

2002-2003 No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Program Cover Sheet

Name of Principal Mrs. Jane S. Davis

Official School Name Mt. Pleasant Academy Elementary School

School Mailing Address 605 Center Street

Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina 29464-4901

Tel. (843) 849-2826 Fax (843) 849-2897

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

(Principal’s Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent Dr. Ronald A. McWhirt

District Name Charleston County School District, Charleston, South Carolina

Tel. (843) 937-6319

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

(Superintendent’s Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board Chairperson Mr. Gregg Meyers

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board Chairperson’s Signature) Date _____

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 of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12.
2. The school has been in existence for five full years.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suite 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.
6. 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

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 45 Elementary schools
 15 Middle schools
 3 Junior high schools
 11 High schools

 74 TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$9,873.67

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$1,879.62

SCHOOL

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. 15 Number of years the principal has been in her position at this school.
5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level.

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
K	31	30	61
1	21	33	54
2	29	21	50
3	40	18	58
4	33	27	60
5	26	33	59
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL			342

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school: 85.2 % White
 11.0 % Black or African American
 1.5 % Hispanic or Latino
 2.3 % Asian/Pacific Islander

100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 3.9 %

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	7
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	6
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	13
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	331
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.039
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3.9

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 03 %
1 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 1
Specify languages: Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %
42 Total Number Students Who Qualify

10. Students receiving special education services: 23 %
79 Total Number of Students Served

The number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<u> </u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u> </u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>22</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>42</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>10</u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

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

	Full-time	Number of Staff Part-Time
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>19</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>33</u>	<u>4</u>

12. Students-“Classroom teacher” ratio: 18

13. The attendance patterns of teachers and students.

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Daily student attendance	96.6	96.1	96.5	96.5	96.6
Daily teacher attendance	97.9	97.1	97.6	97.8	98.1
Teacher turnover rate	12.0	8.0	4.0	0	4.0

PART III - SUMMARY

A Snapshot of Mt. Pleasant Academy

Mt. Pleasant Academy Elementary School, in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, has served the community as a neighborhood school since 1809. Our attendance zone was once the heart of a small village; it is now part of a rapidly growing suburb of Charleston. Mt. Pleasant Academy has been a vital and respected part of our community throughout this period because of our success in achieving our school's mission. *The mission of Mt. Pleasant Academy, working in partnership with families and the community, is to assist each student to excel academically, to act responsibly, and to expand talents and social skills by providing diverse learning experiences in a nurturing environment.*

Working in partnership with families and the community...

Mt. Pleasant Academy serves 342 children in nineteen classes for kindergarten through fifth grade. We enjoy diversity of ethnicity, income, and cultural heritage among our families. What unites our staff, our families, and our community is dedication to quality education. Family involvement is vital to our success. Families and community members act as mentors and tutors for our children and frequently offer presentations in the classroom and at school-wide events. The Mt. Pleasant Fire Department, Kiwanis Club, and local businesses and church groups give our students individual support and encouragement. In turn, our school works with the Boys and Girls Club, supports charitable organizations in the community, and serves as the site of the state's first nationally accredited after-school program. All our families belong to our PTA, and their efforts in sponsoring family programs and in fund-raising are vital to our school. Finally, our School Improvement Council exemplifies our mission of partnership, as family and community representatives meet with school staff to make key decisions governing our school.

To assist each student to excel academically...

Our families and staff are in agreement that academic excellence is at the heart of our mission. Our curriculum is based on rigorous, research-based national and state standards. Our school is identified in the community as having a great respect for traditional methods of instruction, and we have also chosen to use the best elements of innovative programs when they serve the needs of our children. The continuing strength of our academic program is demonstrated by the fact that Mt. Pleasant Academy has earned state incentive awards every year since its inception in 1984.

To act responsibly...

Children at Mt. Pleasant Academy are expected to demonstrate responsibility for their learning and behavior at developmentally appropriate levels throughout our school. In addition, students show responsibility to each other through peer tutoring, peer mediation, and collaborative learning. They also have an outstanding record of acting responsibly toward the larger community by working to support community organizations such as Meals on Wheels, the American Heart Association, and the Ronald McDonald Foundation.

To expand talents and social skills by providing diverse learning experiences...

Our school's high expectations for every child ensure that all children develop their talents in math, writing, science, reading, and the other academic areas. All students have a variety of experiences in the visual and performing arts and in athletics. Classroom instruction is rich in activities that appeal to different learning styles and foster the expression and expansion of individual talents. These classroom and school-wide performance opportunities, along with collaborative learning experiences and a strong guidance program, also encourage the development of healthy social interaction.

In a nurturing environment.

Our school's small size and neighborhood setting allow our families and staff to enjoy strong, personal relationships. We know our children and their families, we follow their progress through the grades, we offer our support when they have problems, and we celebrate their achievements. Most of all, we enjoy playing a part in their growth as learners and as individuals.

Part IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Palmetto Challenge Achievement Test (PACT) is published by the South Carolina Department of Education. A new edition is published yearly. PACT was developed in response to the requirements of the Education Accountability Act of 1998. The Education Accountability Act of 1998 called for setting higher standards for the state's K – 12 educational system and reviewing the state's improvement process. The improvement process included the development of demanding state tests and annual school report cards to report the results. The PACT test is administered to students in grades 3 – 8 in late April/early May of each school year. For the years 2000, 2001, and 2002, PACT consisted of subject area tests in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

Students receive one of the following performance level indicators on each subject area test of the PACT examination.

Below Basic: The student has not met minimum expectations for student performance based upon the South Carolina Curriculum Standards. The student is not prepared for work at the next grade level. An Academic Assistance Plan must be developed for the student.

Basic: The student has met minimum expectations for student performance based upon the South Carolina Curriculum Standards. The student is minimally prepared for work at the next grade level.

Proficient: The student has met expectations for student performance based on the South Carolina Curriculum Standards and is well prepared for work at the next grade level. The PROFICIENT level represents the long-term goal for student performance in South Carolina.

Advanced: The student has exceeded expectations for student performance based on the South Carolina Curriculum Standards and is very well prepared for work at the next grade level.

During 2001, *The Princeton Review* conducted a ranking of state accountability systems based on academic alignment, test quality, openness of policies and procedures, and consistency with the educational goals of the state. South Carolina's accountability system made the list of the best programs in the nation, ranking eighth out of the 50 states.

More than 96% of the students at Mt. Pleasant Academy were assessed using PACT in 2000, 2001, and 2002. An explanation of the students excluded is as follows: Limited English Proficient students were excluded from PACT per state policy through 2002. Also, per state policy, students with certain handicapping conditions were excluded when their disabilities prevented them from addressing the state curriculum standards. These students were assessed with alternate means. Only five students failed to take any one subtest due to absences during all three years of data presented; however, all of these students took at least one of the subject area tests.

Based on the test scores on the nationally ranked South Carolina assessment, the students at Mt. Pleasant Academy Elementary School perform in an exemplary manner overall and within subgroups. The performance of our students consistently exceeds average state and district performance, even when we are compared to schools with similar student populations.

PACT Grade 3 Mathematics

Results Reported in Percentages

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing Month	Apr/May	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	98.4	94.6	83.0
At Advanced	64.5	75.0	52.5
Number of students tested	62	56	59
Percent of total students tested	98.4	96.6	95.2
Number of students excluded	*1	*2	*3
Percent of students excluded	1.6	3.4	4.8
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. African American			
At or Above Basic	**	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	**	62.5	50.0
At Advanced	**	37.5	0.0
2. Free/Reduced Lunch			
At or Above Basic	**	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	**	57.2	60.0
At Advanced	**	28.6	20.0
3. LD Special Education			
At or Above Basic	**	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	**	100.0	87.5
At Advanced	**	61.5	62.5
STATE SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	73.3	71.8	68.8
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a
At or Above Proficient	30.9	32.8	25.3
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a
At Advanced	11.7	16.0	9.3
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a

*See next page

**Insufficient data

**PACT
Grade 3 Mathematics**

Groups Excluded from Testing

2001 – 2002

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How assessed: PACT Alt Performance Test
Number: 1 student; 1.6%

2000 – 2001

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How assessed: PACT Alt Performance Test
Number: 2 students; 3.4%

1999 - 2000

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How assessed: Portfolio
Number: 2 students; 3.0%

Group: Limited English Proficient
Reason: Met specified requirements from SC Department of Education
How assessed: Test of English Proficiency
Number: 1 student; 1.6%

PACT
Grade 3 English/Language Arts

Results Reported in Percentages

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing Month	Apr/May	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	93.6	83.6	93.1
At Advanced	24.2	14.5	20.7
Number of students tested	62	55	58
Percent of total students tested	98.4	94.8	94.0
Number of students excluded	*1	*3	*4
Percent of students excluded	2.0	5.2	6.0
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. African American			
At or Above Basic	**	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	**	50.0	66.7
At Advanced	**	12.5	0.0
2. Free/Reduced Lunch			
At or Above Basic	**	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	**	57.2	70.0
At Advanced	**	14.3	10.0
3. LD/Special Education			
At or Above Basic	**	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	**	66.6	100.0
At Advanced	**	8.3	50.0
STATE SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	80.2	78.5	74.4
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a
At or Above Proficient	41.6	41.4	40.0
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a
At Advanced	4.0	3.4	4.0
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a

*See next page

**Insufficient data

PACT
Grade 3 English/Language Arts
Groups Excluded from Testing

2001 – 2002

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How assessed: PACT Alt Performance Assessment
Number: 1 student; 1.6%

2000 – 2001

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How assessed: PACT Alt Performance Assessment
Number: 2 students; 3.4%

Group: Students in regular classroom
Reason: Absent during entire testing time
How assessed: No assessment given
Number: 1 student; 1.7%

1999 – 2000

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How assessed: Portfolio Assessment
Number: 2 students; 3.0%

Group: Limited English Proficient
Reason: Met specified conditions from SC Department of Education
How assessed: Test of English Proficiency
Number: 1 student; 1.6 %

Group: Students in regular classrooms
Reason: Absent during entire testing time
How assessed: No assessment given
Number: 1 student; 1.6%

PACT Grade 4 Mathematics

Results Reported in Percentages

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing Month	Apr/May	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	100.0	96.6	97.3
At or Above Proficient	87.0	74.1	74.0
At Advanced	59.3	44.8	38.4
Number of students tested	54	58	73
Percent of total students tested	98.0	88.0	94.8
Number of students excluded	*1	*8	*4
Percent of students excluded	2.0	12.0	5.2
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. African American			
At or Above Basic	100.0	77.8	85.7
At or Above Proficient	50.0	33.3	28.6
At Advanced	16.7	22.2	28.6
2. Free/Reduced Lunch			
At or Above Basic	100.0	83.3	88.9
At or Above Proficient	57.2	22.2	44.4
At Advanced	28.6	16.7	22.2
3. LD Special Education			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	75.0	50.0	33.3
At Advanced	75.0	33.3	0.0
STATE SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	75.2	67.3	61.6
State Mean Score	n/a	N/a	n/a
At or Above Proficient	36.2	25.9	23.6
State Mean Score	n/a	N/a	n/a
At Advanced	15.3	9.6	8.0
State Mean Score	n/a	N/a	n/a

*See next page

**PACT
Grade 4 Mathematics**

Groups Excluded from Testing

2001 – 2002

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How Assessed: PACT Alt Performance Assessment
Number: 1 student; 2.0%

2000 – 2001

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How Assessed: PACT Alt Performance Assessment
Number: 6 students; 9.0%

Group: Limited English Proficient
Reason: Met specified conditions from SC Department of Education
How assessed: Test of English Proficiency
Number: 1 student; 1.5%

Group: Students in regular classroom
Reason: Absent during entire testing time
How assessed: No assessment given
Number: 1 student; 1.5%

1999 – 2000

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How assessed: Portfolio Assessment
Number: 4 students; 5.2%

PACT
Grade 4 English/Language Arts

Results Reported in Percentages

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing Month	Apr/May	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	97.3
At or Above Proficient	83.3	84.5	76.7
At Advanced	14.8	8.6	12.3
Number of students tested	54	58	73
Percent of total students tested	98.0	88.0	94.8
Number of students excluded	*1	*8	*4
Percent of students excluded	2.0	12.0	5.2
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. African American			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	71.4
At or Above Proficient	16.7	44.4	14.3
At Advanced	0.0	0.0	0.0
2. Free/Reduced Lunch			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	88.9
At or Above Proficient	28.6	58.3	44.4
At Advanced	0.0	0.0	0.0
3. LD Special Education			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	75.0	83.4	55.6
At Advanced	12.5	16.7	0.0
STATE SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	80.5	80.5	72.0
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	N/a
At or Above Proficient	33.5	37.5	36.9
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	N/a
At Advanced	2.2	2.1	3.9
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	N/a

*See next page

PACT
Grade 4 English/Language Arts

Groups Excluded from Testing

2001 – 2002

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How Assessed: PACT Alt Performance Assessment
Number: 1 student; 2.0%

2000 – 2001

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How Assessed: PACT Alt Performance Assessment
Number: 6 students; 9.0%

Group: Limited English Proficient
Reason: Met specified conditions from SC Department of Education
How Assessed: Test of English Proficiency
Number: 1 student; 1.5%

Group: Students in regular classroom
Reason: Absent during entire testing time
How assessed: No assessment given
Number: 1 student; 1.5%

1999 – 2000

Group: Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason: IEP requirements
How assessed: Portfolio Assessment
Number: 4 students; 5.2%

PACT Grade 5 Mathematics

Results Reported in Percentages

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing Month	Apr/May	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	98.3	92.9	100.0
At or Above Proficient	74.6	72.9	65.6
At Advanced	45.8	50.0	17.2
Number of students tested	59	70	64
Percent of total students tested	96.7	98.6	97.0
Number of students excluded	*2	*1	*2
Percent of students excluded	3.3	1.4	3.0
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. African American			
At or Above Basic	90.0	71.4	100.0
At or Above Proficient	30.0	42.9	25.0
At Advanced	10.0	42.9	0.0
2. Free/Reduced Lunch			
At or Above Basic	92.3	100.0	100.0
At or Above Proficient	38.5	42.9	12.5
At Advanced	15.4	42.9	0.0
3. LD Special Education			
At or Above Basic	100.0	66.7	**
At or Above Proficient	42.9	33.3	**
At Advanced	28.6	11.1	**
STATE SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	71.1	62.8	58.6
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a
At or Above Proficient	29.0	27.5	19.8
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a
At Advanced	11.3	11.0	7.6
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a

*See table page

**Insufficient data

**PACT
Grade 5 Mathematics**

Groups Excluded from Testing

2001 – 2002

Group:	Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason:	IEP requirements
How Assessed:	PACT Alt Performance Assessment
Number:	2 students; 3.3%

2000 – 2001

Group:	Students in regular classroom
Reason:	Absent during entire testing time
How Assessed:	No assessment given
Number:	1 student; 1.4%

1999 – 2000

Group:	Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason:	IEP requirements
How Assessed:	Portfolio Assessment
Number:	2 students; 3.0%

PACT
Grade 5 English/Language Arts

Results Reported in Percentages

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing Month	Apr/May	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	98.4
At or Above Proficient	61.0	67.6	60.9
At Advanced	13.6	12.7	12.5
Number of students tested	59	71	64
Percent of total students tested	96.7	100.0	97.0
Number of students excluded	*2	*0	*2
Percent of students excluded	3.3	0.0	3.0
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. African American			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	91.7
At or Above Proficient	20.0	37.5	33.3
At Advanced	0.0	0.0	0.0
2. Free/Reduced Lunch			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	87.5
At or Above Proficient	23.1	57.1	12.5
At Advanced	0.0	0.0	0.0
3. LD Special Education			
At or Above Basic	100.0	100.0	**
At or Above Proficient	42.9	33.3	**
At Advanced	14.3	0.0	**
STATE SCORES			
TOTAL			
At or Above Basic	75.1	74.1	71.1
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a
At or Above Proficient	25.0	27.7	27.2
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a
At Advanced	1.4	2.1	2.2
State Mean Score	n/a	n/a	n/a

*See table page

**Insufficient data

**PACT
Grade 5 English/Language Arts**

Groups Excluded from Testing

2001 – 2002

Group:	Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason:	IEP requirements
How Assessed:	PACT Alt Performance Assessment
Number:	2 students; 3.3%

2000 – 2001

All students were tested.

1999 – 2000

Group:	Trainable Mentally Handicapped
Reason:	IEP requirements
How Assessed:	Portfolio Assessment
Number:	2 students; 3.0%

2. We Use Assessment Data to Understand and Improve Student and School Performance.

Research and our own experience have shown that effective instruction depends on frequent, meaningful assessment. A variety of proven assessment tools is used to determine each child's needs, plan instruction based on those needs, and determine the effectiveness of that instruction.

The South Carolina Readiness Assessment Program is used to evaluate the strengths and needs of each child throughout kindergarten and first grade. These tests, along with teacher evaluations, are used to design the most effective literacy instruction for that child. Continual assessment identifies learners who need additional or alternative support. Teachers then utilize other instructional methods, call in mentors from our volunteer base, or seek support from our special education resource teacher and our county's bank of special needs teachers. Repeating this cycle of assessment and instruction ensures that when our children complete first grade, they are reading at grade level and have mastered South Carolina's curriculum standards.

Alignment of assessment and instruction continues at every grade level. All students participate in South Carolina's state mandated assessment program (PACT) each year. These tests identify advanced learners who are then tested further for admission into our program for gifted and talented learners. This program is an extension of the regular classroom instruction. The state's test also identifies students who are not meeting state standards, so that parents and teachers can meet to develop an academic plan to address those weaknesses. Additional testing programs are used to plan assistance for students who have learning differences or need special education support services.

In addition to state and standardized tests, teachers continually design and implement assessments to judge the success of instruction. Results are used to revise our curriculum and instructional methods, to analyze our school's performance, to target areas of concern, and to set goals for students. A fundamental reason for the success of our students is that we use assessment to obtain information that will help us challenge the strengths and address the weaknesses of each child in a timely way.

3. We Communicate Student Performance, Including Assessment Data, to Parents, Students and the Community.

Two-way communication is vital to our students' success, and we provide families daily and weekly information on academic and social progress. Daily and weekly parent/teacher communication folders, phone calls, and conferences are a top priority for our teachers. Positive feedback is given to the parents along with suggestions for improving weak areas, and we actively solicit information from families regarding their children.

The State Department of Education's Annual School Report Card and results of the state accountability assessment program (PACT) are sent home to parents annually. The principal conducts public information meetings to explain the results of state assessments. Each classroom teacher holds a meeting with families to explain information included in the state's report card and PACT score reports. Each child's family receives comprehensive academic reports of student performance every four weeks. Teachers also meet with families to discuss individual assessment results. When test results indicate weaknesses, teachers and families meet to develop individual academic plans. The standards being taught and performances expected of the students are included in weekly and daily classroom reports.

Performance standards are identified to students for every lesson, results of assessments are promptly communicated, and teachers confer with students to help each child interpret his performance. With school-wide and classroom recognition programs for academic and social progress, and with individual stickers, smiles and hugs, each teacher constantly communicates with each child about academic performance.

Because partnership with our community is vital to our mission, families and staff work together to inform the community about our school's performance. Newspapers report our state assessment data, our successes, and our events. Open houses for prospective parents and an open door policy provide our community with easy access to information about our school's and our students' performance. Parent involvement is vital to our communication. Because of their involvement, parents are our best community voice, as they praise our successes in the community. Because we have established such open, constant, and successful communication with our community, our community government and businesses actively promote our school successes to the larger population in our county and state.

4. We Will Share Our Successes With Other Schools.

Mt. Pleasant Academy freely shares its success with other schools in a wide variety of ways. Our school has an open door policy, which encourages parents, other teachers, community members and administrators to visit at any time. This allows others to see how we implement our programs and address our state standards and invites conversation and ideas. We articulate, by grade level, with other schools quarterly to share and learn successful teaching techniques and standards implementation. Our principal articulates with other administrators during monthly meetings and through written communication. We also recruit student teachers and practicum students from local colleges to work with our teachers. Many of our teachers facilitate in-services, courses, and workshops for other teachers in the district, parents, and the community. Mt. Pleasant Academy pilots programs for the district and county. We also have a school committee of parents and teachers that informs the media of special events, strategies and achievements.

As a No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon School, Mt. Pleasant Academy will continue to share our successes with other schools by continuing to welcome school visits and providing information sessions about the strategies we use in our school. We will give multimedia presentations and video tours of our school to show the environment and activities that have helped Mt. Pleasant Academy reach academic excellence. Teachers from our school will offer in-services to other schools interested in our instructional methods and materials. Communicating our successes with other schools will be an ongoing process of high priority. We believe in our methods and are proud of our accomplishments at Mt. Pleasant Academy, and we will continue to seek innovative avenues of communication with other schools.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Our Curriculum Engages All Students With Significant Content Based On High Standards.

In compliance with federal mandates, in 1998, our state's Education Accountability Act began the development of a statewide curriculum based on research recommendations of national professional education groups, including the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Science Foundation, and the National Council of Teachers of English. Approximately eight years earlier, the faculty of Mt. Pleasant Academy, frustrated by a lack of confidence in the educational soundness of texts and methods of the time, had undertaken our own research to develop a curriculum driven by these national organizations' recommended curriculum standards. Thus, our school's curriculum was and is based on our state's and our nation's leading edge research.

As mandated by South Carolina, our school's curriculum includes language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, health and physical education. Within this curriculum are specific learner standards that drive instructional decision-making at the school level. The combination of effective content and process skills provides learning that is relevant and can be transferred among the disciplines. The curriculum is modified and aligned with the ways in which certain groups of children learn and process information. This ensures that children at Mt. Pleasant Academy receive developmentally appropriate instruction that is adapted to their needs in all subject areas. Our rigorous curriculum, based on state standards, meets and exceeds requirements for teaching every child. High expectations are evidenced as 99% of our students have met or exceeded minimum academic standards on PACT test results for the past three years, and over 80% were at or above the proficient level. When comparing all students classified as gifted and talented in Charleston County, 71% of the gifted and talented students at Mt. Pleasant Academy achieved advanced level on PACT. This far exceeds the percentage at any other school and reflects high expectations and significant content for all students in every classroom. From the extension classes for gifted and talented children to the classes for students with disabilities, each classroom operates with two driving forces: the curriculum standards and the individuality of the learners. And, in each classroom the excitement and enthusiasm for learning is contagious as teachers model and children actively participate in constructing their own knowledge.

Our students' instructional and assessment tasks are focused on engaging the learners in effectively taught and relevant content that encompasses a wide range of topic-worthy and interesting subject matter that is conceptually complex. Building concepts and relating these concepts among the disciplines encourage our students to make generalizations at the synthesis level. Instructional content that requires higher-level thinking generates opportunities for our students to become problem solvers today and in the future. All of our methods are for the explicit purpose of enabling our students to gain proficiency in our state's performance standards, thus affirming the significance of the content.

We are confident that the content of our instruction is significant because it focuses daily on state and national standards, and our students' performance on state and national assessment results confirms our beliefs. Each year, for the past three years, Mt. Pleasant Academy's absolute scores on the PACT have been the highest in the state. Federal law requires students in every state be tested using the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to assure the quality of each state's standards. Evaluation of the South Carolina standards shows South Carolina is one of six states with proficiency tests of difficulty comparable to the NAEP. This assures Mt. Pleasant Academy teachers, parents, and the community that our children are performing at the highest standards in the nation today.

2. Our Reading Curriculum And Why We Choose This Particular Approach to Reading

Reading instruction is the cornerstone of our curriculum at every grade level as reading, writing, speaking and listening are integrated throughout all content areas. Our teachers have trained in and have implemented a variety of scientifically sound, standards-based reading instruction models. Research shows that children learn differently, and if we offer only one model of instruction, children will be left behind. Additionally, in keeping with the research of the National Council of Teachers of English, we recognize that needs of the learner change as reading ability develops. Our school's test results show that our combination of reading approaches is successful for all our children.

Traditional phonics, sight words and basal programs are the core of our early curriculum as early word attack skills lay the necessary foundation to extend thinking skills. In the upper grades, the emphasis shifts to connecting the content areas by integrating higher-level cognitive and critical thinking skills through application of real-life experiences. Skills in brainstorming, webbing, and outlining give students the ability to think with organization and fluency. Teaching technical vocabulary and word analysis skills improves comprehension and teaches students to adjust their reading methods to the purpose of the text. Interdisciplinary units allow students to immerse themselves, through language arts, in purposeful activities related to the sciences and humanities. Individual student interest, diverse learning modalities, and a variety of proficiencies in skills are incorporated to tailor unit instruction for each student. Additionally, reading instruction is individualized through literary circles, computer lab practice, peer and parent volunteer tutoring and small group instruction. Writing is an integral part of our program and occurs across all genres to give students practice in applying skills and freely expressing themselves.

Our students are immersed in a literature-rich environment. We have a large, comprehensive and up-to-date media center, extensive classroom libraries, school-wide incentive programs, book clubs, book fairs, family reading nights, reading partnerships with Rotary International and local fire department volunteers and visiting authors. Parents and the community are closely involved in supporting and promoting reading as they give their time, talents and gifts to secure a nurturing environment to promote students' love of reading.

3. Our Science Curriculum Relates Essential Skills And Knowledge Based On Our Mission.

Mt. Pleasant Academy is a participant in a National Science Foundation grant program, Project Inquiry, which is designed to improve science instruction, promote equity and diversity in the classroom, and facilitate professional development for elementary school science teachers. Our teachers are trained to use the inquiry method to structure science instruction, foster multiple types of intelligence, and nurture the diverse talents of different types of learners. Inquiry methods and the use of science notebooks allow learners to develop and express their written and oral communication skills, artistic talents, and problem solving abilities. Our students develop their social skills while working on inquiry-based activities in small collaborative groups, and teachers incorporate creative drama and literature to reinforce science content learning.

Family and community resources are a vital part of our science program. Family members and community volunteers from the science professions often serve as presenters in the classroom and lab. Members of the community have created a memorial fund that has helped equip our science lab in honor of one of our science teachers. Business donations and community-based fund-raising efforts have provided materials that allow our children to explore science concepts and make real world connections in an active, hands-on way.

The science curriculum at Mt. Pleasant Academy implements the South Carolina science standards, which are in turn based on National Science Education Standards. It is both research-based and very rigorous. All students, including those with learning disabilities, sensory impairments, and language differences, participate in developmentally appropriate, standards-based science instruction beginning in kindergarten. Our curriculum fosters critical thinking, analytical skills, and problem solving through scientific investigation.

4. We Use Different Instructional Methods To Improve Student Learning.

From the independent group projects that require synthetic and evaluative thinking in the creation of a whole new country to the Edmark Sight Word Program specifically designed for children with mental disabilities, the instructional methods at Mt. Pleasant Academy are an eclectic mix. This mix is in no way random, but has been specifically formulated based on research and the experience of our faculty in serving the needs of our particular student population. The faculty body has deliberately sought a large knowledge base of pedagogically sound methods from which to draw.

From this body of knowledge, our kindergarten classes use the constructivists' models of teaching. As learners develop, we move toward direct teaching, with an emphasis on modeling, followed by guided practice. However, we also incorporate community-based trips, activity-based mathematics, inquiry and guided discovery units, cooperative and ability grouping, collaborative learning, individualized instruction, peer tutoring, creative dramatics, independent and collaborative research projects, writing across the curriculum, incorporation of the arts, and the integration of all parts of the curriculum in thematic units. Always, the teacher is modeling.

As part of our instructional methods, the faculty uses standards-based assessments, tiered to meet each student's needs, to individually diagnose each student's understanding. This forms the foundation upon which differentiated instructional methods are based to move the student's learning from the known to the unknown with real world ties that help each child make the knowledge his own. The state's academic assessment program (PACT) scores validate the instructional methods we have chosen as we continue to exceed the adequate yearly progress required in the No Child Left Behind legislation.

Our methods are driven by our goal: to always address individual styles, modalities, and intelligences across the curriculum and at the appropriate developmental level of each child and thus fulfill our mission to provide diverse learning experiences in a nurturing environment.

5. Our Professional Development Program And Its Impact On Improving Student Achievement

The teachers at Mt. Pleasant Academy work collaboratively to enhance student achievement through a variety of professional growth activities. Our school's professional development program is driven by the state standards, the changing needs of our students, and the highly motivated and enthusiastic staff. Our staff's professional development experiences focus on improving student achievement. School and district based professional in-service training, district liaison curriculum sessions, and college graduate courses increase teachers' knowledge of curriculum materials, curriculum standards, content-specific strategies for effective teaching, and evaluative methods to help identify and meet the needs of diverse learners. Faculty members continually seek the knowledge of new methods and materials to make the best-educated decisions for our students. Faculty members also continually share their expertise in developing ways to apply knowledge and strategies in the best interest of each learner. Our approach to effective staff development includes professional training, implementing this training, and, in conjunction with administration and other staff, continually assessing and analyzing the effectiveness of new methods in the classroom, and ultimately sharing effective outcomes with peers to assure true professional growth.

By identifying the specific needs of the students, teachers have focused their training in several critical areas. Every staff member is trained in progressive technology skills. Every member of our staff has received advanced training in content areas, and many teach graduate level courses in content and methodology. Eighty percent of our faculty is active as members in at least one professional organization. Many attend state, regional and national conferences and present teacher-training seminars at these conferences. Our professional development program reflects the collegial efforts of the faculty and staff, as well as the support of school and district administrators.