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

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

Name of Principal: Dr. Jerrod Wheeler

Official School Name: Espy Elementary

School Mailing Address:
220 S. Gregg Rd.
Nixa, MO 65714-5300

County: Christian State School Code Number*: 022-089

Telephone: (417) 875-5650 Fax: (417) 725-7448

Web site/URL: www.espyelementary.net E-mail: jwheeler@mail.nixa.k12.mo.us

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

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Stephen Kleinsmith

District Name: Nixa R-II Tel: (417) 875-5400

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

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mrs. Peggy Taylor

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

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

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*
Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

# PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.

6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.

7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

# PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**All data are the most recent year available.**

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

1. Number of schools in the district:

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | Elementary schools |
| 2 | Middle schools |
| 1 | Junior high schools |
| 1 | High schools |
| 0 | Other |
| **9** | **TOTAL** |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 7228

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 9338

**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
   [ X ] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

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

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

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

| Grade | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total | Grade | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PreK** | 0 | 0 | 0 | **7** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **K** | 39 | 50 | 89 | **8** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1** | 32 | 49 | 81 | **9** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **2** | 46 | 46 | 92 | **10** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **3** | 58 | 48 | 106 | **11** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **4** | 39 | 41 | 80 | **12** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **5** | 0 | 0 | 0 | **Other** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **6** | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| | | **TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL** | | | | | 448 |

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

| | |
|---|---|
| 0 % | American Indian or Alaska Native |
| 1 % | Asian |
| 2 % | Black or African American |
| 5 % | Hispanic or Latino |
| 0 % | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| 92 % | White |
| 0 % | Two or more races |
| **100 %** | **Total** |

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 10 %

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(1)** | Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year. | 24 |
| **(2)** | Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year. | 23 |
| **(3)** | Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]. | 47 |
| **(4)** | Total number of students in the school as of October 1. | 448 |
| **(5)** | Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4). | 0.105 |
| **(6)** | Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100. | 10.491 |

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 1 %

Total number limited English proficient 5

Number of languages represented: 3
Specify languages:

Spanish, Russian, and Urdu are the languages in addition to Engligh represented in our school.

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

Total number students who qualify: 97

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

10. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

Total Number of Students Served: 42

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

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Autism | 3 | Orthopedic Impairment |
| 0 | Deafness | 1 | Other Health Impaired |
| 0 | Deaf-Blindness | 2 | Specific Learning Disability |
| 0 | Emotional Disturbance | 28 | Speech or Language Impairment |
| 2 | Hearing Impairment | 0 | Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 2 | Mental Retardation | 0 | Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| 0 | Multiple Disabilities | 0 | Developmentally Delayed |

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

| | Number of Staff | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Full-Time** | **Part-Time** |
| Administrator(s) | 1 | 0 |
| Classroom teachers | 23 | 0 |
| Special resource teachers/specialists | 12 | 0 |
| Paraprofessionals | 5 | 0 |
| Support staff | 3 | 0 |
| Total number | 44 | 0 |

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 **16 :1**

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

| | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daily student attendance | 96% | 96% | 97% | 97% | 96% |
| Daily teacher attendance | 98% | 98% | 98% | 97% | 97% |
| Teacher turnover rate | 23% | 7% | 5% | 5% | 5% |

Please provide all explanations below.

In the fall of 2007, Nixa opened its fifth elementary school, High Pointe Elementary. A core group of Espy teachers transferred to help establish a strong faculty in that building. Espy also had three teacher retire that year. Hence, the high teacher turnover rate in 2007-2008.

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

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

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

# PART III - SUMMARY

*Excellence is not a destination; it is a continuous journey that never ends. - Brian Tracey*

George Espy Elementary School is one of five Kindergarten through Fourth Grade schools in Nixa, Missouri, a small but progressive and quickly-growing suburban community in southwest Missouri. Now in its 21st year, Espy Elementary has experienced a legacy of educational excellence, and the future has never looked brighter for our students! In 2001, Espy Elementary was honored as a Missouri Gold Star School. We are ecstatic about the opportunity to add a second Gold Star and our first Blue Ribbon designation in 2009 to honor the success of our students, parents, teachers, and community!

The mission of Espy Elementary is to ensure all students acquire a comprehensive academic, social, emotional, and physical foundation for life-long learning and personal fulfillment. At Espy, we envision: (a) a safe, positive, stimulating environment that is highly conducive to learning; (b) learning experiences that are enhanced through research-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment facilitated by a highly-skilled, comprehensively-trained and dedicated faculty; (c) intrinsically-motivated students who are challenged and empowered to achieve at their highest academic and personal capabilities; (d) collaborative partnerships among students, teachers, parents, and members of the community; and (e) a prominent, state-of-the-art campus that allows for the achievement of our goals. Through strategic planning, deliberate action, and responsive reflection, we work tirelessly each day to move our vision and mission to results in the form of increased student achievement and success.

Espy Elementary serves 448 students with an instructional staff of 45. Our student population consists primarily of middle class Caucasian students, with 22% of students qualifying for free and reduced meals and an 8% minority population. Our school is best described as a welcoming atmosphere where a team-centered and fun-loving attitude leads student learning. For the last three years, student attendance has averaged above 96%, a testament that our students enjoy learning at Espy. Our Character Education program, Caring Kids: Above and Beyond, sets the culture for our school and helps us sustain an environment highly conducive to learning. Moreover, developing great character habits and intrinsic motivation is a core subject at Espy, and it shows!

Synergistic teamwork is the fuel that powers continuous improvement at Espy: Cooperation, collaboration, communication, and shared commitment are evident in all we do. Teamwork abounds throughout our educational organization, and is reflected in the success of our students. Behind every good outcome within our school, lies a dedicated team of parents, students, teachers, and community partners who are devoted to success for one…success for all.

Look out Langley! When it comes to CIA (Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment), Espy students and teachers excel. Espy teachers take a prescriptive approach to teaching the written curriculum in a differentiated and diversified manner so all students reach mastery. Results are reflected in our assessments. Missouri Assessment and Stanford Achievement scores regularly place Espy students above the respective state and national norms on Math and Communication Arts.

Along with the “Three R’s,” Espy is a progressive leader in technology. Our faculty realizes technology literacy is *the* key to equity for our students. Accordingly, all Espy classrooms are multimedia equipped with

First through Fourth Grades and Specials being SMART Classrooms. Document projectors, student responders, web cams, and digital science probes are all used to help students learn, complete assignments, and prepare research. Communication among students, teachers, and parents occurs regularly through websites, blogs, podcasting, and traditional methods. In 2008, Espy completed construction of a state-of-the-art Library Media Center/Computer Lab which now serves as a hub for learning and research within our school community.

Parental and community involvement at Espy abounds as we partner for progress for all students. Leading all partnerships is the Espy Parent Teacher Association, a progressive leader in student motivation and recognition as well as instructional technology and communication. Educational, celebratory, and philanthropic activities occur weekly throughout the year via this highly-supportive organization. Other partners include A+ high school tutors, business partners, Adopt-a-School/Class partners, university extension programs, parents, grandparents, and volunteers. Indeed, many constituencies make countless personal contributions within our strong community and strong school.

Our students, teachers, parents, and community are proud of our school, and it shows in all we do! As we reflect on our past success, we concurrently look ahead as we reach for a world-class education for all students. We are humbled by the opportunity to submit this 2009 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon application, and we graciously thank you for your consideration. With optimism and high expectations, we anxiously await your decision!

# PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

**Context information for the following data analysis is as follows. Prior to 2006, MAP was scored on five achievement levels, and Communication Arts and Math were assessed in Third and Fourth Grades, respectively. In 2006, MAP achievement levels were combined into four: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Since 2006, Communication Arts and Math have been assessed in Third and Fourth Grades. Hence, only three years of data will be referenced for Third Grade Math and Fourth Grade Communication Arts. Achievement levels were established by Missouri teachers, parents, legislators, employers, and business leaders and are representative of what this group should expect students to know and be able to do at each grade level and subject area, through rigorous work. Demographic data established two subgroups for the five-year period: Caucasian students and students qualifying for free and reduced meals. Students scoring "Proficient" are considered to be "meeting the standard" (hereafter referred to as MTS). Additional information may be viewed at http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/.*

When it comes to state assessments, small steps have combined to form giant leaps in student performance in Math and Communication Arts on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) over the last five years. Overall, MAP results indicate student achievement at Espy Elementary is moving in a positive direction in all areas.

Math has emerged as our core area of strength. In 2006, Third Grade MAP results produced 59% of students MTS (state average 44%). Last year, 69% scored MTS (state average 44%), an increase of 10% over three years. For the five-year timeline for Fourth Grade, 2004 MAP results showed 44% MTS (state average 40%). In 2008, 77% of students scored MTS (state average 45%). This reflects an increase of 33% over five years, or nearly 7% increase per year.

Communication Arts has also seen growth over the last five years. Fourth Grade leads with 77% of students MTS in 2008, an increase of 9% since 2006. Highlighting this performance is a three-year average of 24% of students scoring at the Advanced level. State averages for the same time period indicate 45% of students MTS with 15% scoring Advanced. Consistent gains, high performances, and large numbers of students scoring Advanced summarize our Fourth Grade Communication Arts assessments.

While less consistent, Third Grade Communication Arts performance is moving in a positive direction as well. In 2004 and 2005, Espy Third Grade students averaged 52% MTS with Advanced accounting for only 1% (state average 35% MTS with 2% Advanced). In 2007 and 2008, Espy students averaged 55% MTS with a whopping average of 20% scoring Advanced! Of the five-year period, our highlights for Third Grade Communication Arts occurred in 2007 when 63% scored MTS with 23% performing in the Advanced category, compared to the state average of 42% and 16%, respectively.

Three major disparities are noted in the data. The first is a 12.5% drop in the number of Third Grade students scoring MTS in Communication Arts in 2008. The second disparity is the consistent disproportion of performance between Third and Fourth Grade students. Average scores over the last three years show Fourth Grade students outperforming Third Grade students by 18% in Math and 7% in Communication Arts, in terms of percentages of students MTS. Lastly, socioeconomically disadvantaged students consistently scored below the group average in Math and Communication Arts.

We believe the drop in Third Grade 2008 Communication Arts scores can be attributed in part to the following: In the fall of 2007, Nixa opened a new elementary school which called for reorganization of district boundaries. Hence, approximately 38% of our students were new to Espy in 2007-2008. This posed a unique challenge for our team to internalize these "new" students and their background information.

Disparity between Third and Fourth Grade performances is likely related to instructional inconsistency. Over the last five years, our Third Grade team experienced a high rate of transience, while our Fourth Grade team saw minimal changes. In 2007-2008, the mean years of teaching experience for Third Grade was five with a mode of two, whereas our Fourth Grade mean was 12 with a mode of 10.

Lastly, our students qualifying for free and reduced meals have consistently scored lower than our whole group. One explanation for this disparity is the majority of our student mobility occurs within this subgroup, thus overall educational consistency poses a challenge. Secondly, research proves basic needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged students are often primary motivators, rather than educational needs. While we are deliberate and assertive in taking action to meet the hierarchy of needs of all our students, we continue to see disparities within assessment results for this group, and hence have much work yet to do.

Overall, our students are scoring above the state averages in all areas on the MAP, and we improved in all areas over the last five years. Success on state assessments isn't everything, but around Espy it's tradition. We look to keep this tradition alive and well in upcoming years.

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Team Espy uses assessment data every day to drive instruction and learning. We believe student success rests upon the triangulation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Assessment is a tool used seamlessly throughout the year and is nearly synonymous with instruction at Espy.

Individual informal assessments include the Scholastic Reading Inventory, Developmental Reading Assessment, and chapter/unit assessments. In addition, "real-time" assessments are used daily to differentiate teaching and enhance mastery of learning objectives for all students at an individual level. Espy teachers have embraced the fact that learning and assessment occur at the speed of life. Accordingly, student assessment is viewed as a teacher skill more so than a booklet or exam, and that skill is practiced each minute of every instructional period.

Benchmark assessment data is used three times per year to assess mastery of objectives and to pace the scope and sequence of instruction. Benchmark results are used for re-teaching objectives and/or remediation for students not demonstrating mastery.

Standardized state assessment results are used at the beginning of the year to develop classroom and individual learning goals. Per our Neo-Classic school improvement model described in the "School Leadership" section, the goals are divided into two categories: Neo goals and Classic goals. At the classroom level, Neo, or new, goals target improvement of the lowest performance areas of the entire group based on item-by-item analysis of the data. Moreover, Neo goals target the areas which were not mastered by the group. Classic goals are used to enhance areas of instruction where mastery has been achieved in order to enrich

learning and enhance depth of knowledge. Students also set individual Neo and Classic goals based on a review and discussion of their own performances with their teachers. Together, Neo and Classic goals provide the one-two punch that helps students master GLE's!

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

As one of the few districts in the state of Missouri to receive the designation of "Accredited with Distinction in Performance" for the seventh year in a row, Nixa Public Schools take pride and responsibility in informing our patrons of success. Above anything else, our success is based on increases in students' academic achievement. This information is communicated in several different manners to inform all patrons.

At the district level, standardized assessment results are shared via public presentation by principals and directors at the September Board of Education meeting. Assessment results are disaggregated by grade level, subject, and school. Results are compared to conference and state averages. Patrons are invited to meet with district administration with any questions. This information is publicized through various media.

At the building level, many actions are taken to ensure parents and patrons are informed and understand assessment results. Each fall, the principal distributes an overview of the building achievement to patrons, and invites two-way communication about assessment results. Next, the school counselor sends parents a copy of their child's assessment results with a letter from the principal asking them to review the information and prepare any questions. Shortly thereafter, classroom teachers hold conferences with all parents. At these conferences, each student's standardized assessment performance is reviewed in great detail as is the student's performance so far within the current school year. Identified strengths and areas of concern are discussed openly by the parents, teachers, and students. Teachers seek confirmation that parents understand assessment results and that the results are used to drive instruction for the year.

At the classroom level, each teacher reviews assessment results with each student. Again, strengths and concerns are discussed. The goal of this discussion is to inform students of their accomplishments and motivate and reward their successful efforts. Likewise, this conversation is used to set the above-mentioned learning goals for the year and forge a partnership for success between the student and teacher.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Of Maxwell's 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, the Law of Reproduction is Team Espy's favorite. In many ways, Espy not only invests in its own team, but also partners with surrounding school districts and local universities/colleges to share our successful practices.

Espy is renowned as one of the premier training destinations for student teachers and has helped produce many "best of the best" new educators recognized within our state. Likewise, teachers throughout the region regularly visit Espy to observe model teaching in such areas as Math Investigations, Building Blocks/Four Blocks, Johnny Can Spell, Love and Logic, SMART applications, Kagan Cooperative Learning, Jensen's brain-based strategies, and inquiry-based instruction. One of the state's pilot eMINTS (enhancing Missouri's Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies) schools, Espy now serves as a training location for the newly-formed eMINTS program at Missouri State University. Espy teachers regularly partner with Success Link to submit lesson plans and units to be shared with other districts throughout the nation. Additional programs often shared with other districts include our Perfect Pass Attendance Program, MAP 20-Week Plan of Action,

and Caring Kids: Above and Beyond character education, as well as other programs derived from research-based best practices. These are among the many ways Team Espy partners with the greater educational community for the success of all students.

Sharing the accomplishments of our wonderful students and teachers is a weekly activity at Espy, and is one everyone loves doing! Should Espy be awarded Blue Ribbon School status, we would be the first school in our district to receive this prestigious honor. Being the highest award a school can receive, our students and team would certainly share an abundance of excitement and pride within our community, region, and state if named a Blue Ribbon School. We would initiate a media blitz to announce this great achievement and to provide coverage of the corresponding celebrations. In the years to follow, we would continue to advocate for continuous improvement for Espy students, and for all schools in our state and nation. We would cheerfully accept the privilege of mentoring other schools seeking Blue Ribbon status.

# PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment (CIA) is the heart of Espy Elementary…to ensure all students acquire a comprehensive academic, social, emotional and physical foundation for life-long learning and personal fulfillment. The core curriculum serves as marching orders each day, and Espy teachers take a very prescriptive approach to teaching it. Delivered in an individualized and differentiated manner, the written curriculum is the taught curriculum, which in turn is the assessed curriculum. Yet, each day, we also find ourselves focusing on the "unwritten curriculum" as we strive to develop the whole child.

Guided by the Missouri Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 and the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the blueprint for all Missouri curriculum is the Show-Me Standards; the state's expectations for knowledge and performance of graduating students/productive citizens. From these 73 rigorous standards, a curriculum framework and corresponding Grade Level Expectations (GLE's) serve as our comprehensive and exacting curricular guidelines. Based on the GLE's, Nixa educators have developed comprehensive core and extracurricular curriculum to guide instruction. Using Electronic Alignment Tool (EAT) technology to enhance usability, Nixa curriculum consists of GLE's, objectives, suggested activities, and accurate assessments, all of which result in precise instruction and learning.

Communication Arts serves as the foundation for all curricular areas. Our approach is founded on balanced literacy and the Building Blocks/Four Blocks model of Guided Reading, Self-selected Reading, Writing, and Working with Words. Several supplementary programs, including Johnny Can Spell, Writer's Workshop, Six Traits, and school-to-home reading programs are used to enhance our CIA.

Math curriculum is implemented using a combined approach of traditional computation, problem solving, and hands-on "Investigations." This balanced approach provides students the opportunity to develop their own understanding of math while also internalizing facts and operations. Rocket Math, Investigations, journaling, Problem of the Day/Week, and a number of online resources supplement math CIA.

Science curriculum is also facilitated through a combined approach of hands-on experimentation and conventional instruction. Utilizing the world around us and science experimentation kits/resources, students are immersed in experimental curricular activities that raise levels of curiosity, excitement, and comprehension.

Social Studies curriculum expounds on our student's lives yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Through inquiry-based and interactive activities, as well as online resources, the stories of "his-story" are brought to life for our students. Again, the world in which our students live (and regularly the people in it) are used to personify the curriculum so students internalize and apply the objectives therein.

The core areas of Art, Music, and Physical Education combined with the essential areas of Technology (Computer Lab) and Information Literacy (Library Media Center) serve as our specialized curriculum. Students attend each class weekly, and a specialized curriculum is taught by a correspondingly certified and

specialized staff. These curricular areas provide a well-rounded approach to our vision of comprehensive education.

Entering the halls of Espy, one quickly realizes the arts are a priority, as student artifacts and activities abound. Kindergarten students are as likely to nickname their friend Van Gogh as they are to provide their parents a Valentine's gift fresh from the art kiln. All media, as well as art history are used to immerse students into the world of art. Student projects are showcased in numerous venues, and as a result, several state, national, and international awards have been bestowed upon Espy students.

As witnessed throughout the recent inauguration, music continues to tell the story of our nation. At Espy, we're jumping on the VH1 bandwagon to "Save the Music" as we embrace the importance of Music Education as a part of each child's comprehensive development. In addition to receiving weekly instruction, students engage in Honor Choir, grade-level performances, and many community presentations. By the time students leave Espy, they can carry a tune…and they often do.

The "Biggest Loser" would be a lost cause at Espy, as our students practice a plethora of healthy lifelong Physical Education habits. Led by our School Health Advisory Committee, our students participate in the Presidential Fitness program, Walk Across America, Weekly Walking Club, field day, and countless other active programs. Health and nutrition education is also a focus at Espy, as we teach and enforce the Missouri Eat Smart guidelines and other healthy habits.

The hub of our learning community, our new Library Media Center (LMC) draws students into a world of information literacy. A virtual learning environment, our LMC is embellished floor to ceiling with models, murals, and artifacts that reflect our curriculum. Literally speaking, an oversized Solar System and a 12-foot T-Rex are suspended in the air, as are figuratively, the Standards For The 21st-Century Learner.

Technology (as shared in the "Additional Curriculum Area" section) is a non-core curriculum area which is integrated heavily throughout all other curricular areas.

As a progressive leader in Special Education, Espy takes a team-based approach to meeting the diverse and unique needs of all students. Faculty members work interdependently to tailor highly-effective Individualized Education Plans. From the most cognitively challenged to the most gifted of students, our team is dedicated to helping each child achieve full potential. Response to Intervention, Care Team, and faculty collaboration result in success for all students.

Foreign language has been present at Espy piecemeal over the last five years through push-in partnerships with high school students in advanced French and Spanish classes. Aggressive debates and brainstorming sessions focused on funding and scheduling are currently underway to enhance this curricular area.

Overshadowing all core and non-core areas at Espy is our Character Education curriculum, which is implemented through the integration of two programs—Caring Kids: Above and Beyond and Character Plus. These programs define the Espy culture and are so ingrained into our habits that they are seamless in most ways. Our character education programs help students reliably, dependably, and consistently demonstrate great character and positive behavior. In action, our character program includes public affairs such as: nursing

home partnerships, recycling, adopt-a-family/student/soldier, disaster recovery efforts, student health fundraisers, and food/coat/Humane Society drives. In essence, our character and service curriculum is as important to us as our core curriculum and is treated as such.

Overall, these curricular areas are utilized in our pursuit of a comprehensive educational, social, emotional, and physical foundation for all students at Espy Elementary.

2a. **(Elementary Schools) Reading:**

*My early and invincible love of reading I would not exchange for all the riches of India. - Edward Gibbon*

Team Espy approaches reading with extensive research-based knowledge and skills essential to reaching our goal of developing a solid foundation for life-long literacy in every student. Just as importantly, we approach literacy with the goal of eliciting in all students a love for reading and for the endless knowledge and imagination it evokes.

Reading instruction is implemented through balanced literacy, utilizing the Four Blocks framework (Guided Reading, Self-selected Reading, Writing, and Working with Words). Four Blocks was adopted because it acknowledges children learn in unique ways and guides instruction to support the various learning styles and individual intelligences a child possesses. Each block facilitates multi-level and differentiated learning, providing additional support for children who struggle and rigorous challenges for children who internalize concepts quickly.

Classroom reading instruction is supplemented for struggling readers through a pull-out program called Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery is a research based one-on-one tutorial program which targets the lowest struggling readers in First Grade. Two highly-trained reading specialists implement this intense twenty-week, individualized program for at-risk readers. Sixteen to 20 students are accelerated to grade level or above through the Reading Recovery program each year. Pre-tests and post-tests are administered by the reading specialists to measure progress, using Marie Clay’s Observation Survey.

Early Literacy is used as a small-group intervention which targets students with reading abilities below grade level. Seventy to 80 students are served in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade each week. A combination of push-in and pull-out programs is used by the reading specialists to model and instruct best practices in reading.

In Kindergarten through Second Grade, the Developmental Reading Assessment is individually administered three times per year to drive reading instruction in order to accelerate students' reading abilities in word decoding and reading comprehension. In Third and Fourth Grades, the Informal Reading Inventory is administered in the same manner, as an assessment to drive reading comprehension instructional activities. Benchmark tests are also administered three times a year in all classrooms to measure student gains and persistence in reading skills, as well as reading comprehension. The Scholastic Reading Inventory is used three times per year as an additional assessment in Second through Fourth Grades. These assessments are used to formatively plan daily individualized Reading instruction which ensures growth, success, and rigorous challenges for all students.

2b. **(Secondary Schools) English:**

This question is for secondary schools only

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

Our nation's schools have long struggled to establish equality for all students. It is the staunch belief of Team Espy that technology is the key to equality in today's schools. Hence, technology is a key component of our mission to provide a comprehensive education, and serves as our highlighted curriculum area.

Leading the pursuit of technology literacy and proficiency for all students, Espy is served by two eMINTS (enhancing Missouri's Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies) teachers. Through rigorous PD based on the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, eMINTS teachers receive specialized technology training to engage students in exciting learning activities, enrich teaching to improve student performance, and employ inquiry-based instructional strategies which utilize innovative digital resources. Students emerge from the eMINTS experience with diverse technology and critical thinking skills, prepared for lifelong learning and research. Technology literacy is also promoted by our Computer Lab specialist and our district technology specialists.

In 2007, Espy constructed a Library Media Center/Computer Lab, which serves as the nucleus for learning within our school community. With a circulation of over 14,000 items and network of dozens of databases, the Espy SMART LMC includes a student research center and is equipped with computer research stations, a document projector, Classroom Performance System (CPS), digital science probes, and a plethora of other technologies. The SMART Computer Lab consists of 26 student workstations, a document projector, and CPS. Students visit both on a weekly basis where technology, research skills, and inquiry-based curriculum objectives are presented by specialists.

Goal seven of our BIP calls for all Espy classrooms to be equipped as SMART Classrooms. We are only a few classrooms shy of reaching this goal and are planning for our next actions. Using these resources, all teachers model technology literacy and integrate technology objectives across the core curriculum. As a result, Espy students are engrossed in digital pedagogy throughout our school. Some of our highlights may be viewed at our school website and the websites of our individual classrooms.

**While it was tempting to highlight our Third Grade Science curriculum which led to an average of 76 % of students MTS on the Science MAP the last five years it was given; and, while it was nearly as tempting to highlight the Fourth Grade Social Studies curriculum which resulted in an average of 72% of students MTS on the Social Studies MAP during the same period, we chose technology because of the tremendous role it currently plays and the impact it will have on our students' futures.*

4. **Instructional Methods:**

*More important than the curriculum is the question of the methods of teaching and the spirit in which the teaching is given. - Bertrand Russell*

Espy students love coming to school and love learning…and it shows! Of all the reasons, this is most directly a result of the passionate and fun-filled manner in which Espy teachers approach the teaching/learning

partnership. Expansive knowledge, diverse skills, enthusiastic attitudes, and a student-centered focus combine to form the habits that lead our instruction.

At Espy, instruction and assessment are simultaneous and inseparable. Assessment of learning and assessment for teaching occurs throughout each and every day. "Teachable moments" of individual students abound and are utilized to assess students at the speed of their learning. Moreover, instruction is led by our teachers' invariable internalization of each student, their abilities, current depth of knowledge, and difficulties. Teachers are current in research on Multiple Intelligences, brain-based strategies, cooperative learning, flexible grouping, inquiry, depth of knowledge, highly effective questioning, individual assessment, learning styles, and other research-based best practices.

Our faculty practices research targeting students of poverty in order to better understand the most effective means of communicating, motivating, and succeeding with our children. Likewise, our Special Services department consists of "resource" specialists who target all learning modalities while working with our Special and Regular Education teachers to accomplish the goals of each student's Individual Education Program. All instruction is designed with the pluralistic nature of our nation in mind in order to encompass all ethnic groups.

Although the number of students within our subgroups is limited, teachers employ a differentiated approach to educating all students. Individualized education is achieved primarily through weekly one-to-one conferring sessions with each student. During these personalized interactions, teachers provide individual instruction and also determine the need for intervention as a response to identified areas of concern. If necessary, the teacher partners with our Response to Interventions (RTI) team, and the process to ensure success for the child continues. Multiple levels of interventions are in place to provide the needed help at the lowest level of intrusiveness into the regular education program of each student.

5. **Professional Development:**

Professional Development (PD) is one of the most exciting elements of our school, because it is the fuel that powers our vehicle of continuous improvement in instruction, assessment and student learning. Espy teachers are gung-ho when it comes to enhancing their knowledge and skills, and they look to PD opportunities with great enthusiasm! Our district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) strategizes that we will recruit, hire, *train*, and retain high quality educators. Within our building, the Espy Professional Development Committee (PDC) guides our efforts as a sub-entity of our district PDC.

The structure of our PD follows the research-proven fact that training must be ongoing and integrated into everyday activity. Accordingly, five contracted days are dedicated to PD and all faculty members are released one hour early each Friday to collaborate on PD initiatives. In addition, PD offerings occur weekly at the building or district level. Lastly, PDC funds are used to support out of district PD events.

The district CSIP was created through strategic planning and identifies goals for student learning. As such, this plan is the driving force for PD, and all activities must be directly related to a strategy therein. While broad, this plan is also specific in that it focuses on the needs of all students. Hence, when a teacher seeks PD for an entire class issue or an issue specific to one child, the structure of our PD program will support that need.

Examples of activities are endless, but ultimately student mastery of Grade Level Expectations drives our PD activities. By applying the strategies of Jensen, Payne, Marzano, DuFour, Schmoker, to name but a few, our district has been recognized for seven years straight as being Accredited with Distinction in Performance. Year after year, our students' performance on all assessments continues to improve. The bottom line is our teachers and subsequently our students are learning, and professional development activities are the proverbial books that shed the enlightenment.

6. **School Leadership:**

Leadership at Espy Elementary is a responsibility which is shared at all levels. Students, teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, support staff, and community members all contribute to the collaborative and purpose-driven culture of our school – to ensure success for all students. We work interdependently each day to ensure all students acquire a comprehensive academic, social, emotional, and physical foundation necessary for life-long learning and personal fulfillment. Interdependence, trust, professionalism, and high expectations for all are common threads which allow our team to work as a singular unit where strengths are replicated and weaknesses dissolved. Success for one is success for all at Espy! Hence, our educational programs, policies, and practices as well as our tools and talents remain current and concentrated on the identified needs of our school and individual needs of our students.

The role of the principal at Espy is to build, train, sustain, and quarterback a winning team of students, parents, and teachers. The principal and the Principal's Advisory Team (PAT) have worked strategically to plan for continuous improvement. As a result, the team created a new school improvement model called Neo-Classic Design. Neo-Classic is the acronym for our "Neuro-cultural Educational Organization - Cultivating Learning Amidst Scientific Study Inquiry & Collaboration." Inspired by the re-birth of the arts and literature during the Neo-Classic Era, this model focuses on the cognitive domain (neuro) and affective domain (cultural) in order to ensure the approach we take in educating our students is all-inclusive. As we strive each year for continuous improvement, we embrace the new (neo) changes in pedagogy as lifelong learners, but we simultaneously remain true to the existing (classic) practices which have produced great results. As a result, Espy is an evolving and ever-changing organism whose vision remains on possibilities rather than practicalities for our students.

Two elements which move vision to results are the Building Improvement Plan (BIP) and our outstanding committee work. Each year, school-wide Neo and Classic goals are developed within the BIP to hone our improvement efforts for the year. These goals are carried out through the following committees: Principal's Advisory Team, Professional Development Committee, Parent Teacher Association, Media/Public Relations Committee, Perfect Pass Attendance Committee, Response to Intervention/Care Team, Caring Kids/Character Plus Team, and Social Committee. Within these dedicated teams, the rubber meets the road for transparent, research-based, and outcomes-driven student/school improvement. Each year the Principal and the PAT evaluate the effectiveness of each committee in terms of its direct impact on student growth and achievement. This evaluation component helps us focus our future efforts to ensure continuous school improvement and increased student success.

The wind at our back, our course steady, our sails full, our eye on the horizon… each member of our crew is first mate on "Leader-Ship Espy" and we continue to chart new waters each day in the sea of Student Success!

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Missouri Assessment Program

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2008 Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

| | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Testing Month | Apr | Apr | Apr | | |
| **SCHOOL SCORES** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 69 | 56 | 59 | | |
| % Advanced | 13 | 14 | 12 | | |
| Number of students tested | 105 | 78 | 83 | | |
| Percent of total students tested | 100 | 100 | 100 | | |
| Number of students alternatively assessed | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| | | | | | |
| **SUBGROUP SCORES** | | | | | |
| **1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 50 | 44 | 42 | | |
| % Advanced | 4 | 0 | 4 | | |
| Number of students tested | 24 | 18 | 24 | | |
| | | | | | |
| **2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Caucasian** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 70 | 59 | 60 | | |
| % Advanced | 14 | 15 | 13 | | |
| Number of students tested | 96 | 73 | 75 | | |
| | | | | | |
| **3. (specify subgroup):** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **4. (specify subgroup):** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |

Notes:

Math has been assessed in Fourth Grade by the Missouri Assessment Program for the last three years only.

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Missouri Assessment Program
Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

| | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Testing Month | Apr | Apr | Apr | Apr | Apr |
| **SCHOOL SCORES** | | | | | |
| %Proficient plus % Advanced | 48 | 63 | 52 | 48 | 56 |
| % Advanced | 16 | 23 | 15 | 1 | 1 |
| Number of students tested | 105 | 78 | 83 | 85 | 78 |
| Percent of total students tested | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number of students alternatively assessed | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| **SUBGROUP SCORES** | | | | | |
| **1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students** | | | | | |
| %Proficient plus % Advanced | 29 | 61 | 42 | 19 | 33 |
| % Advanced | 4 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of students tested | 24 | 18 | 24 | 16 | 30 |
| | | | | | |
| **2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Caucasian** | | | | | |
| %Proficient plus % Advanced | 51 | 63 | 53 | 47 | 58 |
| % Advanced | 18 | 25 | 16 | 1 | 1 |
| Number of students tested | 96 | 72 | 75 | 78 | 73 |
| | | | | | |
| **3. (specify subgroup):** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **4. (specify subgroup):** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 4 Test: Missouri Assessment Program
Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

| | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Testing Month | Apr | Apr | Apr | Apr | Apr |
| **SCHOOL SCORES** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 77 | 74 | 51 | 70 | 44 |
| % Advanced | 18 | 22 | 10 | 17 | 11 |
| Number of students tested | 85 | 82 | 84 | 71 | 92 |
| Percent of total students tested | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number of students alternatively assessed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| **SUBGROUP SCORES** | | | | | |
| **1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 57 | 60 | 45 | 50 | 36 |
| % Advanced | 10 | 27 | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Number of students tested | 21 | 15 | 20 | 24 | 25 |
| | | | | | |
| **2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Caucasian** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 77 | 75 | 51 | 71 | 45 |
| % Advanced | 19 | 22 | 10 | 17 | 12 |
| Number of students tested | 78 | 77 | 80 | 69 | 87 |
| | | | | | |
| **3. (specify subgroup):** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **4. (specify subgroup):** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Missouri Assessment Program

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

| | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Testing Month | Apr | Apr | Apr | | |
| **SCHOOL SCORES** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 77 | 72 | 68 | | |
| % Advanced | 24 | 26 | 23 | | |
| Number of students tested | 83 | 82 | 84 | | |
| Percent of total students tested | 100 | 100 | 100 | | |
| Number of students alternatively assessed | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| | | | | | |
| **SUBGROUP SCORES** | | | | | |
| **1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 67 | 53 | 45 | | |
| % Advanced | 19 | 27 | 0 | | |
| Number of students tested | 21 | 15 | 20 | | |
| | | | | | |
| **2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Caucasian** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 78 | 75 | 69 | | |
| % Advanced | 24 | 27 | 23 | | |
| Number of students tested | 78 | 77 | 80 | | |
| | | | | | |
| **3. (specify subgroup):** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **4. (specify subgroup):** | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |

Notes:

Communication Arts in Fourth Grade has been assessed by the Missouri Assessment Program for only the past three years.

---------- **END OF DOCUMENT** ----------