. The chorus and recorder players perform at the school and in the nearby mall and our P.E. Running Club meets weekly to train for participation in the Palm Beach Marathon. Our annual Fine Arts Night highlights students' creative expression and encourages parents as well as community members to visit Verde and experience a taste of the students' accomplishments.

Verde Elementary School follows the prescribed curriculum as identified by the School District of Palm Beach County. For additional information about the curriculum and the supporting software available to students with

INTERNET access see: www.palmbeachlearns.org or www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us. For more specific information about issues at Verde Elementary School, you can also visit: www.edline.net/pages/Verde_Elementary_School.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

Our reading curriculum is based on a Balanced Literacy Approach as outlined by the K-12 Comprehensive Research Based Reading Plan developed by the District to meet state guidelines. This approach models and develops students' skills in reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening. It involves several methods of teaching reading and writing that enable all students to learn to read and write effectively. Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are components of this approach. Students are exposed to a variety of texts that are both on and above grade level through read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. Read alouds develop vocabulary concepts, build prediction skills, and provide students with a model for reading. Shared reading develops comprehension skills and builds vocabulary.

Our curriculum is modified to meet the needs of individual students. Whole and small group instruction provides remediation and enrichment to students based on assessment results. Guided reading groups students based on ability and targets a particular skill or strategy. Students receive teacher support with print concepts, reading strategies, and comprehension.

Our curriculum utilizes a variety of instructional materials including the district reading series, novels, leveled readers, reading software, and magazines. Our school also implements Reading Counts which is a computer-based reading program that helps encourage and monitor independent reading.

Students are frequently monitored through a variety of assessment tools including Reading Running Record, DIBELS, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Reading Counts, District Diagnostic Tests, and the FCAT.

The main goal of our reading curriculum is to ensure that all students are proficient readers, constantly improve their reading skills, and become life long readers. The Reading Leadership Team chose a Balanced Literacy Approach because it is a researched based program incorporates various reading approaches and employs several instructional methods that meet the needs of all students which will enable students to use multiple strategies to become proficient readers.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

According to the National Teachers of Science, students who are taught science in a hands-on, inquiry based manner in elementary school can begin to develop important life-long science literacy skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and teamwork.

This research is reflected in Verde's science program which emphasizes hands-on, inquiry based investigations, life, earth and physical science content, and opportunities to develop and maintain science processing skills.

Technology plays a primary role in the teaching of science at Verde. All classrooms are equipped with document cameras and presentation stations, televisions, computers and CD/DVD players. Software such as Brain Pop, Brain Pop Jr., and FCAT Explorer, access to Discovery Education Streaming, and the School District's Learning Village represent some of the technological tools used in our classrooms. Students produce podcasts that depict the classmates doing experiments and analyzing their results. These science venues are broadcast on the school's website. Also, and due to a grant written by our teachers, we have a complete mobile microscope lab, including a presentation microscope.

Verde has a unique relationship with the City of Boca Raton. Our students participate in science programs at Sugar Sand Park and the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center. Verde's young scientists also visit Palm Beach Science

Museum to increase their understanding of, and interest in, science. Students in all grade levels take part in these science based, interactive trips which are coordinated with the specific grade level's science curriculum.

Science education is not confined to the school day. Science and technology workshops are an ongoing part of our professional development. All grades learn the scientific method and participate in the Science Fair and the fifth graders participate in the Invention Convention, both of which are held annually and viewed by our families on Fine Arts Night. Students in the Environmental Club are in charge of our recycling program, a beach clean-up program and participate in a state park canoeing experience. And, as part of their botanical unit, a small garden was planted and is maintained by students in the third grade. Science at Verde is a living experience!

4. Instructional Methods:

At Verde, the teachers utilize a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of students. When planning for instruction, students' learning modalities are taken into consideration. Educators implement direct instruction that incorporates a variety of instructional techniques including the use of manipulatives, hands-on activities, graphic organizers, discovery and inquiry learning, cooperative learning and learning centers. Teachers use a variety of questions, including higher level and open-ended questions, in addition to other strategies to help students understand concepts. The instructional program incorporates whole group, small group and individualized instruction to teach, review, and enhance each student's skills.

Teachers infuse technology into their delivery of instruction (computers, projectors, DVD, CD, and document cameras are located in every classroom). Technology tools are utilized to remediate and reinforce skills and to provide enrichment. Riverdeep, Brain Pop, online textbooks, and Harcourt Math software promote interactive learning and reach visual and auditory learners.

Students who have been identified as reading below grade level receive an additional thirty minutes of reading instruction every day. Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI) provides daily literacy instruction to students in grades 3, 4, and 5 who scored at Level 1 or 2 on the Reading FCAT or are performing in the lowest 25%. Verde also provides these students an After-school Tutorial Program that targets and remediates their weaknesses in a small group setting.

Students in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program receive instruction in a least-restrictive environment that provides an appropriate individualized education program. Teachers employ instructional strategies (best practices) that target each student's specific needs. Additional resources and curriculum are used to ensure students make learning gains.

Gifted students receive differentiated instruction through a small group pull-out program. The instructional emphasis involves a focus on critical thinking, problem solving, and research skills. These strategies help amplify their success in the regular classroom.

Students in our English Language Learner (ELL) program participate in a pull-out program that focuses on academic vocabulary and reading. The ELL program also provides each student with the opportunity to develop their English language skills in writing, listening, and speaking through a variety of instructional activities.

5. Professional Development:

The goal of Professional Development at Verde is to improve the quality of our teaching practices and show growth in student achievement. Professional Development decisions are consistent with, and supported by, the School Improvement Plan. Each year, a Needs Assessment questionnaire is given to all teachers. The resulting information helps identify the particular instructional strategies and curricular areas that become the focus of our professional development. In that the Professional Development workshops and trainings support school needs, it has positively impacted student achievement.

Based on the Needs Assessment, we found that the teachers wanted to become more proficient with the use of instructional technology and specific software. Thereby we established a “technology café”. The café is held weekly and addresses a variety of topics from digital camera use to the interpretation of information from the Electronic Data Warehouse (EDW).

Over the past several years, the District has implemented an instructional focus on Literacy. Accordingly, we have provided our staff with numerous workshops on best practices in reading instruction. In addition, we have instructed them on Balanced Literacy, especially in the area of guided reading.

As a way to continue to develop our already talented staff, we offer professional development trainings and workshops on campus throughout the year. We have provided workshops to our staff on Kagan Strategies, Writing Workshop, Inclusion Best Practices, and Educational Data Warehouse Training. In addition, teachers attend conferences and workshops in areas of individual need. After attending a workshop or conference, teachers present the information they have learned to our faculty. Also, our first-year teachers participate in a New Teacher Mentoring Program that supports and develops our new teachers.

Professional Development is helping Verde to become a Professional Learning Community (PLC). We make data-driven decisions to identify specific issues and collectively decide the most appropriate method to solve them. As a result, our students’ needs are met and our instructional program continues to grow and develop.

6. School Leadership:

Verde Elementary School’s administrative team, the principal and assistant principal, work in conjunction with the School Leadership Team. The leadership team includes the grade level chairperson for grades K-5, the school-based program directors for the Exceptional Students Education (ESE) and English Language Learners (ELL), the Fine Arts chairperson, and the School Advisory Council (SAC) chairperson. This team meets on a monthly basis and as needed throughout the year including a meeting in the summer. Ideas, suggestions, and decisions are presented and reviewed at these meetings. Many of the decisions are shared decisions. For example, near the end of each year, each grade level meets and maps out the students’ class population for the following year.

The matrix of the fine arts schedule, the lunch schedule, the ninety-minute reading block, the ESE program, and the ESOL program make for a complex problem. In order to minimize or avoid overlaps in services and programs, the leadership team meets during the summer to finalize the master schedule.

Additionally, the School Based Team helps guide our compliance with IDEA related issues. The team is comprised of the guidance counselor, at least one teacher from regular education, the school nurse, the AP, one ESE and one ELL teacher. The team reviews teacher recommendations for students in need of assistance and provides strategies and interventions.

The administration participates in monthly or bi-monthly Learning Team Meetings (LTM’s) to review data and focus on particular areas in need of additional instruction. Also, they plan and provide materials for the tutorials each year that target the lowest performing students. These programs help ensure positive increase in academic performance.

The principal (a graduate of Academy XII of the National Staff Development Council) is an avid learner and is currently enrolled in the Program to Reinvigorate Instruction in Mathematics and Science (Promise) training sponsored by the Florida Department of Education in conjunction with Florida State University. The Assistant Principal recently enrolled in a Reading Certification program. Verde’s administrators are committed to excellence!

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT)

Edition/Publication Year: yearly Publisher: DOE contract with McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 + Level 4 + Level 5	91	93	94	88	87
Level 4 + Level 5	73	71	64	62	54
Number of students tested	131	150	143	137	132
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	100	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	81	100	93	79	78
Level 4 + Level 5	56	74	48	48	48
Number of students tested	26	27	39	33	31
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	93	95	94	91	87
Level 4 + Level 5	76	76	73	62	60
Number of students tested	77	83	77	76	67
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	85	85	97	87	88
Level 4 + Level 5	75	58	51	62	43
Number of students tested	27	28	38	32	37
4. (specify subgroup): No other subgroup > 10%					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year: yearly Publisher: Florida DOE contract with McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 + L.4 + L.5	84	80	85	80	81
Level 4 + Level 5	56	53	54	52	48
Number of students tested	131	151	143	137	133
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	100	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	66	70	74	74	65
Level 4 + Level 5	41	41	31	36	40
Number of students tested	21	27	31	31	26
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	87	84	87	82	84
Level 4 + Level 5	62	56	66	59	51
Number of students tested	72	74	71	69	65
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	72	78	84	70	72
Level 4 + Level 5	47	38	36	45	47
Number of students tested	31	29	33	23	43
4. (specify subgroup): no other subgroup >10%					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5					
Level 4 + Level 5					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT)

Edition/Publication Year: yearly Publisher: DOE contract with McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 + Level 4 + Level 5	93	85	82	92	82
Level 4 + Level 5	69	52	51	46	44
Number of students tested	156	143	135	135	120
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	87	70	68	93	58
Level 4 + Level 5	47	33	40	64	21
Number of students tested	34	21	27	40	24
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	94	88	85	93	83
Level 4 + Level 5	71	61	49	52	51
Number of students tested	85	74	68	70	74
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	87	83	76	88	77
Level 4 + Level 5	61	48	51	42	34
Number of students tested	33	33	28	38	26
4. (specify subgroup): No other subgroup > 10%					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT)

Edition/Publication Year: yearly Publisher: DOE contract with McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 + Level 4 + Level 5	90	86	84	87	80
Level 4 + Level 5	59	57	53	60	48
Number of students tested	156	143	135	134	128
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	77	77	75	84	54
Level 4 + Level 5	41	43	35	49	13
Number of students tested	30	23	30	36	24
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	92	86	85	87	83
Level 4 + Level 5	63	66	57	57	56
Number of students tested	83	72	68	65	74
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	84	80	84	86	77
Level 4 + Level 5	55	45	43	60	31
Number of students tested	32	32	31	37	26
4. (specify subgroup): No other subgroup > 10%					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT)
 Edition/Publication Year: yearly Publisher: DOE contract with McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 + Level 4 + Level 5	83	79	87	85	76
Level 4 + Level 5	63	55	65	57	47
Number of students tested	149	129	132	126	143
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	100	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	77	77	78	68	65
Level 4 + Level 5	42	37	58	29	38
Number of students tested	24	27	28	28	26
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	88	82	90	88	77
Level 4 + Level 5	71	60	75	64	45
Number of students tested	77	59	65	74	79
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	80	74	78	81	79
Level 4 + Level 5	61	46	54	52	59
Number of students tested	33	29	36	27	29
4. (specify subgroup): No other subgroup > 10%					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT)

Edition/Publication Year: yearly Publisher: DOE contract with McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 + Level 4 + Level 5	84	85	84	84	79
Level 4 + Level 5	55	55	51	52	40
Number of students tested	149	129	132	126	143
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	100	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	58	83	78	61	65
Level 4 + Level 5	39	51	39	25	25
Number of students tested	18	29	28	28	26
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	89	85	85	88	81
Level 4 + Level 5	64	56	54	56	42
Number of students tested	78	61	61	74	83
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
L.3 + L.4 + L.5	74	87	85	86	72
Level 4 + Level 5	43	51	41	0	31
Number of students tested	31	34	39	43	37
4. (specify subgroup): No other subgroup > 10%					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: