

Revised March 16, 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 Ms. Kathleen A. Starr
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 1701 Pleasure House Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Virginia Beach VA 23455-4020
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)
Virginia Beach 0540
County School Code Number*

Telephone (757) 460-7535 Fax (757) 460-7100

Website/URL www.hermitagees.vbschools.com E-mail kastarr@vbschools.com

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. Timothy R. Jenney
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Virginia Beach City Public Schools Tel. (757) 263-1007

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. Daniel Edwards
(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 _____

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

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

[Include this page in the school's application as page 2.]

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.

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

1. Number of schools in the district: 56 Elementary schools
 14 Middle schools
 NA Junior high schools
 11 High schools
 6 Other (Advanced Technology Center, Technical
 and Career Education Center, and 4 Alternative Centers)
- 87 TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$7,414.00
- Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$8,186.00

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural area
 Rural
4. 5 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
- If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	NA	NA	NA	7	x	x	x
K	43	35	78	8	x	x	x
1	53	42	95	9	x	x	x
2	29	44	73	10	x	x	x
3	36	48	84	11	x	x	x
4	46	28	74	12	x	x	x
5	41	31	72	Other	x	x	x
6	x	x	x				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							476

[Throughout the document, round numbers to avoid decimals.]

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|-------------|--|
| <u>58</u> | % White |
| <u>27</u> | % Black or African American |
| <u>8</u> | % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>2</u> | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <u>1</u> | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| <u>4</u> | % Unspecified (Identified according to Virginia ethnic groups) |
| 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: 50%

(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.	86
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	84
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	170
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1 (same as in #5 above)	336
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.50
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	50%

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 3%
12 Total Number Limited English Proficient
 Number of languages represented: 4
 Specify languages: Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Turkish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39%
 Total number students who qualify: 182

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.

Part III – Summary Hermitage Elementary School

Hermitage Elementary School is home to approximately 500 students and is located in the Bayside borough of Virginia Beach, Virginia, in the northwestern corner of the city in close proximity to the Chesapeake Bay. The school serves the Chesapeake Beach, Lakeview Park, Lakeview Shores and naval base communities, all of which represent a diverse mix of ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic groups. More than 50 percent of the student body comprises children of military families stationed at Little Creek Amphibious Base, which is one of four military installations in Virginia Beach. Over the last two years the Navy has been renovating base housing in the Hermitage school zone, and the resulting refurbished housing has attracted increasing numbers of families new to this borough. Consequently, the school has seen an increase in new families registering their children at Hermitage, as well as a corresponding increase in its mobility index, up from its previous 30 percent to 50 percent in the 2003-2004 school year alone.

In June 2003 Hermitage Elementary was demolished as part of the school division's long-range plan to renovate and/or rebuild its oldest elementary schools and new construction was begun immediately on a new facility at its Pleasure House Road site. During construction, the faculty, staff and students moved to a temporary location in another area of the city (Kempsville), which is approximately eight miles from the community. Coupled with the high mobility index, this forced, albeit temporary, move presented additional challenges to staff and students in keeping the instructional focus. As an example, half-day kindergarten students were moved to another school closer to their community because transporting them the eight-mile distance was determined to be too great a hardship. In addition, the after-school tutoring schedule had to be revised, again because of transportation issues. However, the school community is now looking forward to March 2005, when it will move back into its new, state of the art facility which also will be the first *Leadership in Energy Design* building in Hampton Roads.

Despite the challenges involved with what was essentially moving out of the area and school zone to a temporary location for two years, staff and students have maintained a strong instructional focus over time and throughout the 2003-2004 school year. During the past five years, committees have been and continue to be established to develop the Vision and Mission statements which support the Continuous Improvement plan, updated annually. The mission of Hermitage Elementary School *is to engage students in academic work that results in meeting or exceeding grade level standards. For students not mastering challenging curriculum, we will work collaboratively with colleagues, students, parents, and community to ensure student achievement.* Staff commitment to this mission is evident in the assessment results achieved over the last five years. Rigorous standards and expectations are held for each student. In addition, the staff has embraced a long-term staff development model on implementing reading comprehension strategies through a *Reader's Workshop* in each classroom. Through this model, teachers reach out in a variety of ways to teach each child at his or her level, helping all to be successful. Each child's progress is charted and followed regularly. As a result, the vision for Hermitage Elementary is clearly understood by all: *Hermitage Elementary is a world class school that is committed to academic excellence. We welcome our community into a safe and positive environment that fosters cooperation, respect and lifelong learning.*

Hermitage has a strong, involved PTA and enjoys active community support. Its PTA has been recognized each of the past six years for its outstanding commitment to the Virginia Beach Council of PTAs. For school year 2003-2004, the PTA achieved 100 percent membership. The PTA and school continue to collaborate on a volunteer in education program that encourages and educates the community to participate in many different aspects of the school environment. Last school year over 170 committed volunteers provided approximately 3300 volunteer hours despite the inconvenience of having to travel some distance from the community to the temporary location. In addition, the PTA sponsors many activities for families, both educational and recreational. Every event is well attended by the community. Because of this support, the PTA has been able to fund several school initiatives for students, including providing new maps and globes for every classroom in the new school.

Part IV – 1 Indicators of Academic Success - Assessment Results

Students in grades three and five at Hermitage Elementary participate in the annual state assessment program known as the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. This assessment comprises the following categories: English Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and History. These assessments are criterion-referenced achievement tests. The grade three SOL tests are cumulative in nature and cover curricula taught in grades K-3. Students are tested in the following categories: English, Math, Science, and History. The grade five SOL tests are also cumulative in that they cover curricula taught in grades four and five. In grade five students are tested in the following areas: English Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and History. Each content area is divided into smaller reporting categories for that curriculum area. Mean scaled scores in the reporting categories of 0 to 50 show individual strengths and weaknesses. Students scoring 30 or higher show a strength in that area while a score of less than 30 may indicate a weakness. A minimum scaled score of 400 is required to pass each subtest, with 600 being a perfect score. Scaled scores from 400 - 499 are deemed *pass proficient* while scaled scores from 500 - 600 are considered *pass advanced*. State of Virginia school accreditation ratings require a 70 percent pass rate in all elementary school content areas except for English which requires a grades three and five combined 75 percent passing score, and grade three history and science which each require a 50 percent passing score. In addition to accreditation, state SOL scores are also used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act. Additional information regarding the Virginia Standards of Learning Assessment can be found at the Virginia Department of Education Web site at www.pen.k12.va.us.

From Spring 1999 to Spring 2004, Hermitage has seen significant growth not only in percent of students passing on the SOL tests, but also in the number of students passing *advanced* in each area. That growth is specifically outlined in the tables at the end of this application. Data from spring 2004 show that almost 94 percent of third graders passed at or above *proficient* on the Reading SOL while approximately 34 percent of those students passed *advanced*.

The gap between the minority and non-minority students in reading at the third grade level has been significantly reduced over the past five years, but still exists at 14 percentage points. Analysis of this gap shows a greater percentage of minority students were new to Hermitage in grade three in 2003-2004. In addition, a greater percentage of minority students qualified for special education and free and reduced lunch in third grade. These factors may have contributed to this achievement gap. Reducing this gap is one of the main focuses of the school's Continuous Improvement Plan for the 2004-2005 school year. This is the first year of implementing a full *Readers Workshop* that provides more opportunities for reading and responding to text in each classroom. Students are challenged and guided through their instructional reading levels to understand strategies that assist them to become strategic readers. This reading initiative should help Hermitage reach this goal.

Spring 2004 math results showed that 100 percent of Hermitage third graders passed at or above *proficient* on the Math SOL with 83 percent passing *advanced*. There are no significant gaps within subgroups for this assessment. Hermitage implemented a higher level thinking math program, *Everyday Mathematics*, that was adopted several years ago by the Virginia Beach School Board. This is a spiral program that tracks students on their attainment of beginning, developing and secure math skills. Teachers have also incorporated into their lesson plans the *Everyday Math* calendar activities which are implemented school-wide at the beginning of each day.

Approximately 98 percent of students taking the grade five Spring 2004 SOL Reading test passed at or above *proficient* with 51 percent passing *advanced*. There were no significant gaps in the minority and non-minority subgroups. While there was a gap in reading at this grade level among the economically and non-economically disadvantaged, it was less than ten percent with all students in these groups passing from 92 – 100 percent. Nonetheless, this is the area of focus for fifth grade.

While Hermitage has had much success on the Reading and Math SOL tests, the Science and History SOL tests have had equal if not higher achievement scores. Approximately 95 percent of third grade students passed at or above *proficient* in History with 75 percent passing *advanced*. The same success was also noted in Science where 98 percent passed at or above *proficient* and 66 percent passed *advanced*. Grade five registered similar success in both areas. Approximately 30 percent of third and fifth graders received perfect scores of 600 in History and Science.

Part IV – 2 Use of Assessment Data

Each year, following the disaggregation of state SOL assessment results, the staff takes part in professional development during which data are analyzed in all content areas and subgroups. Through this analysis, staff members identify strengths and challenge areas to be improved as well as any trends in data that may be indicated over time. Assessment data particular to the subgroups identified in the No Child Left Behind legislation are examined and analyzed to determine if adequate yearly progress has been made. The data used include facts relating to ethnicity, gender, special education, socio-economic status, and English as a second language. State Standards of Learning assessment data are further analyzed to identify overall pass rates for each content area in grades three and five. In addition, data are analyzed to determine the percentage of students who scored at a pass *proficient* and pass *advanced* level on the state assessments. The results of this data analysis then guide the development of goals for the coming school year as part of Hermitage’s Plan for Continuous Improvement. Once goals are written to address identified gaps, action teams are formed.

These action teams comprise vertical teams of administrators, classroom teachers, special education teachers, and resource teachers. The teams develop action plans, which identify the instructional strategies and necessary resources needed to meet the goals identified to address areas of student performance needing improvement. These action teams then meet monthly to monitor progress, report results to the faculty, and make any necessary adjustments based on further data analysis.

Additional data are analyzed to include reading levels (Diagnostic Reading Assessment), citywide testing data (benchmark tests), Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening K-3 (PALS) and classroom performance. VBCPS administers quarterly benchmark tests to determine mastery of curriculum. They are aligned to a curriculum framework and pacing guides. After tests are given, teachers modify or adjust instruction based on students’ strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are trained to collect and track data daily. At their weekly planning sessions teachers develop goals and strategic interventions based on classroom data.

Part IV – 3 Communicate Assessment Data

Student performance, to include assessment data, is reported to parents on an on-going basis throughout the school year. In the fall of each school year, an Open House event is held to which all parents and community members are invited. This Open House begins with an overview of the Spring SOL data from the previous school year. The SOL data are compared using at least three data points to show growth over time in each content area tested. SOL data for Hermitage Elementary are also compared to selected schools in the Virginia Beach school division that have comparable demographics. This same information is available on several Web sites, among them the school’s, the division’s, and the state’s Department of Education Web site. These measures begin the process of informing parents and community members of the overall status of student performance, which will guide the instructional focus for the upcoming school year.

Student performance, again including assessment data, is further shared with parents and community members through the forum of the Hermitage Elementary School Planning Council, which comprises administrators, classroom teachers, PTA representatives, parents, and other community members. The School Planning Council meets at least four times throughout the school year. At these meetings data are not only shared but they are also compared to and measured against the data of previous school years as well as to data pertinent to division school performance. This data analysis is then used to demonstrate how the school plans to develop its annual Plan for Continuous Improvement in conjunction with parent and community support.

The Virginia Beach City Public School System also provides Annual School Report Cards to parents. This report card provides information regarding present student performance measures on the Stanford Achievement test and the Virginia Standards of Learning tests, as well as information regarding trends over a three-year period. The Commonwealth of Virginia also provides a Virginia

School Report Card for Hermitage Elementary that provides comparative data on student performance measures with statewide achievement data.

An ongoing effort is made throughout the school year to monitor and report student performance using such district wide vehicles as parent-teacher conferences, progress reports, and report cards. In addition, staff monitors student progress through assessments such as literacy folders, writing portfolios, observational/anecdotal records, and performance based activities.

Students themselves are involved in the monitoring of their own progress through the use of a variety of rubrics, which incorporate self-evaluation. Students graph test scores from both teacher-created assessments and district assessments in order to promote self-awareness of their current status and on-going achievement and growth.

Part IV – 4 Indicators of Academic Success - Sharing Success

Each school year Hermitage Elementary School is involved in activities that provide opportunities to share its successes with different teachers and schools within the Virginia Beach school division. These activities focus on instructional initiatives and research-based strategies currently being implemented at Hermitage to promote student success.

For example, reading specialists and classroom teachers from other schools visit Hermitage Elementary each year to participate in staff development. They observe the different components of the language arts program to include the *Readers Workshop* as it is modeled in classrooms at different grade levels. These staff development opportunities include post-observation discussions as well as collaborative planning sessions. Staff development sessions have also been conducted in which effective test-taking strategies that incorporate think alouds and metacognitive reflection are shared. Again, teachers and reading specialists from other schools attend these sessions. These visiting teachers then return to their home schools to provide the training to their staff members.

Teachers from Hermitage Elementary School are also invited on a yearly basis to visit other elementary schools to provide staff development training to selected grade level teachers. In some instances this training is then followed by classroom observations with relevant feedback and discussion. In addition, the resource teachers at Hermitage Elementary attend citywide monthly or quarterly meetings, which provide opportunities to share effective instructional strategies related to *Reading and Writing Workshop*, *Kagan* cooperative learning and differentiated instruction currently in place at Hermitage.

Finally, Hermitage Elementary has been selected to participate in the Virginia Association of School Superintendents' annual Standards of Learning (SOL) Expo held in Roanoke, Virginia, on February 28, 2005. This is an exceptional opportunity to share the instructional strategies in place at Hermitage that are consistently contributing to high student achievement such as *Readers Workshop*, *Kagan* Cooperative learning and metacognitive reflection. The principal, reading specialist, and a third grade teacher will attend this expo and conduct an hour-long presentation on these strategies for the attendees.

Part V– 1 Curriculum and Instruction - School Curriculum

The elementary **reading/language arts** program utilizes a literature-based, integrated approach to instruction. The Virginia Beach objectives, which include the Virginia Standards of Learning, are taught and reinforced through a variety of quality literature supported daily through writing instruction and practice. Whole group modeling, guided practice and guided reading on comprehension strategies are the focus for the *Readers Workshop*.

Problem solving is integrated through the six strands of **mathematics**: Number and Number Sense, Computation and Estimation, Measurement, Geometry, Probability and Statistics, and Patterns, Functions, and Algebra. The development of problem-solving skills and independent thinking are major goals of the mathematics program at every grade level. Instruction in the process of problem solving is integrated early and continuously into each student's mathematics education. Students have many opportunities to develop and use the skills of computation, estimation, time, money, measurement, geometry, graphing, probability, and algebra to solve a wide variety of problems.

Students participate in a range of hands-on investigations to study life, physical, and earth sciences. They use an assortment of **science** processes to explore the world around them, including observing, asking questions, sequencing, measuring, classifying, comparing, inferring, recording information, and using materials safely. The students develop inquiry skills, the ability to make inferences, and observe relationships in the natural and technological world.

The elementary **social studies** program is designed to develop the knowledge and skills of history, geography, civics, and economics that enable students to place people, ideas, and events that have shaped our world, nation, and state in perspective. Students are introduced to ancient civilizations and continue to look at the world with an emphasis on regions of the United States and Virginia. This program enables students to understand the basic values, principals, and operation of American democracy and prepares them to become informed and responsible citizens.

The **special education** program provides students with disabilities quality educational opportunities. Specific objectives are targeted from the defined curricula to meet the individual needs of each student. The delivery of instruction, through the use of systematic modifications and/or adaptations to instructional techniques, materials, equipment, and the environment, ensures that the unique needs of students with disabilities are appropriately addressed. Each student's overall course of study is precisely defined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The goal of the **English as a second language** (ESL) program is to teach English to non-native speakers so that they may acquire the language and communication skills necessary to participate successfully in the mainstream classroom from kindergarten through grade twelve. Instruction is designed to meet the needs of students at various English proficiency levels. Language and culture taught in the ESL program reinforce skills and concepts taught in all areas of the regular curriculum.

The elementary **art** program is aligned with the National Standards for Arts Education and the Virginia Standards of Learning. The program is a concept-based, sequential curriculum that integrates the disciplines of art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and art production.

The study of general **music** in the elementary school focuses on the development of certain basic skills, understandings, and attitudes essential to becoming an informed consumer of music. The student experiences music through a variety of related activities, which include listening, singing, moving, and playing melodic and choral instruments. Emphasis is placed on exploration, appreciation, creativity, expression, and enjoyment. The music curriculum is aligned with the core curriculum Standards of Learning.

In the **physical education** program, students participate in activities, which develop basic game skills and body awareness. The program stresses the importance of achieving an appropriate level of physical fitness. Students receive instruction from the physical education specialists and assistants.

All resource study aligns with grade level SOL core content in English, math, history, and science curriculum objectives whenever possible, especially in the history and science areas. Resource teachers are trained to address grade level SOL objectives in their lessons and are expected to do so. The principal monitors this activity regularly.

Part V– 2 (a)Curriculum and Instruction - Reading/Language Arts

The Hermitage Elementary language arts curriculum is a literature-based integrated program, which provides a balanced approach to the teaching of reading, writing, and word study. The language arts program is based on the premise that literacy is the foundation for all learning and embraces the philosophy that students naturally use language to communicate and to learn. An effective language arts program integrates listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking into all language arts instruction. Students are taught communication skills as integrated processes practiced through relevant activities rather than isolated exercises.

Language arts instruction incorporates a variety of reading and writing strategies and activities designed to provide instruction and practice based on the Virginia Beach language arts objectives. Instructional activities for both whole class and small groups include developing reading comprehension strategies, decoding, composition, grammar, mechanics, vocabulary development, and spelling. Instruction is related to literature selections in order to make learning purposeful and relevant for students. Teachers are encouraged to make natural connections between language arts and other areas of the curriculum when possible.

The *Readers and Writers Workshops* are incorporated across all grade levels, and provide whole group, guided practice, and guided reading group instruction. Teachers select text based on students' independent and instructional reading levels. During whole group instruction, the primary focus is teacher modeling, to include metacognition in order to develop reading strategies and skills. The program incorporates the seven research-based comprehension strategies outlined in Zimmerman and Keene's book, *Mosaic of Thought*. Students are then given opportunities to practice and apply these same strategies and skills during guided practice and guided reading at both their independent and instructional reading levels. The school's basal readers are used as a resource for this model. Hermitage chose to emphasize reading comprehension strategies along with skills and to implement *Readers Workshop* based on a citywide guided reading initiative and other models across the country.

Language arts tasks are completed using a range of grouping structures in order to accommodate various learning styles and to provide differentiated instruction. Types of groups include guided reading groups, cooperative learning groups, discussion groups, literature groups, and learning center groups. These groups are referred to as flexible since their composition changes often.

Part V– 3 Curriculum and Instruction - Social Studies Curriculum

As part of fulfilling the mission of Hermitage Elementary School, the social studies curriculum is integrated into the language arts block through the selection of non-fiction text that supports relevant concepts to be introduced and maintained throughout each unit. These non-fiction texts are used for whole group teacher modeling, small group guided practice, as well as small group guided reading.

Based upon the research conducted by Doug Reeves at Harvard University, multiple opportunities for students to engage in non-fiction writing are provided to students through the use of learning logs and process writing. Also, as part of the *4 Square Writing Method* initiative, expository writing prompts selected for instruction and practice are content related.

In addition, the research-based *Kagan* cooperative learning structures are incorporated into daily social studies lessons as an effective way to deliver content instruction. Research on the use of these structures has shown that they are highly effective in addressing cultural diversity, multiple learning styles, and in closing achievement gaps that may exist. Closing the achievement gap is a goal for the 2004-2005 Plan for Continuous Improvement at Hermitage Elementary and using the *Kagan* structures is one of the identified resources needed to meet this goal. As a result of incorporating these instructional strategies as part of the social studies curriculum, students in grades three and five have achieved high levels of academic achievement on the state Standards of Learning history test. Approximately 30 percent of third and fifth graders received perfect scores on the Spring 2004 test.

Part V– 4 Instructional Methods to Improve Student Learning

The focus on improving student learning begins within the grade level. Teachers are provided weekly collaborative planning sessions that are uninterrupted and last between 80 - 85 minutes. This

common planning time is used to develop teacher-created tests, analyze data and district assessments such as the results of diagnostic reading assessments, and to discuss classroom performance – all in order to identify areas of strength and weakness within each instructional area. Curriculum maps, which identify strategies and skills that are to be introduced or maintained for each month, are consulted in conjunction with the data analysis. Weekly planning sheets are then developed as the framework for daily lesson plans. This system is effective in ensuring that all required Virginia Beach objectives as well as the Virginia Standards of Learning are included in instruction. In addition, staff ensures that curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned to promote academic achievement.

Resource teachers, including the Reading Resource, Computer Resource, Gifted Resource, Art, Music, and PE teachers, as well as the Library Media Specialist are involved in collaborative planning sessions. In this way, resource teachers fully support classroom instruction by ensuring that their lessons reinforce the content areas stipulated in Virginia Beach Objectives and Virginia Standards of Learning. In addition, rather than pulling out small groups of children from the classroom, resource teachers at Hermitage Elementary employ a push-in model in which the Reading and Gifted Resource teachers co-teach with classroom teachers. This method increases the number of students who benefit from these specialized services.

Various research-based instructional strategies are being implemented school-wide in order to address multiple learning styles and cultural diversity that exist in each classroom. These instructional strategies include: *Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures*, which promote cooperative grouping and collaboration for students; *Reading Workshop*; *Writing Workshop*; and *Think Alouds/Metacognitive Reflection*. In using these strategies, teachers maintain emphasis on the strategy rather than the text when students are reading. Moreover, teachers model for students the thinking process of how the strategy or skill assists them with comprehension. Teachers have been provided staff development training in all of these instructional strategies prior to implementation, and they receive support during the year through on-going modeling, observation, and feedback. A systematic approach to writing instruction, using the *4 Square Writing Method*, is also implemented school-wide to promote consistency and increase academic achievement. *4 Square* is a process approach to writing using a graphic organizer that gives students a structure for developing their thought processes for writing. It also helps them with organizing details needed for descriptive writing.

Part V– 5 Professional Development Program

Hermitage Elementary approaches professional development from the research and philosophy purported in Rick Du Four’s *Professional Learning Communities At Work*. The topics selected for professional development are identified as part of the process of data analysis and the development of goals for the annual Plan for Continuous Improvement.

Professional development at Hermitage is structured to provide teachers with explicit training followed by classroom modeling at individual grade levels. After training and modeling, teachers are then given time to practice the instructional initiative in their own classrooms. Once teachers have had time to practice their new instructional skills, informal observations are conducted and specific feedback is provided. This cycle is on-going throughout the year with at least two to three formal models being provided for classroom teachers. The framework ensures that teachers are supported along all levels of the continuum not only in understanding but also in implementing the various instructional initiatives. A further benefit is that teachers exhibit a higher level of effective implementation of strategies learned.

Professional development at Hermitage has been ongoing. The main focus has been to revamp the language arts block to include more authentic reading and writing experiences for children. As discussed previously, guided reading, *Reading Workshop*, and *Kagan* cooperative learning structures have been the primary focus for at least four years. This laser-like focus has enabled the staff to gain fully the experience and feedback they need for effective implementation.

In addition to school-wide staff development, weekly opportunities to provide professional development to individual grade levels exist because of the common planning time built in to the master schedule. During this uninterrupted planning time, specialists such as the reading resource or gifted resource teacher can conduct training that is specific to the needs identified through data analysis.

Virginia's Reporting Form for NCLB Blue Ribbon Data

ENGLISH 3RD GRADE

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	May/June	May/June	May/June	May/June	May/June
	This is data that is reported on the Website for SOL Report Cards ¹ for Virginia's schools. Also see footnote. ²			This is data that is reported on the Website for 2000 ³ and 2001. ⁴ Also see footnote ⁵	
HERMITAGE SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	94	94	90	79	65
% At Advanced	34	28	17		
Number of students tested	65	71	59		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	91		
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	1		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	1		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% At or Above Proficient	93	93	82		
% At Advanced	13	20	12		
Number of Students Tested	15	15	17		
2. Black					
% At or Above Proficient		77			
% At Advanced		23			
Number of Students Tested	9	13	9		
3. White					
% At or Above Proficient	97	98	88		
% At Advanced	44	31	19		
Number of Students Tested	32	49	42		
4. Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At Advanced					
Number of Students Tested	2	3	2		
5. Students with disabilities					
% At or Above Proficient		100			
% At Advanced		0			
Number of Students Tested	7	10	2		
STATE SCORES⁶					
% At or Above Proficient	71	72	72	65	61
% At Advanced	14	19	17		

¹ <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/src/index.shtml>

² It does not include re-takes on any SOL assessment.

³ Use 2000 data <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

⁴ Use 2001 data <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

⁵ This data was reported prior to the implementation of NCLB in Virginia. It does include re-takes on all SOL assessments. No subgroup data is available for either of these years.

⁶ For 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004. http://pen2.vak12ed.edu/cgi-bin/broker?_service=doe_prod&instit_id=0&_program=prodcode.st_sol_by_grade_report.sas

The state percentage passed indicated on this Website is equivalent to the percent above proficient.

For 2000-2001 and 1999-2000 see <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

**Virginia's Reporting Form for NCLB Blue Ribbon Data
ENGLISH (READING) 5TH GRADE**

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	May/June	May/June	May/June	May/June	May/June
	This is data that is reported on the Website for SOL Report Cards ⁷ for Virginia's schools. Also see footnote. ⁸			This is data that is reported on the Website for 2000 ⁹ and 2001. ¹⁰ See footnote ¹¹	
HERMITAGE SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	98	99	97	89	66
% At Advanced	51	21	26		
Number of students tested	72	101	93		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	97		
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% At or Above Proficient	92	100	93		
% At Advanced	42	21	30		
Number of Students Tested	12	29	30		
2. Black					
% At or Above Proficient	90	100	100		
% At Advanced	60	13	19		
Number of Students Tested	10	23	16		
3. White					
% At or Above Proficient	100	99	97		
% At Advanced	48	22	25		
Number of Students Tested	40	67	67		
4. Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At Advanced					
Number of Students Tested	4	1	5		
5. Students with disabilities					
% At or Above Proficient		100			
% At Advanced		0			
Number of Students Tested	7	10	5		
STATE SCORES¹²					
% At or Above Proficient	85	83	78	73	68
% At Advanced	31	19	17		

⁷ <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/src/index.shtml>

⁸ It does not include re-takes on any SOL assessment.

⁹ Use 2000 data <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

¹⁰ Use 2001 data <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

¹¹ This data was reported prior to the implementation of NCLB in Virginia. It does include re-takes on all SOL assessments. No subgroup data is available for either of these years.

¹² For 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004. http://pen2.vak12ed.edu/cgi-bin/broker?_service=doe_prod&instit_id=0&program=prodcode.st_sol_by_grade_report.sas

The state percentage passed indicated on this Website is equivalent to the percent above proficient.

For 2000-2001 and 1999-2000 see <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

**Virginia's Reporting Form for NCLB Blue Ribbon Data
MATHEMATICS 3RD GRADE**

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	May/June	May/June	May/June	May/June	May/June
	This is data that is reported on the Website for SOL Report Cards ¹³ for Virginia's schools. Also see footnote. ¹⁴			This is data that is reported on the Website for 2000 ¹⁵ and 2001. ¹⁶ See footnote ¹⁷	
HERMITAGE SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	100	97	89	90	68
% At Advanced	83	69	55		
Number of students tested	65	70	64		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98		
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	1		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	1		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% At or Above Proficient	100	93	83		
% At Advanced	67	67	28		
Number of Students Tested	15	15	18		
2. Black					
% At or Above Proficient		92	80		
% At Advanced		47	40		
Number of Students Tested	9	13	10		
3. White					
% At or Above Proficient	100	98	89		
% At Advanced	97	76	51		
Number of Students Tested	33	49	47		
4. Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At Advanced					
Number of Students Tested	2	3	2		
5. Students with disabilities					
% At or Above Proficient		90			
% At Advanced		10			
Number of Students Tested	7	10	7		
STATE SCORES¹⁸					
% At or Above Proficient	87	83	80	77	71
% At Advanced	49	47	40		

¹³ <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/src/index.shtml>

¹⁴ It does not include re-takes on any SOL assessment.

¹⁵ Use 2000 data <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

¹⁶ Use 2001 data <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

¹⁷ This data was reported prior to the implementation of NCLB in Virginia. It does include re-takes on all SOL assessments. No subgroup data is available for either of these years.

¹⁸ For 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004. http://pen2.vak12ed.edu/cgi-bin/broker?_service=doe_prod&instit_id=0&_program=prodcode.st_sol_by_grade_report.sas

The state percentage passed indicated on this Website is equivalent to the percent above proficient.

For 2000-2001 and 1999-2000 see <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

Virginia's Reporting Form for NCLB Blue Ribbon Data
MATHEMATICS 5TH GRADE

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	May/June	May/June	May/June	May/June	May/June
	This is data that is reported on the Website for SOL Report Cards ¹⁹ for Virginia's schools. Also see footnote. ²⁰			This is data that is reported on the Website for 2000 ²¹ and 2001. ²² See footnote ²³	
HERMITAGE SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	98	92	95	79	63
% At Advanced	31	29	31		
Number of students tested	72	99	93		
Percent of total students tested	100	99	97		
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% At or Above Proficient	92	93	93		
% At Advanced	17	21	20		
Number of Students Tested	12	29	30		
2. Black					
% At or Above Proficient	90	91	94		
% At Advanced	10	9	6		
Number of Students Tested	10	23	16		
3. White					
% At or Above Proficient	100	93	94		
% At Advanced	38	36	33		
Number of Students Tested	40	67	69		
4. Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At Advanced					
Number of Students Tested	4	1	5		
5. Students with disabilities					
% At or Above Proficient		100			
% At Advanced		0			
Number of Students Tested	7	10	7		
STATE SCORES²⁴					
% At or Above Proficient	78	74	71	67	63
% At Advanced	20	18	16		

¹⁹ <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/src/index.shtml>

²⁰ It does not include re-takes on any SOL assessment.

²¹ Use 2000 data <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>

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²³ This data was reported prior to the implementation of NCLB in Virginia. It does include re-takes on all SOL assessments. No subgroup data is available for either of these years.

²⁴ For 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004. http://pen2.vak12ed.edu/cgi-bin/broker?_service=doe_prod&instit_id=0&_program=prodcode.st_sol_by_grade_report.sas

The state percentage passed indicated on this Website is equivalent to the percent above proficient.

For 2000-2001 and 1999-2000 see <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/school-by-school-pass-01.xls>