

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

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

Name of Principal: Mrs. Donna Barrett

Official School Name: Carolina Elementary School

School Mailing Address:
719 West Carolina Avenue
Hartsville, SC 29550-4411

County: Darlington State School Code Number*: 1601015

Telephone: (843) 383-3112 Fax: (843) 857-3232

Web site/URL: http://ces.dcsdschools.org E-mail: donnab1@darlington.k12.sc.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. Rainey Knight

District Name: Darlington County School District Tel: (843) 398-5100

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: Mr. Connell Delaine

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:
- | | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 13 | Elementary schools |
| 3 | Middle schools |
| 0 | Junior high schools |
| 4 | High schools |
| 2 | Other |
| 22 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 8666

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 8577

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

0 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	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
1	21	19	40	9	0	0	0
2	22	24	46	10	0	0	0
3	23	29	52	11	0	0	0
4	36	20	56	12	0	0	0
5	25	28	53	Other	0	0	0
6	0	0	0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							247

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
27 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
68 % White
3 % 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: 9 %

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	10
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	12
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	22
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	235
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.094
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	9.362

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 3 %

Total number limited English proficient 7

Number of languages represented: 2

Specify languages:

Spanish, Tagalog

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 55 %

Total number students who qualify: 136

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: 19 %

Total Number of Students Served: 48

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

<u>8</u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u> </u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>25</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> Hearing Impairment	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>4</u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u> </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u> </u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>25</u>	<u>5</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 25 :1

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

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	98%	98%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	99%	95%	94%	96%	94%
Teacher turnover rate	26%	26%	17%	16%	18%

Please provide all explanations below.

Daily Teacher attendance in 2005-2006: one teacher was out for maternity leave, two teachers had long term absences due to surgery.

Daily Teacher attendance in 2003-2004: two teachers had an extended time of illness

Teacher turnover rate appears high because our faculty is so small.

2003-2004 One teacher retired, two teacher moved. one teacher transferred to the middle school

2004-2005 Two teachers retired, one teacher transferred to another school because of RIF

2005-2006 One teacher retired, one teacher transferred to another school because of RIF

2006-2007 Six grade teacher moved to the new mIddle school, two teachers transferred, one teacher moved, one teacher retired

2007 - 2008 Three teachers moved, two teachers transferred because of RIF

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	<u>0</u> %
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u> %
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u> %
Found employment	<u>0</u> %
Military service	<u>0</u> %
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u> %
Unknown	<u>0</u> %
Total	<u>100</u> %

PART III - SUMMARY

Located in the small rural town of Hartsville, in Darlington County, South Carolina, Carolina Elementary School serves approximately 253 students in grades 1 to 5 from a small geographic school zone. Because of the Choices Option mandated by the No Child Left Behind legislation, students have been given opportunities to choose to come to Carolina from other school zones, thereby making it a school of choice.

As a vital part of the Hartsville community for 60 years, Carolina has built a strong heritage and reputation for dedicated teachers and effective instruction. Carolina has been a member of the Southern Association for Schools for the past 25 years, and as a result of the commitment to outstanding achievement, the school has received recognitions for academic accomplishments, implementation of best practices, community involvement, and positive school climate. The awards include:

- Red Carpet Award for a warm and friendly environment from the South Carolina State Department of Education,
- Literacy Spot Award for using best reading practices in grades one through three from the South Carolina Reading Advisory Council,
- Red Wagon Award for school involvement in the community from America's Promise Alliance,
- District's Five Star Award for a positive school climate from the Darlington County School District, and
- Palmetto Silver Award for student achievement based on student improvement as outlined in the State's Assessment Accountability Act of 1998.

The successes of the school's programs are the result of the collaboration of dedicated faculty, staff, and administration as well as supportive parents, local businesses and the community.

The mission statement for Carolina Elementary School is "A community of learners dedicated to student achievement." To support this mission, at Carolina we believe that all students will become caring, respectful life-long learners who will make positive contributions to society. We further believe that all staff and faculty are dedicated to growing professionally and working collaboratively while providing a positive learning environment for our children. At Carolina, we know the family plays a vital role in student learning and appreciate and continually cultivate the open, two-way communication between school and home. We welcome continuing opportunities for involvement, support, and collaboration with the community and school environment. Based on these beliefs and values, Carolina Elementary strives toward the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan in three areas: academics, technology, and school climate.

To support the continuing move toward academic excellence, Carolina Elementary School has infused innovative strategies and initiatives into its repertoire including Reading Recovery for first grade students, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Compass Learning Program, and Benchmarks in all four content areas. The school provides and maintains an after-school academic Quiz Bowl program to encourage an enthusiastic learning environment. Students are offered continuing opportunities during the day and after school to work on academic strengths and weaknesses using the individualized Compass Learning Program based on MAP testing scores. Further, in order to meet the learning needs of the students, teachers and administrators examine and use state testing data, district benchmark results as well as MAP scores to individualize and differentiate instruction based on the South Carolina Academic Standards. To support this effort, the school maintains a staff of highly qualified teachers, special education teachers, a guidance counselor, a coordinating teacher, assistants, and an administrator. The School Leadership Team comprised of the media specialist, guidance counselor, coordinating teacher and principal, works together to develop and coordinate activities and expectations for the students' academic success.

In an effort to encourage continuing improvement in technology, interactive learning, and communication, classrooms are equipped with state-of-the-art technological equipment which includes wireless laptops for teachers, Promethean Boards, document cameras, classroom web-pages, voice mail, e-mail, and LCD

Projectors. A computer lab is available for teachers and students to use to enhance and promote skills in the use of computer technology. The school also maintains two wireless laptop carts each with 25 computers that have internet access and educational software installed.

Carolina Elementary School promotes a positive school and learning environment through the Positive Behavior Intervention Support Program (PBIS), and expectations for students are displayed throughout the school. Incorporating the District's Character Education Word of the Week, the school community challenges the students, parents, faculty, and staff to think and perform at high levels of achievement and exhibit positive character values. Classroom and individual student achievement are celebrated each month, and a school-wide Dragon Fest Celebration is held at the end of the school year.

Parents are involved in every aspect of Carolina Elementary School and serve as volunteers for a host of activities, ranging from duplicating papers and selling ice cream to assisting in the library's book fair, mentoring students, or chaperoning field trips. Parent groups like the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) sponsor school-wide fundraisers to support field trips and other needs throughout the school. The Carolina Elementary School Education Foundation (CESEF) organizes an annual Golf Tournament to support school needs and efforts. Teachers are able to request grant funds from the foundation to purchase programs, books and materials as needed. In addition, the School Improvement Council (SIC), a group of volunteer parents, teachers and community members, serves as an advisory committee to the school's principal.

Finally, the students, parents, teachers, staff, and community of Carolina Elementary School work together as a team to provide a positive school community dedicated to student achievement. We believe that within the entire school community we respect and care for each other. We believe that the safety and well being of all students is the responsibility of the entire school community. We are devoted to exemplifying excellence in ourselves and helping all students reach their highest potential.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Because of the No Child Left Behind legislation and the South Carolina Accountability Act of 1998, our students in grades 3-8 must take the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) annually. This rigorous assessment evaluates student progress in the areas of English/Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science and social studies. The PACT student performance level indicators are as follows:

Advanced: The student has exceeded grade level expectations and is well prepared for the next grade level.

Proficient: The student has met grade level expectations and is well prepared for the next grade level.

Basic: The student has met minimum expectations for student performance.

Below Basic: The student has not met minimum grade level expectations for student performance and is not prepared for the next grade level.

Historically Carolina Elementary has scored at the top percent of the elementary schools in the Darlington County, and has received a “Good” rating from the state department for the past five years. The percentage of students scoring Proficient and Advanced at Carolina has been higher than like schools in the state in math, science and social studies.

The percentage of students scoring Proficient and Advanced in Grade three (ELA) has increased 11 % from 2003 to 2008; in Grade four, the increase was 18%, and in Grade five, the increase was 19%. .

Additionally, students have shown significant growth in Math. The percentage of third grade students scoring Proficient and Advanced increased 27% from 2003 to 2008. The percentage of fourth grade students scoring Proficient and Advanced also increased 27% and the percentage of fifth grade students scoring Proficient and Advanced increased 29% during the same time period.

Carolina Elementary has shown consistency in closing the achievement in both sub- groups of Free and Reduced meals and African Americans at each grade level in the past five years. ELA scores increased at the third grade level from 21% in the Free and Reduced meals subgroup, and 29% in the African American subgroup. Fourth grade showed similar growth in ELA Proficient and Advanced levels, 39% increase in the Free and Reduced subgroup and 32% increase in the African American subgroup. Fifth grade scores increased from 38% in the Free and Reduced meals subgroup and 29% in the African American subgroup.

The percentage of students scoring Proficient and Advanced in Math in both subgroups have increased considerably. In the third grade, an increase of 35% of the students scored Proficient and Advanced in the Free and Reduced meals subgroup. The African American subgroup increased 32% from 2003 to 2008. Fourth graders showed growth in both subgroups: 14% in the Free and Reduced meals subgroup and 8% in the African American subgroup. Fifth grade showed dramatic increases: 33% in both subgroups.

Carolina Elementary was named a Palmetto Silver Award Winning School by the South Carolina Department of Education in 2005. Carolina was also honored as a Showcase School the same year. In November, 2005, Carolina was awarded with the Literacy Spot Award by the South Carolina Reading Recovery Association and Clemson University for exemplary literacy practices in grades 1-3.

Detailed information on the state’s assessment process may be found on the website www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/PACT.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The South Carolina State Department of Education provides a school report card that outlines all data including No Child Left Behind criteria, subgroup data, school data, parent survey data, teacher survey data, and district data. These report cards are sent home with each student, published by the local newspapers, and available on line at www.ed.sc.gov. Schools are provided with the data as soon as the data is available from the state. Once we receive the data, our administrative team begins the process of analyzing the data and comparing the results to the predictions that were made. The data is then provided to each classroom teacher who analyzes it at the classroom level. Both the administration and the teachers look for areas of weakness and strengths. Each year, we set a goal of improving our previous absolute score by a growth of 0.2, with the current year's goal set at a rating of 3.9.

Once the data is reviewed, we start the process of identifying school wide areas of focus. Our 2008-2009 focus is on vocabulary and basic math operations. We monitor these areas by assessing the students using Measure of Academic Performance (MAP), district and school benchmarks, and classroom assessments. We meet with each grade level on a weekly basis to determine how each student is performing and to assess retention of the state standards. We review teacher-created assessments to make certain that the content is at the level of the state standards and indicators, and at the appropriate level of rigor for proficient and advanced learners. The Leadership Team meets weekly to review school performance and identify strategies to continually move our students toward their goals. In addition, Carolina has an after school program for students using the Compass learning program and tutoring. This effort is focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the individual child and grade level standards. Students are also provided tutoring sessions and computer time during the day to supplement classroom instruction.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

The School assessment results are communicated to parents in a variety of ways: the state website: <http://ed.sc.gov>, local newspapers, and the district web page www.darlington.k12.sc.us. Each student receives a copy of the state report card that includes all school and district data. At the school level, parents receive a copy of the individual test scores of their children and review these results with teachers at the first parent-teacher conference of the year. During these conferences, teachers help parents understand what the results mean and how their children are performing in relationship to other students in the same grade at the school, across the district and at the state level. Carolina also administers two nationally normed tests - Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Cognitive Abilities Test (Cogat) – which determine eligibility into the Gifted and Talented Program. These results are shared with parents through individual student reports. Along with teachers and school administration, the School Improvement Council (SIC) helps analyze the data and makes recommendations for improvements at the school level. These recommendations are shared with our parents and community.

Finally, each year, students set individual yearly goals for the MAP assessment given three times a year (fall, winter, spring). These goals are shared with parents and students and are correlated to the state performance levels of advanced, proficient, basic and below basic. The Guidance Counselor provides classroom instruction in understanding the results, and helps the students create and determine ways to reach their goals.

4. Sharing Success:

Carolina has willingly shared its successes through presentations, conversations, and demonstrations. We are always open to visitors, and we welcome opportunities to share our thoughts and strategies.

This past fall, the principal, curriculum coordinator and a classroom teacher made a presentation to the Darlington County Principals on the Teacher Directed Reading component of our Literacy Model. Our guidance counselor and principal were featured presenters at the South Carolina Association of School

Administrators 2008 Summer Leadership Institute. The curriculum coordinator and classroom teachers are often called upon to serve as presenters at our district staff development sessions as members of the district Content Area Team (CAT). Classroom teachers and administrators also serve on local committees for reading, math, technology and student intervention. In addition, teachers from other schools have visited our campus to observe instruction in our classrooms. This gives us opportunities to work directly with other teachers and administrators in our district and to share our ideas.

Finally, our web page (<http://ces.dcsdschools.org>) is available to the public. Each teacher in our school has a class page and updates it with recent activities and information. Our school newsletter, Dragon Tells, is sent home every two weeks to inform parents of school activities and highlight school and student successes.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Reading/Language Arts: In order to improve and accelerate student learning, teachers at Carolina Elementary use South Carolina Academic standards to plan and implement effective classroom instruction. During instruction, teachers use a balanced literacy approach with an emphasis placed on teacher directed reading, guided reading at student's instructional level, independent student reading and teacher read-alouds. Curriculum materials used in instruction include Rigby and Wright Group leveled texts as well as novel sets that incorporate science and social studies standards.

Our balanced literacy program incorporates specific strategies that are designed to improve student proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Teachers create formative and summative assessments to evaluate student learning in reading and language arts. Teachers in grades one and two evaluate student progress in reading using the Dominie Reading Assessment. In grades three through five, student growth is monitored by the use of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing.

Writing instruction is incorporated in various ways across the curriculum. Journals in science and social studies are used for reflections and insight into student learning. There is a continuous effort to evaluate student writing through the use of monthly focused writing prompts. Students are encouraged to complete compositions for publication by the school's publishing company.

Mathematics: Our mathematics curriculum is based on building concrete mathematical foundations and incorporates the use of manipulatives into activities based on real-life situations. Teachers plan lessons incorporating the South Carolina Academic Standards by using the Darlington County District math pacing guide. Students are engaged in learning situations that address numbers and operations, algebra, data analysis and probability, measurement and geometry. Math materials include activities from Marilyn Burns, Math Solutions, Harcourt Mathematics and NCTM. Research based practices include the use of Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP), mathematical games, and manipulative activities.

Student progress in mathematics is evaluated through the use of teacher made assessments, MAP assessments and district math benchmark tests. Through the use of small group and leveled group instruction, students have an opportunity to become actively involved in their learning.

Science: The science curriculum at Carolina Elementary allows students to learn by doing. Students receive science instruction based on South Carolina Academic Standards that address three areas: earth science, physical science and life science. Through the use of Harcourt Science, Full Option Science System (FOSS) kits, and Delta Science kits, students are able to build conceptual understanding, critical thinking and vocabulary knowledge. In addition, students in third grade receive instruction from a consultant with the South Carolina State Children's Museum who assists students with hands-on science lab experiments that correlate with the State Academic Standards and the science lessons taught. The use of inquiry-based science enables students to explore and manipulate various models designed to foster a clearer understanding of science concepts.

Social Studies: The social studies curriculum, based on South Carolina Academic Standards, emphasizes developing an awareness of community as well as learning about the history of our state and the United States. Instruction focuses on building community within the school setting as well as generating an understanding of federal, state and local government, South Carolina and United States history. Teachers guide students in understanding the basic tenets of a democratic society in order to nurture citizenship and a love for country.

Carolina students also work to give back to the community of Hartsville by participating in school-wide service projects. Our students have collected canned goods for the local food bank, pennies for leukemia, aluminum cans for a burn center, contributed to Habitat for Humanity, and visited local nursing homes. Our service projects allow our students to understand the true meaning of giving to those who are in need.

Visual and Performing Arts: The curriculum for Visual and Performing Arts is based on South Carolina Academic Standards. All students participate in weekly art and music classes that allow artistic exploration and musical participation. Our weekly classes allow students to gain an understanding of the influences of art and music as reflected by different cultures in the world. Students in first and fourth grades participate in an evening musical performance which highlights singing, public speaking, listening skills, team building and performance behaviors. In addition, Artists in Residence from all across the state of South Carolina in both performing arts and visual arts work with students on an annual basis.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

Carolina Elementary uses a balanced literacy model designed to help all students learn to read and write effectively. This model stands firmly on the premise that all students can learn to read and write, and is required in all Darlington County Schools. The balance between reading and writing allows students to receive instruction needed to master grade level competencies. Instruction in the balanced literacy model is closely aligned with the South Carolina Academic Standards for English/Language Arts. Teachers prepare lessons that advance student learning in reading and the comprehension of text.

The language arts balanced literacy block of 120 minutes is divided into three parts. The springboard of the literacy block is a 30-40 minute teacher-directed reading component during which the teacher provides direct, explicit standards-based instruction. During teacher-directed reading, teachers build background knowledge, focus on vocabulary in context, model thinking aloud and provide a purpose for reading. Teachers also use Bloom's Taxonomy to formulate critical-thinking questions enabling students to move beyond simple comprehension into more complex thoughts about the texts and their connections to life.

Guided reading is the small group component of the balanced literacy model and is based on students' instructional needs using leveled text. During guided reading, teachers provide systematic, explicit instruction in the five essential elements of reading, the reading cue systems and the South Carolina ELA standards. Literacy centers are in place allowing students to work on structured activities when not working with the teacher. The assessment/instruction elements of these groups continually determine differentiated instructional needs and appropriate placement in readable text.

The third component of the balanced literacy model is independent reading. During independent reading students are reading books that interest them. Based on the works of Regie Routman and Irene Fountas, each classroom has an extensive classroom library with a variety of genres that engage students, allowing them to become fluent readers. During independent reading, teachers conference individually with students to practice strategies that have been taught during teacher-directed reading, to assess and evaluate the books they are reading, and to assess and revise individual learning goals to further improve their comprehension. Students make quarterly reading goals and are rewarded when they are fulfilled.

Compass Learning affords students opportunities to use computerized lessons that provide specific strategies to help strengthen concepts taught in the classroom. Teachers use Compass Learning in the computer lab for targeted individual or small group acceleration or remediation.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

Research completed by the National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment indicates that science instruction must prepare students to understand the various models of scientific inquiry and use them effectively. At Carolina Elementary, we believe that our science curriculum promotes active learning, inquiry problem solving, cooperative learning and other instructional methods that engage and motivate students to learn science concepts at higher levels. In 2005, when the first state science test was administered, 26% of our students scored in the Proficient or Advanced levels. In order to improve science instruction in our school, the faculty began intensive efforts to move to inquiry-based science instruction. From our research into inquiry-based science, we noted that when students are allowed to explore they are likely to begin to understand the natural world and make meaning out of their experiences.

Our science instruction is aligned with the South Carolina Academic Standards, which address three areas: earth science, life science and physical science. For inquiry lessons, teachers present explorations in the

science lab using materials from the Full Option Science Systems (FOSS) kits and Delta Science Modules. Activities from the FOSS kits and Delta Science Modules allow students to explore and manipulate various models designed to foster a clearer understanding of science concepts.

To help our teachers become more skilled in presenting engaging science inquiry lessons, Darlington County School District has provided intensive professional development that addresses state curriculum science standards. As a result of professional development our teachers have become more familiar with science concepts presented at each grade level. They have also developed instructional strategies that allow students to explore and learn by doing, and have increased efforts to utilize Bloom's Taxonomy when creating all assessments. As a result of our endeavors, student achievement in science increased to 64% in 2008 as measured by the South Carolina state science test.

4. Instructional Methods:

In order to meet the diverse academic needs of our students, Carolina's teachers use a number of strategies to deliver instruction that is engaging and takes into account the abilities of all learners. Teachers prepare guided reading lessons based on students' instructional reading levels as measured by the Dominion Reading Assessment or Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) subtests in reading. At each grade level guided reading groups are fluid, allowing students to move up or down levels according to their reading ability. Also, when planning whole group instruction for teacher-directed reading, teachers create guided practice and independent activities that differentiate among student learning levels. It is the belief of the faculty that all students can learn at higher levels than they are presently learning and daily classroom instruction focuses on engaging activities that promote higher levels of learning for all students.

A significant number of our students with learning challenges receive additional services from a resource teacher. The resource teacher may work one-on-one with individual students or small groups in the regular classroom. The resource teacher and the regular classroom teacher work very closely to ensure that specific concepts or strategies are constantly reinforced for this segment of the student population. Also, at Carolina Elementary the Reading Recovery teacher provides additional reading instruction to students in the upper grades. The Reading Recovery teacher demonstrates problem-solving strategies and provides support to help students develop effective reading strategies.

Students who have difficulties in math receive daily small group instruction with the school's curriculum coordinator. The curriculum coordinator works closely with classroom teachers to reinforce math concepts that have been taught in the classroom. Also, weekly math groups that target specific academic levels are taught by classroom teachers, the curriculum coordinator and guidance counselor. The purpose of the math groups is to provide remediation or acceleration in a small group setting.

After school tutoring is provided for students who are experiencing difficulties in math or ELA. Teachers work closely with the computer assistant to develop individual student lessons using Compass Learning software. Students in the after school program are constantly monitored, and as specific concepts are mastered, other academic areas are addressed. An after school Quiz Bowl challenge session is provided for students who excel academically.

5. Professional Development:

Research has shown educator quality to be the most important influence upon student achievement. At Carolina Elementary the faculty and administration believe that high quality professional development is essential to increasing educators' knowledge, skills and attitudes so that they may enable all students to learn at high levels. Quality professional development allows educators the opportunity to gain knowledge of academic content and teaching strategies that promote higher levels of student learning.

Professional development at Carolina Elementary is based on the school's and district's strategic plan and specific needs of teachers as identified by yearly test data. At the district level, professional development has been provided to augment the lagging test scores in science and social studies. Consultants from The Writing Improvement Network, ScienceSouth, the South Carolina Department of Education and local agencies have conducted workshops that provide teachers a greater understanding of state academic standards as well as

content specific concepts. The professional development sessions have allowed teachers to learn strategies that can be readily applied to classroom instruction and student learning. Math, science and ELA coordinators from Darlington County School District also provide periodic professional development sessions that address state academic standards. In addition, the school district also utilizes a train-the-trainer model with all school curriculum coordinators.

At the school level, professional development addresses identified areas of weakness in the curriculum or specific needs of the faculty. The faculty spent a year of professional development devoted to technology. This training allowed teachers to learn advanced uses of technology equipment such as the Promethean Board as well as how to create web pages. To address curriculum areas, the faculty has engaged in book studies that relate to improving student vocabulary and strategies that improve reading comprehension. In order to understand how poverty affects our students the faculty also conducted a one-year study of Ruby Payne's work.

6. School Leadership:

Carolina Elementary has a strong leadership team whose focus is student academic performance and growth. Each year, the leadership team analyzes the state PACT data and determines school strengths and weaknesses. Each teacher is then presented with her/ his own test results and determines class needs. Staff development is provided at the school level for each individual classroom teacher. Carolina teachers and administrator take active roles in participating and leading district staff development. The principal is an active part of the staff development. This year, she is the chairman of the District Reading Committee which is developing a new literacy model for Darlington County Schools.

At the school level, weekly grade level meetings offer opportunities to discuss progress in all content areas. Each week the classroom teachers meet with the principal and the curriculum coordinator to discuss curriculum and classroom concerns. Topics of discussion include student data, classroom assessments and specific curriculum topics. During the school week, classroom observations from the principal or curriculum coordinator provide feedback to teachers for continuous improvement. Teachers also have the opportunity to visit other classrooms in the school and throughout the district to observe effective teaching strategies. Another aspect of leadership is vertical teaming which allows teachers to work with other teachers in grades either below them or above them. Collaboration among these teachers builds skills and strategies from one grade level to the next.

Working with parents and the community is important in sharing leadership opportunities. Parents are welcome to talk with the administrator and offer suggestions on improving student performance. Three times a year, there is a Principal's Chat, where parents and members of the community are invited to talk with the Principal about their concerns and ideas. The School Improvement Council, PTO and the Carolina Elementary School Education Foundation work side by side to ensure that Carolina is a school where students learn and grow to their potential. Grants are written to local businesses and foundations for classroom materials, professional development and additional classroom assistants. Our Mission Statement: A community of learners dedicated to student achievement is first and foremost about working together for all students to succeed in academics.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: PACT

Edition/Publication Year: Updated Yearly

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	60	52	71	59	33
Advanced	36	12	40	30	9
Number of students tested	47	45	45	47	47
Percent of total students tested	100	100	87	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	6	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	13	2	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus % Advanced	45	25	43		10
Advanced	30	6	21		0
Number of students tested	20	16	14		20
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African Americans					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	53	19	33		21
Advanced	37	6	13		0
Number of students tested	15	16	15		14
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:

Off grade level testing for IEP students was allowed through the 2006 PACT administration. As of 2007, the PACT test no longer allowed off grade testing. Carolina Elementary had three self-contained Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH) classes in 2004, two self-contained classes in 2005-2006, one self-contained class in 2007 and 2008. A self-contained autism class was added to our building in 2007-08. All students in each grade level are tested using grade level PACT tests.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: PACT

Edition/Publication Year: Yearly

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Proficient plus % Advanced	61	60	74	66	50
%Advanced	7	14	11	13	2
Number of students tested	47	45	45	47	47
Percent of total students tested	98	100	87	98	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	6	1	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	13	2	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
%Proficient plus %Advanced	56	50	67		25
%Advanced	0	8	0		0
Number of students tested	16	12	12		37
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
%Proficient plus %Advanced	50	39	54		21
% Advanced	0	0	8		0
Number of students tested	10	13	13		14
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:

Off grade level testing for IEP students was allowed through the 2006 PACT administration. As of 2007, the PACT test no longer allowed off grade testing. Carolina Elementary had three self-contained Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH) classes in 2004, two self-contained classes in 2005-2006, one self-contained class in 2007 and 2008. A self-contained autism class was added to our building in 2007-08. All students in each grade level are tested using grade level PACT tests. The one student who was alternately tested in 2008 was tested using the South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-ALT). This assessment is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in a school curriculum that includes functional and life skills as well as academic instruction. This student is in the self-contained autism class.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: PACT

Edition/Publication Year: Yearly update

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	68	67	70	74	41
% Advanced	38	48	45	28	25
Number of students tested	54	54	53	41	57
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	44	49	31	53	30
% Advanced	12	37	19	12	9
Number of students tested	25	19	16	17	23
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	35	47	40	50	27
% Advanced	15	24	13	17	9
Number of students tested	20	17	15	12	22
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:

Off grade level testing for IEP students was allowed through the 2006 PACT administration. As of 2007, the PACT test no longer allowed off grade testing. Carolina Elementary had three self-contained Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH) classes in 2004, two self-contained classes in 2005-2006, one self-contained class in 2007 and 2008. A self-contained autism class was added to our building in 2007-08. All students in each grade level are tested using grade level PACT tests.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: PACT

Edition/Publication Year: Updated Yearly

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	54	52	49	15	36
% Advanced	10	4	4	0	2
Number of students tested	54	54	53	41	57
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	0	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	53	38	25	0	14
% Advanced	5	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	19	16	16	16	21
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	47	36	27	10	15
% Advanced	7	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	15	14	15	10	20
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:

Off grade level testing for IEP students was allowed through the 2006 PACT administration. As of 2007, the PACT test no longer allowed off grade testing. Carolina Elementary had three self-contained Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH) classes in 2004, two self-contained classes in 2005-2006, one self-contained class in 2007 and 2008. A self-contained autism class was added to our building in 2007-08. All students in each grade level are tested using grade level PACT tests.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: PACT

Edition/Publication Year: Yearly updated

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	71	55	60	45	42
% Advanced	39	31	24	24	19
Number of students tested	50	55	52	56	78
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	41	25	30	35	8
% Advanced	18	17	4	9	4
Number of students tested	17	12	23	23	25
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	50	21	25	29	17
% Advanced	19	7	10	8	4
Number of students tested	16	14	20	24	24
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:

Off grade level testing for IEP students was allowed through the 2006 PACT administration. As of 2007, the PACT test no longer allowed off grade testing. Carolina Elementary had three self-contained Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH) classes in 2004, two self-contained classes in 2005-2006, one self-contained class in 2007 and 2008. A self-contained autism class was added to our building in 2007-08. All students in each grade level are tested using grade level PACT tests.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: PACT

Edition/Publication Year: Yearly Updated

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	55	43	33	27	36
% Advanced	6	2	2	2	3
Number of students tested	50	55	52	56	78
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	42		4	0	4
% Advanced	0		0	0	0
Number of students tested	12		23	21	24
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	42	20	5	0	13
% Advanced	8	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	12	10	20	22	23
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:

Off grade level testing for IEP students was allowed through the 2006 PACT administration. As of 2007, the PACT test no longer allowed off grade testing. Carolina Elementary had three self-contained Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH) classes in 2004, two self-contained classes in 2005-2006, one self-contained class in 2007 and 2008. A self-contained autism class was added to our building in 2007-08. All students in each grade level are tested using grade level PACT tests.