

REVISED – MARCH 24, 2005

2004-2005 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet

Type of School: Elementary Middle High K-12

Name of Principal Mrs. Jan Richards
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Laurel Mountain Elementary
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 10111 D-K Ranch Road
Austin, Texas 78759 - 6402

County Travis School Code Number* 246909116

Telephone (512) 464-4300 Fax (512) 464-4390

Website/URL: [Laurel Mountain Performance Indicators](http://www.roundrockisd.org/laurelmountain) E-Mail: Jan_Richards@roundrockisd.org
www.roundrockisd.org/laurelmountain

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. Thomas Gaul
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Round Rock Independent School District Tel. (512) 464-5000

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
President/Chairperson Mr. John Romano
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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 President's/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. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2004-2005 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. 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 the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. 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.
8. 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 2004-2005.

DISTRICT

- Number of schools in the district:
 - 27 Elementary schools
 - 8 Middle schools
 - 0 Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 2 Other – 1 Ninth Grade Center
1 Alternative Learning Center
 - 41 TOTAL
- District Per Pupil Expenditure: Including all district funds \$6,708 AEIS: \$4,918
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$8,029

SCHOOL

- 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
- 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
- Number of students as of October 1, 2004 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				7			
K	66	49	115	8			
1	71	52	123	9			
2	78	59	137	10			
3	67	50	117	11			
4	57	58	115	12			
5	57	69	126	Other			
6							
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							733

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school: 53 % White
1 % Black or African American
5 % Hispanic or Latino
40 % Asian/Pacific Islander
1 % American Indian/Alaskan Native
100% Total

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 7.4%

(This rate should be 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.	31
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	21
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	52
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2003	698
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	$\frac{52}{698}$
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	$.074 \times 100$

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 14%

Based on enrollment of 733 on 10-01-04 103 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 25

Specify languages: Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Kannada, Konkani, Korean, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Panjabi, Russian, Spanish, Taiwanese, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3%

Total number students who qualify: 25

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 federally-supported lunch 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: 7%
54 Total Number of Students Served

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

<u>10</u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>23</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
	<u> </u> Emotional Disturbance

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> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>35</u>	<u>2</u>
		2 teachers job-share 1 position
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>
Support staff	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
Total number	<u>67</u>	<u>14</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 20:1
 The 20:1 ratio was calculated by using the October 1, 2004 enrollment of 733 students and dividing by the 36 classroom/homeroom teachers in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade.

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
LME Daily student attendance	97.2%	97%	97.4%	97.1%	97.6%
RRISD Daily teacher attendance *	92.8%	90.3%	91.4%	90.1%	91.9%
RRISD Teacher turnover rate	6%	13%	17%	15%	21%

* RRISD does not track data on teacher daily attendance by individual campus. Human Resources used the number of teachers, as reflected on the AEIS report, and compared the total available hours per year to the “Total Filled Job Hours” from the substitute system to come up with the approximate attendance rates. Some of the sub hours could reflect absences other than teachers. This also includes absences for staff development reasons as well as illness or other unanticipated absences.

Part III – SUMMARY

Laurel Mountain Elementary, located in a northwest Austin, Texas suburban neighborhood, often surprises visitors with its ethnic diversity. We are a learning community of people from many cultures and nations. Our students speak 25 languages, and they celebrate this cultural diversity while we prepare them to become leaders of our community, city, state, country, and world. Our mission states that we will, “provide a safe, nurturing environment in which all children will develop the skills, strategies, and attitudes necessary to become independent explorers, critical thinkers, leaders, and responsible citizens.” We are a professional learning community where every administrator, parent, teacher, support staff member, and student is expected to share responsibility for realizing this mission.

Our dedicated faculty and staff lead us to succeed. The guiding vision of our principal sets a standard for excellence and progressive educational practice. Initiatives such as, differentiated instruction and problem-based learning are enthusiastically supported, implemented, and evaluated. Laurel Mountain teachers create nurturing classrooms where children develop academically, socially, and emotionally. Our teachers are passionate about education. They are learners themselves—continually seeking new knowledge to answer the question—“How can I help this child?”

At Laurel Mountain, engaged learning is our practice. Our strategies include aligning the state curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS), both vertically (across grade levels) and horizontally (within grade levels) to ensure seamless instruction. Assessments that provide knowledge of individual student needs drive our instruction. Pre-assessments and other indicators of prior learning support the differentiated learning model used in our classrooms to enrich or remediate depending on student need. We implement a quality management system both at the campus and classroom level, a system that helps each of our 733 students share responsibility for their learning.

All Laurel Mountain students are provided both enrichment and service learning opportunities. Enrichment is provided at all instructional levels examples include: Light Bulb Projects—students select a topic on which to research and report. K.I.D.S. KITS—themed boxes of hands-on materials support a variety of student interests. Take-Out Science Kits—students take science experiments home. Robo Lab—students build and motorize Legos. Claymation—students computerize movement in clay sculptures. All grade levels provide enrichment days from “Immigration Day” in fifth grade to a celebration of the “100th Day of School” in kindergarten. We have many after-school clubs including Math Pentathlon, Chess, Spanish, Storytelling, Art, Destination Imagination, and Chorus. Service opportunities for the school community include the Recycling Green Team, Lionhearts, Safety Patrol and Jump Rope for Heart. Our goal is to ensure that learning comes alive as each student is engaged, has fun, and finds meaning and purpose in their accomplishments.

One of Laurel Mountain’s greatest resources is our parent involvement. Parents set high standards for their children and support student success with their participation in our learning community. Parents contributed over 14,000 hours of volunteer time last year. Everyday, parents enhance our students’ learning by working in classrooms, creating instructional materials, providing enrichment in art and music, serving on committees, and initiating ideas for continuous improvement. In addition, our PTA annually contributes monies to fund additional supplies and programs that enhance learning.

Every child at Laurel Mountain has a “story—” a past, a present, and a future. As administrators, teachers, and parents, we listen to each story. Then we teach, inspire, support, and encourage. Together, we are building a better world, one student at a time.

Part IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Meaning of Assessment Results

Laurel Mountain Elementary students are assessed on the required curricula, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), through the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) assessments. All students in 3rd through 11th grades take TAKS in reading and mathematics annually, and test in science, writing, and social studies every few years. In order to be promoted to 4th grade, all 3rd grade students must demonstrate mastery on the reading TAKS test. Each TAKS test consists of questions designed to measure problem solving, critical thinking, processing, and application of knowledge and skills in a specific content area. Schools are rated by the state as Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable or Low-Performing based on overall campus results of passing rates in each tested area, as well as performance of subpopulations. In addition to passing percentages, Texas school results are further compared for Commended Level performance (90% correct).

Laurel Mountain teachers and administrators use the results of the annual TAKS assessment to measure student achievement in order to plan for continuous improvement. Laurel Mountain students continue to exceed state standards and perform at the Exemplary Level, having received this recognition for the past 10 years. We measure student achievement not only by the percentage of students passing the TAKS, but also by analyzing Commended Level performance, scale scores, and proficiency on each reading and math objective. There are no discrepancies noted between represented subpopulations as defined by Texas or Federal criteria. Represented student groups consistently passed each the math and reading sections of the TAKS at 98% or better.

Exemplary Performance in Reading at Laurel Mountain:

- 2004 TAKS - 99% of 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored at the Mastery Level, exceeding the state's average of 85%
- 2003 TAKS - 51% of 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored at the Commended Level
- 2004 TAKS - 57% of 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored at the Commended Level exceeding 42% at the district level and 28% at the state level
- 2004 TAKS - 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored 85% or higher on the 4 tested objectives
- 2004 TAKS - 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored at the Commended Level on 75% of the 4 objectives tested at each grade level.

Exemplary Performance in Math at Laurel Mountain:

- 2004 TAKS - 99% of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders scored at the Mastery Level, exceeding the state's average of 86%
- 2003 TAKS - 48% of 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored at the Commended Level
- 2004 TAKS - 68% of 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored at the Commended Level exceeding 37% at the district level and 24% at the state level
- 2004 TAKS - scaled scores increased in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade
- 2004 TAKS - 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored 88% or higher on the 6 tested objectives
- 2004 TAKS - 3rd, 4th, 5th graders scored the Commended Level on 83% of the 6 objectives tested at each grade level.

In August 2002, Laurel Mountain was designated an ESOL campus, serving approximately 25 LEP (Limited English Proficient) students. By May 2004 we served 65 LEP students who spoke 25 different languages. Our staff works diligently to learn and implement effective instructional strategies for our diverse student population. Our continued increases in test scores are a result of highly trained, caring teachers, enthusiastic students, and involved parents. Laurel Mountain Elementary is a data-driven school where we continually analyze data from TAKS, benchmark tests, unit tests, anecdotal records, and observations to determine strengths and weaknesses. Our teachers address student needs by changing instructional strategies, enhancing instructional materials, restructuring time during the school day, and

clarifying objectives taught. All staff work together to ensure the effectiveness of instructional programs, efficient allocation of resources, and effective use of personnel. All stakeholders are active participants in developing learning opportunities to meet the diverse needs of our student population.

More comprehensive results and information on testing can be viewed in the assessment area at www.tea.state.tx.us or <http://www.roundrockisd.org/home/index.asp?page=399>

2. Using Assessment to Improve Student and School Performance

The teachers, administration, and staff at Laurel Mountain Elementary use various assessment tools to ensure success for all students and to improve school performance. Our continuous improvement efforts begin before school opens and continue throughout the year.

Student Performance: Before school starts, teachers learn about their assigned students by reviewing data folders, standardized test scores, report cards, writing portfolios, parent conference input, and teacher observations. The classroom teachers work collaboratively with campus instructional specialists to share insights into the strengths of each student and to identify areas for continued growth. The specialists include personnel from special education, ESOL, talented and gifted, speech, specialists in reading, occupational therapy, and the counselor.

The written, taught, and assessed curriculum is aligned to the state standards-the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Prior to new units of study, students are given pre-tests to determine their current mastery levels. Teachers use the pre-test results to plan instruction and learning opportunities that meet the needs of each student. Flexible groups are formed based on individual needs. Some students explore to a greater depth and complexity a unit's concepts and skills while others are learning the required concepts and skills or focusing on prerequisite learning not yet mastered to fill learning gaps.

Students participate in setting personal learning goals based on the TEKS and then monitor their progress towards mastery. In addition to mastery of content areas, teachers monitor student growth in researching, experimenting, listening, speaking, writing, and problem solving. Monitoring systems include observational notes, checklists, work samples, performance assessment, student self-evaluation, data folders, tests, reflective writing, and evaluation conferences. Analysis of these evaluations by teachers and students leads to instructional decisions that increase individual student achievement.

School Performance. Assessment data is collected from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) for 3rd through 5th grade, Texas Primary Reading Initiative (TPRI) for students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and district benchmark tests in reading, writing, math, social studies and science. Teachers disaggregate the data and combine the information from the classroom assessments and observations to make instructional decisions. Additionally, the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) developed by teachers and the Site Based Advisory Committee, reflects areas for school-wide improvement with specific goals for each grade level. Progress on the CIP goals are measured throughout the year and communicated in an annual summary to staff, families, and district personnel.

3. Communication of Student Performance

At Laurel Mountain Elementary, we achieve student success by building positive relationships and meaningful communication between school, home, and the community. Our children and parents speak 25 different languages in their homes. To provide all parents information on our school and student performance, our Site Based Advisory Committee, PTA, and staff are developing action plans, which include providing translators, translating written communication, and hosting cultural meetings.

Parents and students are provided TEKS maps outlining the student learning expectations for the year. TEKS maps are also available to the community on our school website. Teachers, students, and parents work collaboratively to determine specific academic goals for each student. Student progress towards learning goals is shared through individual conferences, data folders, written communication, student/teacher created rubrics, peer conferencing, and analysis of standardized tests and classroom assessments. Communication with parents includes a weekly folder with descriptive comments on student work, report cards, e-mails, notes, and phone calls. In Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade, the developmental report card indicates progress in mastering learning goals. Parents are invited to visit classrooms to observe and to participate in learning activities. Parents and teachers discuss accomplishments and intervention needs for individual students. More formal, written communications on student progress are provided to parents through Building Committee Meetings, LPAC meetings, 504 meetings, and ARD meetings. Each year, parents attend two parent conferences to discuss their student's progress. In many grades, these conferences are student-led. Teachers work with students on gathering data, drawing conclusions, and presentation skills about their progress. The parents, student, and teacher together make recommendations to ensure continued progress.

Reports of all standardized test results (TAKS, OLSAT, SDDA, LDAA, RPTE) are sent to parents. Teachers, administrators, and the counselor answer questions or interpret test data with parents. Student performance and assessment information is publicized to the community on the district's website, the Laurel Mountain website, and the local newspaper. The State of Texas publishes a report annually outlining specific school performance indicators.

4. Sharing Successes

Laurel Mountain has a widely recognized tradition of excellence. Our staff continually learns from other schools, and willingly shares our processes, ideas, and accomplishments. Other schools have requested our program design, implementation, and results on gifted education, enrichment, special education, ESOL, and SAIL (Student Assistance in Learning) programs. Laurel Mountain teachers provide in-service training at other campuses and welcome teachers to observe in our classrooms. Mentoring student teachers, novice teachers, or candidates for National Board Certification offer opportunities for Laurel Mountain teachers to model effective teaching, learning, and monitoring practices.

A district-wide initiative to align the written, taught and assessed curriculum to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) is heartily embraced at Laurel Mountain. The district's website highlights units of study developed at our campus, using them as models for other campuses. Teachers from Laurel Mountain participate on district curriculum councils, develop district scope and sequence documents, and benchmark tests. Laurel Mountain teachers participate with colleagues from across the district to share instructional strategies in art, music, wellness education, special education, and gifted education.

During the past four years, teams of Laurel Mountain teachers and administrators have presented at the Model Schools Conference in Washington DC and Professional Learning Communities at Work Conference with Rick DuFour in both Chicago and Austin. These experiences provided opportunities not only to share our processes, but more importantly to learn from other exemplary schools.

For the past ten years, Laurel Mountain has received an Exemplary Rating from the Texas Accountability System. On the 2004 TAKS, we earned the Gold Performance Acknowledgement for student achievement in Reading/ELA, Writing, Math, and Science. Recognition by the Greater Austin Quality Council Level III Baldrige Quality Award underscores our campus commitment to systems of excellence.

Part V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

I. School Curriculum

Our curriculum, because it is aligned, challenging, and culturally rich, engages students in meaningful learning that results in high achievement. Laurel Mountain teachers build this strong curriculum by aligning the state standards, TEKS, to both assessments and learning experiences. Such alignments are the foundation for powerful teaching and learning. Working collaboratively, teachers develop units of study that integrate reading, writing, and math with science and social studies. Associated with each unit of study are teaching and learning strategies selected to meet individual student needs and learning styles. Our aligned curriculum is a “work in progress,” continually changing to meet student needs. Guided by the work of Heidi Hayes Jacobs and H. Lynn Erickson, our curriculum emphasizes concept development in ways that build meaning and make connections to past and future learning. Student learning improves because a balance exists between teacher organized activities and student initiated and self-directed work. Students have opportunities to think critically, solve problems, work in cooperative groups, set goals, monitor progress, practice self-discipline, and develop social skills.

Students master mathematical processes and skills through the use of manipulatives, hands-on activities, problem solving, cooperative learning, and real world application of mathematical knowledge. Math lessons are designed so that students value mathematics, and become confident in their ability to reason, problem solve, and communicate mathematically.

Our social studies curriculum is presented separately, but also is integrated in meaningful ways through grade level appropriate study of history, geography, economics, government, citizenship, culture, science, technology, and society. We learn daily about different cultures. Our cultural diversity provides multiple opportunities for everyone to learn and appreciate each person’s unique perspective. The children at Laurel Mountain are invaluable resources for students, teachers, parents, and the community as we continually learn from and about each other.

Our classroom practices support the state’s expectation that education promotes science as a way of learning about the natural world. Through hands-on exploration of concepts, students learn how science has built a vast body of changing and increasing knowledge described by physical, mathematical, and conceptual models, but that science cannot answer all questions.

Communication is the foundation of our language arts curriculum. We emphasize the ability to read, write, analyze, build meaning, and relate ideas through spoken and written language. Teachers are trained in writing as a process and in balanced literacy programs that promote individualized instruction. Student writing samples are analyzed vertically to provide consistent, progressive expectations.

Full-time teachers in art, music and wellness education at Laurel Mountain provide students with a foundation and appreciation of the arts and physical activities as well as integration of knowledge and skills from the core curriculum. Students learn to read music and play a variety of instruments through a cultural exploration of sound. Students express themselves artistically through painting, sculpture, and textiles that are representative of the historical and multicultural influence of art. The annual gallery night showcases at least one self-selected creative work from each student, forming a campus-wide portfolio that covers every wall.

Teachers and parents have high expectations for learning by all students. Our classrooms are positive learning environments where students maintain or develop high achievement expectations. Learning is possible when students believe they can achieve. Teachers and students recognize and celebrate effort that leads to accomplishment of learning goals. When students struggle to learn, Laurel Mountain teachers ask themselves, “What do I need to change in my teaching so this student will be successful?”

2. Reading Curriculum

Learning to read is a process that requires students to be active and creative, and to use higher order thinking strategies through comprehension of written text, supported by strategies to develop accuracy and fluency. Laurel Mountain Elementary students construct meaning from reading in order to learn and analyze new information, to read for pleasure, and to make meaningful connections to personal experiences. Based on the research of Regie Routman, Irene Fountas, and Gay Su Pinnell, our teachers guide students to become successful independent readers through a balanced literacy approach defined as reading and writing to, with, and by the children. Reading instruction is regularly integrated with science and social studies to create authentic learning experiences.

During shared reading, all classrooms, including art, music, and physical education, provide opportunities for students to interact with print in the form of stories, books, songs, poems, plays, word walls, research, and primary source documents. Guided reading instruction emphasizes development of strategies to improve comprehension, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and accuracy. The teacher and students work in flexible groups based on instructional level where successful reading strategies are shared and discussed and new strategies are introduced. Literature Circles, student-led book studies are designed to gain a deeper understanding of literature by increasing comprehension and higher level thinking skills. Through reflective discussion, students predict, summarize, analyze, and draw conclusions. During independent reading, the students self-select books of interest and participate in literacy workstations. Our campus-developed Literacy Library provides leveled fiction and non-fiction books allowing teachers to select books that meet an individual student's reading ability and interest.

Teachers monitor comprehension, vocabulary development, phonics, and fluency by observing and interacting with students as they read authentic texts for meaningful purposes. Instruction is differentiated, based on information collected in student data folders, teacher observational notes, and formal assessments. Additional support is provided to students and teachers by reading specialists, special education, gifted education, and ESOL specialists. This support may include intensive small group instruction, one on one instruction, inclusion support, alternative instructional strategies and resources, consultation between teachers, and/or parental involvement.

3. Science Curriculum

In the content area of science, representatives from each grade level collaborate to vertically align earth science from the Texas Essential Skills and Knowledge objectives. We chose earth science based on our 2004 TAKS data. This teacher team discusses academic language, concepts, essential questions, assessments, and differentiation to increase student achievement. Grade level teachers reflecting on past successes and future changes will follow aligned instruction.

Students take advantage of numerous science opportunities: Take-Home Science Experiments connect home and school as parents and children explore science concepts. Students conduct independent research and report findings on our school television broadcast program. Students write scripts and gather visuals, producing videos taped for broadcast during a weekly Feature Spot. Light-Bulb projects encourage students to create their own enrichment projects based on personal interest for an authentic audience. Mad Science®, an after-school program, and the annual campus science discovery fair offer group and independent exploration opportunities. Several grade levels have established gardens around the school that are used for real world application of both math and science skills. The Laurel Mountain Green Team develops and markets a recycling project for both paper and ink cartridges. This project promotes responsible citizenship and earns money for the school. With the help of local engineers, teachers assist all students with thinking, planning, and programming robots through Robo-Lab. Whether it's safety in the science lab, hands-on discovery of science concepts, differentiated learning based on process or product, take home science experiments, broadcasting on our school TV program, creating and maintaining a school garden and greenhouse, or parents volunteering to work with teachers creating

special event days, the Laurel Mountain science curriculum focuses on student learning of the state essential skills and knowledge objectives. We are a learning community dedicated to developing the skills, strategies, and attitudes necessary to become independent explorers, critical thinkers, leaders, and responsible citizens.

4. Instructional Methods Used to Improve Student Learning

Research supports the finding that an important factor in student success is a positive relationship between the student and teacher. Beginning the first minute of the first day of school, students at Laurel Mountain become a part of a classroom learning community. Together students and teachers develop class mission statements and share expected learning outcomes. Throughout the year, teachers establish positive relationships with each student by engaging in conversation, learning about the students' talents and interests, and attentively listening. The research-based instructional methods identified below are successful in our classrooms because students feel respected and therefore are willing to take risks and accept challenges.

Laurel Mountain follows the 3-High Achievement Model developed by The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). It outlines five research-based instructional methods to improve student learning. Experiential instructional methods provide students opportunities to learn through real-world experiences. As examples, our students monitor school energy consumption and recycling, produce a live morning television broadcast, develop and implement plans to secure additional resources, and in a special project, collected 6,700 books for a library in Uganda. A collaborative learning model allows our students to work in small groups to discuss concept-based learning objectives, peer conference, problem solve, and complete projects. Students learn with one another and receive feedback from fellow students. Using an individualized approach, Laurel Mountain students set personal learning goals, develop action plans, collect data, and reflect on learning outcomes to ensure future success. Student interests, learning styles, and specific needs are used to decide how mastery will be demonstrated. One student may complete a research project, another a PowerPoint presentation, and yet another a model to demonstrate learning. A diagnostic and prescriptive approach targets specific learning and/or social goals. Administrators, classroom teachers, the counselor, special education teachers, gifted education teachers, reading specialists, parents, and students work together to develop specific action plans to develop the skills, strategies, and monitoring necessary for successful completion of targeted goals. The accelerated learning model provides opportunities for students to study to a greater depth and complexity specific learning objectives. All students participate in enrichment activities such as, service to the community or world, technology, after school clubs, grade level learning events, cultural awareness events, independent learning, and school-wide events.

Many instructional support resources are available to staff and students. Additional resources are secured based on documented student needs as dictated by district goals and the Campus Improvement Plan. Our campus budget is increased through the generosity of PTA fund-raising events, corporate and business donations, grants, and individual parent donations.

5. Professional Development Program

The reoccurring Exemplary ratings for Laurel Mountain Elementary result from our professional learning community working in many types of teams to achieve shared goals. At Laurel Mountain Elementary, embedded collaboration is a routine practice. Research indicates collaboration has a positive effect on improving classroom teaching and student achievement. All teachers at Laurel Mountain Elementary receive professional learning as a part of their daily work. We analyze student data and then develop campus and classroom goals based on the student needs revealed by the data. The Academic Leadership Team (ALT), supported by administration plans, selects, implements, and evaluates a multitude of adult learning opportunities designed to improve student achievement. Data is collected throughout the year on both professional learning and what impact it has on student learning.

All teachers are engaged in daily embedded professional learning accomplished by examining student data and work samples, visiting other classrooms, leading a school-wide committee, being a mentor, observing model lessons, collaborating vertically and horizontally, aligning curriculum to state standards, developing concept-based curriculum maps, planning school improvement, and collaboratively planning lessons. In addition to district-wide staff development days, grade level teams are provided eight additional collaborative meeting times, plus four half days that focus on developing concept-based curriculum maps. Also, the district has created new positions called Curriculum Integration Specialists (CIS) and a Teacher Cadre to work directly with teachers at the campus level to improve instruction. Classroom teachers use the expertise of the CIS and Teacher Cadre for lesson design, model teaching, peer coaching, and analysis of student work. Additional opportunities for professional learning are faculty meetings, campus improvement plan meetings, grade level meetings with administration, monthly Academic Leadership Team meetings, Site Based Advisory Committee meetings, and team meetings. Yearly action research projects provide teachers in-depth learning based on Campus Improvement Plan goals targeted to improve student achievement. Finally, teachers may attend outside trainings that support campus or district goals.

Our parent community recognizes the quality of education their children receive and understands the need for staff to continuously improve curriculum and instructional delivery. Parent support is evident from generous donations of volunteer time as well as financial contributions through the PTA for teacher training programs.

PART VII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Explanation of Data Tables

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)
2002-2003 2003-2004

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)
1999-2000 2000-2001 2001-2002

In accordance with the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, Texas calculation of passing percentages in 2002-2003 changed in significant ways from calculations in prior years. First, the test changed from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills to the much more rigorous Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. Second, some students with disabilities who were previously exempted from the accountability calculations were included in all proficiency calculations. Third, students were required to be enrolled in a school for 120 consecutive days in order to be included in the calculations for that school. These changes may cause the data from the 2002-2003 school year and beyond to appear different from the data from previous years for some schools. In addition to the TAKS in English, state scores include tests in Spanish, Limited English Proficient, and Special Education. Grade 3 scores are cumulative, given over the course of the year to facilitate promotion. By law, if students don't pass the 3rd grade reading test, they are not promoted to the next grade.

TAAS Test Standards 1999-2002

- Academic Recognition: This represents high academic achievement (95%) in reading, math, and/or writing (4th grade)
- Met Minimum Expectations: This represents satisfactory academic achievement. Students performed at or above the state passing standard as set by the State Board of Education.
- Did Not Meet Minimum Expectations: This represents unsatisfactory academic achievement. Students performed below the state passing standard.

TAKS Test Standards 2002-2003 and 2003-2004

- Commended Performance: This represents high academic achievement (93% approx) in reading, math, writing (4th grade), and/or science (5th grade)
- Met the Standard: This represents satisfactory academic achievement. Students performed at or above the state passing standard as set by the State Board of Education.
- Did Not Meet Standard: This represents unsatisfactory academic achievement. Students performed below the state passing standard.

Students Exempt from TAAS or TAKS

- Special Education students for which the TAAS or TAKS would not be an appropriate assessment measure, even with allowable modifications, are assessed using the State Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) or a Locally Developed Alternative Assessment (LDAA). This decision is made by the special education Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARD). The baseline year for SDAA was 2000-2001.
- Recent immigrant students that have not had sufficient time to acquire the necessary academic language are assessed on alternative assessments. These students are assessed using the Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE), Observation Protocol, portfolio assessments, and math assessments. This decision is made by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC).

Texas Third-Grade Criterion-Referenced Reading Test

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/publication year: 2004 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

SCHOOL YEAR	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Test Given	TAKS	TAKS	TAAS	TAAS	TAAS
Testing month	Mar/Apr	Mar/Apr	April	April	April
Total Students	103	102	103	113	126
SCHOOL SCORES					
(TAKS,TAAS) % Commended Performance	61%	60%	55%	57%	55%
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	100%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	98%	97%
Number of students TAKS/TAAS Tested	94	95	102	107	121
% of total students tested TAKS/TAAS	91%	93%	99%	95%	96%
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	4	0	4	NA
% of students alternatively assessed	3%	4%	0%	4%	NA
Number of students exempt or absent	6	3	1	2	5
% of students exempt or absent	6%	3%	1%	1%	4%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	60%	58%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	100%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	96%	96%
Number of students tested	57	62	71	75	77
2. Asian/Pacific Island					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	69%	68%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	100%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	100%	100%
Number of students tested	32	28	26	26	28
STATE SCORES					
(TAKS) % At or above Commended Performance	35%	26%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % At or Above Met Standard	91%	89%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	87%	86%	87%

Fewer than 5 students were in the subpopulations, Hispanic, African American, and Economically Disadvantaged, therefore results are masked to protect student confidentiality.

Texas Third-Grade Criterion-Referenced Math Test

Subject: Math Grade: 3 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/publication year: 2004 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

SCHOOL YEAR	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Test Given	TAKS	TAKS	TAAS	TAAS	TAAS
Testing month	April	April	April	April	April
Total Students	103	102	103	113	126
SCHOOL SCORES					
(TAKS, TAAS) % Commended Performance	68%	38%	30%	34%	51%
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	100%			
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards			100%	96%	99%
Number of students tested TAKS/TAAS	95	96	103	109	121
% of total students tested TAKS/TAAS	92%	94%	100%	96%	96%
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	4	0	2	NA
% of students alternatively assessed	2%	4%	0%	2%	NA
Number of students exempt or absent	6	2	0	2	5
% of students exempt of absent	6%	2%	0%	2%	4%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	60%	32%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	100%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	95%	99%
Number of students tested	58	63	71	77	77
2. Asian/Pacific Island					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	84%	54%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	100%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	100%	100%
Number of students tested	32	28	27	26	28
STATE SCORES					
(TAKS) % At or above Commended Performance	25%	18%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % At or Above Met Standard	90%	90%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	87%	82%	80%

Fewer than 5 students were in the subpopulations, Hispanic, African American, and Economically Disadvantaged, therefore results are masked to protect student confidentiality.

Texas Fourth-Grade Criterion-Referenced Reading Test

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/publication year: 2004

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

SCHOOL YEAR	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Test Given	TAKS	TAKS	TAAS	TAAS	TAAS
Testing month	April	April	April	April	April
Total Students	115	114	123	131	130
SCHOOL SCORES					
(TAKS, TAAS) % Commended Performance	48%	45%	82%	68%	68%
(TAKS) % Met Standard	99%	96%			
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards			99%	99%	99%
Number of students tested TAKS/TAAS	105	112	117	125	126
% of total students tested TAKS/TAAS	91%	98%	95%	95%	97%
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	2	4	4	NA
% of students alternatively assessed	4%	2%	3%	3%	NA
Number of students exempt/absent	5	0	2	2	4
% of students exempt or absent	4%	0%	2%	2%	3%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
<i>1. White</i>					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	44%	50%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	99%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	99%	100%	99%
Number of students tested	68	72	79	76	89
<i>2. Asian/Pacific Island</i>					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	59%	37%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	91%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	97%	100%
Number of students tested	32	35	34	32	28
STATE SCORES					
(TAKS) % At or above Commended Performance	25%	17%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % At or Above Met Standard	85%	85%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	92%	90%	89%

Fewer than 5 students were in the subpopulations, Hispanic, African American, and Economically Disadvantaged, therefore results are masked to protect student confidentiality.

Texas Fourth-Grade Criterion-Referenced Math Test

Subject: Math Grade: 4 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/publication year: 2004 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

SCHOOL YEAR	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Test Given	TAKS	TAKS	TAAS	TAAS	TAAS
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
Total Students	115	114	123	131	130
SCHOOL SCORES					
(TAKS, TAAS) % Commended Performance	62%	46%	25%	26%	59%
(TAKS) % Met Standard	99%	98%			
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards			99%	99%	100%
Number of students tested TAKS/TAAS	106	112	120	127	127
% of total students tested	92%	98%	98%	97%	98%
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	2	2	2	NA
% of students alternatively assessed	5%	2%	2%	1.5%	NA
Number of students exempt or absent	4	0	1	2	3
% of students exempt of absent	4%	0%	0%	1.5%	2%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	56%	49%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	99%	99%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	99%	100%	100%
Number of students tested	68	72	81	77	90
2. Asian/Pacific Island					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	76%	40%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	97%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	97%	100%
Number of students tested	33	35	34	32	27
STATE SCORES					
(TAKS) % At or above Commended Performance	21%	15%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % At or Above Met Standard	86%	87%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	94%	91%	87%

Fewer than 5 students were in the subpopulations, Hispanic, African American, and Economically Disadvantaged, therefore results are masked to protect student confidentiality.

Texas Fifth-Grade Criterion-Referenced Reading Test

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/publication year: 2004 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

SCHOOL YEAR	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Test Given	TAKS	TAKS	TAAS	TAAS	TAAS
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
Total Students	124	131	133	137	122
SCHOOL SCORES					
(TAKS, TAAS) % Commended Performance	63%	50%	75%	63%	65%
(TAKS) % Met Standard	98%	98%			
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards			100%	100%	100%
Number of students tested TAKS/TAAS	121	127	126	135	118
% of total students tested TAKS/TAAS	97%	95%	95%	98%	97%
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	6	1	NA
% of students alternatively assessed	1%	2.5%	4%	1%	NA
Number of students exempt/absent	2	2	1	1	4
% of students exempt or absent	2%	2.5%	1%	1%	3%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	68%	51%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	98%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	99%	100%	100%
Number of students tested	75	80	82	89	84
2. Asian/Pacific Island					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	55%	53%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	95%	100%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	100%	100%
Number of students tested	40	40	35	33	23
STATE SCORES					
(TAKS) % At or above Commended Performance	25%	17%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % At or Above Met Standard	79%	79%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	92%	90%	87%

Fewer than 5 students were in the subpopulations, Hispanic, African American, and Economically Disadvantaged, therefore results are masked to protect student confidentiality.

Texas Fifth-Grade Criterion-Referenced Math Test

Subject: Math Grade: 5 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/publication year: 2004

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

SCHOOL YEAR	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Test Given	TAKS	TAKS	TAAS	TAAS	TAAS
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
Total Students	124	132	133	137	122
SCHOOL SCORES					
(TAKS, TAAS) % Commended Performance	74%	60%	49%	42%	47%
(TAKS) % Met Standard	99%	99%			
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards			99%	100%	100%
Number of students tested TAKS/TAAS	121	126	128	136	122
% of total students tested TAKS/TAAS	97%	95%	96%	99%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	4	1	NA
% of students alternatively assessed	1%	1%	3%	1%	NA
Number of students exempt or absent	2	5	1	0	0
% of students exempt or absent	2%	4%	1%	0%	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	72%	52%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	100%	99%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	99%	100%	100%
Number of students tested	75	79	85	90	88
2. Asian/Pacific Island					
(TAKS) % Commended Performance	85%	83%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % Met Standard	98%	100%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	100%	100%	100%
Number of students tested	40	40	35	33	23
STATE SCORES					
(TAKS) % At or above Commended Performance	26%	17%	NA	NA	NA
(TAKS) % At or Above Met Standard	82%	86%	NA	NA	NA
(TAAS) % Met Minimum Standards	NA	NA	96%	94%	92%

Fewer than 5 students were in the subpopulations, Hispanic, African American, and Economically Disadvantaged, therefore results are masked to protect student confidentiality.