U.S. Department of Education
2010 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) [] Charter [**X**] Title I [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Lisa Williams

Official School Name: Anna F. Booth Elementary School

School Mailing Address:
17001 Hurricane Boulevard
Irvington, AL 36544-6047

County: Mobile State School Code Number*: 0035

Telephone: (251) 824-1740 Fax: (251) 824-1762

Web site/URL: http://booth.mce.schoolinsites.com/ E-mail: lmwilliams2@mcpss.com

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. Roy Nichols

District Name: Mobile County Schools Tel: (251) 221-4394

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. William Meredith

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.*
The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. 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 2009-2010 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 2004.

6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.

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: (per district designation)

55	Elementary schools (includes K-8)
19	Middle/Junior high schools
13	High schools
	K-12 schools
87	**TOTAL**

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 8844

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
[X] Rural

4. 7 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position 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	8	11	19	**6**			0
K	32	40	72	**7**			0
1	50	54	104	**8**			0
2	47	28	75	**9**			0
3	56	46	102	**10**			0
4	45	50	95	**11**			0
5	45	35	80	**12**			0
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL					547

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 %	American Indian or Alaska Native
19 %	Asian
10 %	Black or African American
2 %	Hispanic or Latino
0 %	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
69 %	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: 19 %

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.	55
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	45
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	100
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	531
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.188
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	18.832

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 16 %

Total number limited English proficient 90

Number of languages represented: 4

Specify languages:

Vietnamese, Cambodian, Spanish, Laotian

Note: The total number of limited English proficient stundents include LEP I, LEP2, FLEP 1, and FLEP 2.

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 82 %

Total number students who qualify: 449

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: 12 %

Total Number of Students Served: 68

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

0	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	8	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	22	Specific Learning Disability
0	Emotional Disturbance	30	Speech or Language Impairment
1	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
2	Mental Retardation	1	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
1	Multiple Disabilities	3	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	
Classroom teachers	28	
Special resource teachers/specialists	11	1
Paraprofessionals	10	
Support staff	13	
Total number	63	1

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 **20 :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%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	97%	96%	96%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	7%	9%	20%	23%	25%
Student dropout rate	%	%	%	%	%

Please provide all explanations below.

In 2004-2005, the teacher turnover rate was 25%. One teacher retired, one became a resource teacher, and seven teachers transferred within the district to schools that were using a different reading program. In 2005-2006, the turnover rate was 23%. One teacher moved into a secondary level position, one left to pursue an advanced degree, four left the district, one retired, and one chose to stay home with her new baby. In 2006-2007, the turnover rate was 20%. One teacher left for family reasons, one left for health reasons, two relocated to other states, one became a media specialist at another school within the local district, one left the district, and one accepted a position outside of the public school system.

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

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Booth Elementary serves the children of Bayou la Batre, a small fishing community in southern Alabama. Twenty percent of students represent Vietnamese, Cambodian or Laotian populations; 16% are limited English proficient; and 82 % qualify for free/reduced lunch. In spring 2002, our students were struggling. Booth was a low-performing school. In 2002, SAT 9 scores showed third grade performance at the 31st percentile in Reading with only 32% of the students scoring stanine 5 or above. Due to low performance, Booth was selected to implement the Reading First grant. Plans were made to begin training in Spring 2003 with first-year grant implementation set for the 2003-2004 school year. We were assured that the grant would produce results. A vision was set into motion---A vision of a high-performing, high-poverty school with all children reading at or above grade level---A vision of a knowledgeable faculty possessing the expertise to meet the needs of all students.

Reading First implementation produced phenomenal, sustainable achievement at Booth. Data now indicates continual fulfillment of our mission which is "to enable each student to reach his or her educational potential by providing the appropriate academic foundation to ensure that each child will, in turn, graduate from high school fully prepared to enter the global work force or pursue higher education."

In communicating our "story," we must note that Hurricane Katrina devastated Bayou la Batre on August 29, 2005 leaving over 70% of our students homeless. Despite the devastation, teachers did not once express concern that the impact would affect achievement. Teachers persevered in the face of adversity inspired by the knowledge that our children are as capable as any in the nation. When the hurricane hit we were entering third-year Reading First implementation and teachers were confident the hurricane's aftermath would not destroy the foundation built through this grant. The grant had proven to be a catalyst for change producing measurable growth almost immediately. Through professional development, teachers were empowered, confident in their abilities to utilize research-based strategies while allowing data to drive instruction. Further, they had a renewed belief in the students' capabilities resulting in an environment where children are not defined by "first" language, migrant status, or socioeconomic level. Confidence in the children, combined with teacher self efficacy, allowed teachers to embrace their ethical responsibility to ensure achievement for all children while accepting no excuses, not even a hurricane. Staff members supported relief efforts to meet students' basic needs, and students continued to succeed.

Other strengths contributing to success include: implementation of data meeting processes designed to provide a collaborative forum for analyzing student data, making data-drive instructional decisions, and planning professional development; job-embedded, data-driven professional development; a structured intervention plan supported by a staggered schedule; allowing for optimal utilization of time/ human resources; alignment of Standards/Instruction/Assessments; structured School Improvement Processes ensuring constancy of focus; and an empowering Culture with pervasive belief in students' capabilities; student/ staff self efficacy; and dedicated staff who exhibit professionalism, cohesiveness, and collaborative effort.

The following awards document impact of "strengths:" National Title I Distinguished School– 2006; Category: Closing the Achievement Gap Between Student Groups; National School Change Award -2007 (previously low-performing schools now recognized as exemplary); National Title I Distinguished School – 2008; Category: Exceptional Student Performance for Two or More; Consecutive Years; Alabama Torchbearer School (high-poverty schools overcoming odds to become high-performing).

Booth was once perceived as a low-performing school. Now, Booth is perceived as exemplary with capable, nationally-competitive students: a school with an empowering culture that promotes both teacher and student success.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

The state of Alabama utilizes the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) to assess students' mastery of state content standards in reading and mathematics with results utilized for accountability at grades 3-8. The ARMT is a criterion-referenced test consisting of selected items from the Stanford Achievement Test (Stanford 10) which match Alabama state content standards in reading and math along with additional test items developed to ensure all content standards are fully covered. ARMT performance is reported utilizing four achievement levels with Level I indicating the student "does not meet academic content standards," Level II indicating the student "partially meets academic content standards," Level III indicating the student "meets academic content standards," and Level IV indicating the student "exceeds academic content standards" for the assigned grade level. This application includes data tables presenting ARMT data for Booth Elementary for the last five school years, 2004-2005 through 2008-2009. The following information presents trends in this data.

- For all five years, grade level proficiency in Reading for each grade, 3rd-5th, was at or above 88% thereby exceeding state yearly target goals (annual measureable objectives) each year. For example, third grade school-level performance compares to state annual measureable objectives (AMO) as follows:

  2004-2005 State AMO: 73% Booth Performance: 89%

  2005-2006 State AMO: 73% Booth Performance: 90%

  2006-2007 State AMO: 77% Booth Performance: 93%

  2007-2008 State AMO: 77% Booth Performance: 94%

  2008-2009 State AMO: 81% Booth Performance: 94%

- For each of the last four years, a minimum of 50% of students in each grade, 3rd-5th, exceeded standards (scoring Level IV) in Reading. For 2008-2009, 63% of third graders exceeded standards, 56% of fourth graders exceeded standards, and 77% of fifth graders exceeded standards.

- For all five years, grade level proficiency in Math for each grade, 3rd-5th, exceeded state yearly target goals (annual measurable objectives) with performance for the last four years being at or above 82%. For example, fifth grade school-level performance compares to state annual measureable objectives (AMO) as follows:

  2004-2005 State AMO: 59% Booth Performance: 80%

  2005-2006 State AMO: 59% Booth Performance: 84%

  2006-2007 State AMO: 65% Booth Performance: 82%

  2007-2008 State AMO: 65% Booth Performance: 95%

  2008-2009 State AMO: 71% Booth Performance: 97%

- For each of the last four years, a minimum of 50% of students in each grade, 3rd-5th, exceeded standards (scoring Level IV) in Math. For 2008-2009, 73% of third graders exceeded standards, 61% of fourth graders exceeded standards, and 71% of fifth graders exceeded standards.

- With the exception of the special education subgroup, performance of all other identified subgroups during a given year is positive with these subgroups exceeding state yearly target goals (annual measureable objectives) for reading and math in all instances except for one instance when a fifth grade LEP subgroup exactly met, but did not exceed, the state reading goal for school year, 2007-2008.

When analyzing the data, one cannot fully appreciate Booth's consistently strong ARMT performance unless he/she realizes Booth was once a low-performing school as indicated by performance on the Stanford Achievement Test. Now, as with ARMT performance, our school's Stanford Achievement Test results detail a school success story including the following example.

- Third Grade SAT 10 Reading Data indicates consistent and sustainable school improvement. Third graders scored at only the 31st percentile in school year 2001-2002 and the 29th percentile in 2002-2003. Then, after first year implementation of Reading First in 2003-2004, performance has improved steadily to the 43rd percentile in 2003-2004, the 44th percentile in 2004-2005, the 53rd percentile in 2005-2006, the 56th percentile in 2006-2007, the 63rd percentile in 2007-2008, and the 65th percentile in 2008-2009. Further, it should be noted that, in 2002, only 32% of our students scored at or above stanine 5 on this assessment; whereas, in 2009 after seven years of steadily improving percentages, 82% of our students scored at or above stanine 5.

(Information on the state assessment system is available through the Alabama State Department of Education website, www.alsde.edu.)

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Booth Elementary utilizes three coordinated processes (annual *School Action for Excellence* planning, quarterly *School Action for Excellence* reviews, and monthly/bi-weekly Data Meetings) for systematically analyzing assessment data for the purpose of making data-driven decisions for improving teaching/ learning for all students. Each process provides a collaborative forum for making data-driven instructional decisions while effectively aligning professional development and allocating resources for continuous improvement. (*School Action for Excellence, "SAE,"* is the term used in our district for *School Improvement Plan*)

Annual SAE Planning and SAE implementation represent a continuous process of school improvement. The SAE represents a methodical course of action based on a comprehensive needs assessment. Prior to each new school year, we produce a comprehensive needs assessment through disaggregating /analyzing achievement data for the prior year. A plan of action, the SAE, is developed based on this analysis. During the new school year, we conduct SAE Quarterly Reviews to measure impact.

SAE Quarterly Reviews provide a forum to: (a) ensure fidelity of plan implementation; (b) analyze progress monitoring data to determine effectiveness of SAE strategies; and (c) make informed decisions regarding need for possible plan revisions.

Grade-Level Data Meetings are held at least monthly. These meetings represent collaborative effort/ program coordination to ensure we meet the needs of each student. The principal, as instructional leader, leads these meetings in which grade-level and ancillary support teachers collaboratively:

- analyze current data to identify at-risk students.

- discuss impact of current strategies on meeting individual student needs and possible non-academic factors influencing performance.
- determine strategies are effective and should continue; strategies must be revised; or, there are non-academic needs that must be addressed.
- develop an individualized, immediate plan to meet each student's needs.
- determine if professional development is needed to increase knowledge of how to meet identified student needs.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

Student and school performance is communicated to parents, students, and the community through the utilization of purposeful communication tools. The tools are designed to ensure stakeholders are actively informed about assessment results and the meaning/use of this data.

Student performance is communicated to students through teacher-student conferences, administrator-student conferences, and parent-teacher-student partnership conferences. Further, the principal makes intercom, classroom, and assembly "speeches" for the purpose of communicating, in celebratory tone, grade-level and school progress to students.

Progress is communicated to parents through hallway displays, bulletins, PTO meetings, award ceremonies, an annual Title I meeting, Statewide Parenting Day, parent-teacher-student partnership conferences, the school improvement plan, and IEP meetings. Teachers utilize comprehensive assessment profiles during parent-teacher-student partnership conferences.

The detailed hallway display, titled "*Children Blossom at Booth*," is an especially inviting tool utilized to communicate progress/data to parents and community members. We publicly display our data and "story" in the school's main entrance. Visitors view the attractive display and note the success evident in the data and artifacts displayed. Data charts detail student performance on the SAT10 and ARMT as relates to system and state achievement goals. Multiple years of data document and assess school improvement and sustainability of improvement. Further, comparison information is included in order to assess school performance in relation to the district, the state, and (if applicable) to the nation as a whole. We also post feeder middle school performance data in order to communicate sustainability of our students' achievement levels. We have shared our "story" and data with the local city council and business leaders. Community representatives serve as members of our *School Action for Excellence* Committee with representatives actively involved in the development and quarterly/annual reviews of the school improvement plan. Last, a school Success Team submits "data" stories for publication in the local community newspaper.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Booth Elementary staff members have continually gained knowledge as successful schools have shared with us strategies to which they attribute success. Therefore, we wish to "pay it forward," and share our successes with other schools. To this date, we have "shared" through the following activities:

- Hosting on-site visits to our school with opportunity for observation/ collaborative discussion regarding school programs/strategies

- Presenting at the U. S. Department of Education's *Reading First* Conference in Reno

- Hosting visitors from education foundations in Houston, New Orleans, Laurel, Mississippi, and Washington D.C. The visit's purpose was for us to share how we partnered with other entities after Hurricane Katrina in order to ensure continued student achievement for our children in spite of the devastation

- Presenting a concurrent program session titled, *Data Meetings: Indisputable Impact on Student Achievement,* at the NAESP Annual Convention in Seattle

- Presenting, as a recipient of the *National School Change Award*, our story of *instituting and sustaining school change* at the National Principals' Leadership Institute in New York

- Presenting at the Alabama School Board Association Convention on the topic, "Creating a Culture Where Everybody Learns"

- Presenting, as selected by the State Department of Education, our story of "instituting and sustaining change" to school leaders in three Alabama counties

- Serving, at the National Title I Conference, on a Distinguished School Panel addressing the topic: Professional Growth and Support

- Our story has been highlighted at state/national levels through (a) the U.S. Dept of Education website via the on-line journal, *The Achiever*; (b) inclusion in a speech by former Education Secretary, Margaret Spelling; (c) the Learning First Alliance's website, *Public School Insights*; and (d) the Alabama Best Practices Center journal, *Working Toward Excellence*

In the event Booth Elementary is awarded Blue Ribbon Status, we would certainly embrace opportunities, similar to the venues listed above, to share our success.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

Booth Elementary offers a research-based curriculum that supports best practices and clearly defines student learning expectations. Staff members continually maintain cognizance of essential skills in all content areas, as defined by the Alabama Course of Study and Mobile County Pacing Guides, while focusing on student mastery of standards. This curriculum challenges students to excel while, at the same time, allowing teacher latitude to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each student.

Our curriculum provides for scaffolding of skills within the framework of a defined scope/ sequence. Grade-level standards build upon the previous grade's standards while quarterly standards build upon the previous quarter. Further, there is alignment of standards, curriculum, instruction and assessments. At one time, teachers "taught to textbooks" or to favorite thematic units. Standards-based instruction is now the only acceptable norm with teachers utilizing standards-based, rigorous assessments to accurately measure mastery of grade-level skills. Assessment results serve as a tool for planning further instruction. Teachers realize assessment is a critical component in the cyclic teaching process: teach, assess, analyze, re-teach if necessary.

Another important factor is continuity in research-based instructional practices through the grade levels with grade-to-grade consistency supporting learning. For example, all grades utilize a comprehensive reading program. Due to strong professional development on program implementation, teachers implement the program with fidelity ensuring that "teacher talk," "routines/procedures," and "visual anchors" are consistent from classroom to classroom and grade to grade. Children thrive as routines provide structure, familiarity, and smooth grade-level transitions. Further, we incorporate Marzano's nine research-based instructional strategies across all content areas and grade levels while realizing documented impact of these strategies. We also utilize the explicit, direct instruction model across all content areas/grade levels. The cycle includes explicit explanation and modeling by the teacher (I DO), guided practice (WE DO), and independent practice (YOU DO) with checking for understanding/ feedback throughout.

Our math program builds the mathematical foundation for success in middle school math courses with the ultimate goal of ensuring students have the mathematical problem solving skills needed to be career/ college ready upon high school graduation. Strategies for teaching math include explicit, direct instruction; daily routines such as *calendar math* and *Problem of the Day*; and use of manipulatives. We also engage students in math "investigations" that support the acquisition of problem-solving/ higher-order thinking skills.

The *Reading First Initiative* and *Alabama Reading Initiative* serve as our foundation for reading instruction with teachers utilizing a comprehensive reading program and research-based strategies for teaching of the five critical components of reading. (see 2a)

Our writing curriculum represents a coordinated, coherent K-5 instructional plan. The plan utilizes increasingly complex grade-level graphic organizers and scoring rubrics to ensure continuity and scaffolding of instruction as we teach each mode of writing. Teachers utilize the explicit, direct instruction model when engaging students in writing lessons.

Our technology focus is evident as we (a) ensure mastery of Alabama Course of Study technology standards; (b) utilize Smart Boards as an instructional tool; (c) ensure computer use by all students, and (d) utilize instructional software. (We recently purchased microscopes designed for Smart Board use).

Our Physical Education program engages students in varied, motivating exercise activities. The program is supported by an outdoor structure designed to build physical skills (e.g., balance, upper body strength, agility).

Science instruction focuses on inquiry-based learning through "hands-on/minds-on" strategies. Instruction is supported through classroom libraries of nonfiction trade books that support science concepts and utilize scientific language/ writing.

Art/ Music lessons are conducted by itinerant art/music teachers and general education teachers who engage the students through motivating activities and school performances.

Last, our curriculum supports interdisciplinary and cross-curricular experiences designed to promote transfer of knowledge.

2a. **(Elementary Schools) Reading**:
(This question is for elementary schools only)

The *Reading First* and *Alabama Reading Initiatives* serve as the foundation of our reading curriculum. Faithful implementation and relentless effort have produced phenomenal improvement in reading achievement. 2009-2010 Stanford Achievement Test (SAT10) Reading scores indicate performance for tested grades (1^{st}-5^{th}) was at or above the 65^{th} percentile with grade one at the 79^{th} percentile. Notably, the percentage of students scoring stanine 5 or above on this 2009-10 test was 89% at grade one, 87% at grade two, 82% at grade three, 83% at grade four , and 86% at grade five. This data represents a departure from year 2001-2002 when third grade SAT9 Reading scores were at the 31^{st} percentile with only 32% of students scoring stanine 5 or above. We attribute this growth to the *Reading First* and Alabama Reading Initiatives.

Components of these initiatives include: Job-Embedded Professional Development (on-going and data-driven); A Research-Based Comprehensive Reading Program; A Defined, Intensive Intervention Plan with Targeted Small-Group Instruction; Effective Assessment Instruments/Tools; Data-Driven Instruction/Planning; Data Meetings; Focused Collaboration; and Strategic/Effective Scheduling. During first-year (2003-2004) implementation of these K-3 initiatives, it was apparent these components could be replicated in 4^{th} /5^{th} grades, even without the support of initiative funds. Therefore, we replicated these components in grades 4-5 and experienced success.

During first-year implementation, we were required to examine our practices and focus solely on research-based best practice. Subsequently, through effective use of a research-based, systematic reading program, teachers are implementing explicit, research -based instructional strategies to support teaching of the five critical components of reading with one component representing the ultimate goal: reading comprehension.

The impact of these initiatives was described by teacher, Donna Melton, during summer 2006. She had tears in her eyes as she viewed the amazing SAT10 results for her second grade students. She remarked, "Before *Reading First*, we would not have considered giving our students the level of work that we are putting before them now. We did not realize what they were capable of doing."

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

Our mission is to enable each child to reach his/her educational potential by providing the appropriate academic foundation to ensure that each child will, in turn, graduate from high school fully prepared to enter the global work force or pursue higher education.

Therefore, we ensure strategic organization of a math curriculum that builds the mathematical foundation for success in middle school math courses with the ultimate goal of ensuring that students acquire the mathematical problem solving and higher-order thinking skills needed to be career/ college ready upon high school graduation.

Strategies for teaching math include explicit, direct instruction; daily routines such as *calendar math* and *Problem of the Day*; use of manipulatives; and engagement in mathematical "investigations." Further, we utilize varied technologies to support mastery of concepts.

First, we utilize the explicit, direct instruction model when teaching math concepts. The cycle includes explicit explanation and modeling by the teacher (I DO), guided practice (WE DO), and independent practice (YOU DO) with checking for understanding/ feedback throughout the cycle.

We also utilize effective daily instructional routines (e.g., *calendar math, problem of the day*) to support development of math concepts. Manipulative are used to support the exploration and mastery of concepts.

Next, we utilize the *Investigations* component of our Scott Foresman Math Program to engage students in activities that promote mathematical problem-solving and higher order, critical thinking skills rather than just memorization of facts.

Throughout the year, we use varied technologies to support math instruction and mastery of concepts. The SuccessNet computer program provides "in school" and "at home" individualized, needs-based math instruction for either re-teaching or acceleration purposes. Students also enjoy using *Math Facts in a Flash*, a self-paced computer program that builds computational fluency. Smart board presentations and interactive games enhance 4th and 5th grade student engagement/mastery of concepts. .

4. **Instructional Methods:**

We implement well-designed methods to ensure for differentiation of instruction and subsequent achievement for all students. We implement a *Structured Intervention Plan Supported by a Staggered School-Day Schedule Allowing for Optimal Utilization of Time and Human Resources*. Unique orchestration of needs-based instruction results in at-risk students having opportunity, beginning day one of the school year, to receive four small-group lessons per day aligned to his individual learning needs (three small-group sessions for reading at all grades and one small-group session for math in grades 3-5 during the regular school day). During months we offer extended day, a child may receive five small-group, needs-based lessons per day.

Our strategically-staggered schedule structurally supports our intervention plan through provision of grade-level blocks allowing maximum involvement of ancillary support personnel. As classroom teachers provide intervention for struggling students, efforts are supported through effective assignment and assistance of ancillary professional/paraprofessional personnel resulting, as stated, in at-risk students receiving small-group instruction as many as four times daily during the school day. The schedule allows ESL, Special Education, Title I and Reading Staff to provide equitable support to all grades. Intervention begins on the first day of school with intervention grouping based on end-year data from the prior year.

Intervention groups are created from the collective group of grade level students rather than grouping only within individual classrooms allowing for optimum specificity of instructional content. Classroom teachers exhibit great professionalism when taking ownership for meeting the needs of all grade-level students. Analysis of progress monitoring data determines grouping configurations and instructional content. Continual regrouping by similar need ensures for optimum response to each child's specific needs throughout the year.

Professional development has provided knowledge of differentiated strategies designed to meet diverse needs including strategies for working with LD students as detailed in the book, *Overcoming Dyslexia*; and

strategies for meeting the needs of *English Language Learners* as detailed in the book, *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol: Making Content Comprehensible.*

5. **Professional Development:**

We ensure professional development impacts student learning as we focus on Sparks' and Hirsch's vision for professional development which states professional development should be "results driven" focusing on (a) "what students need to know," (b) "what educators need to know and be able to do to ensure student success," and (c) "what professional development will ensure that educators acquire necessary knowledge and skills."

Professional development is job-embedded, ongoing, and data-driven, focused on study of research-based strategies. Analysis of teacher and student data provides direction for professional development designed to affect true change. For example, the principal and school-based reading coach conduct monthly classroom "walkthroughs" focusing on fidelity of program implementation. These "walkthroughs" provide direction for professional development related to reading instruction. Also, data meeting and SAE processes ensure for identification of professional development needs as participants collaboratively analyze data to determine student needs and develop corresponding action plans. Then, participants determine if professional development is required to ensure effective implementation of the action plan.

Job-embedded professional development provides active support as the reading coach provides timely, relevant technical assistance specific to our needs. Teachers are engaged in a coaching cycle with support individualized to meet each teacher's expertise. Research proves professional development is most effective when modeling/practice are embedded in a sustained training sequence as represented by this coaching cycle.

Foremost, teachers must believe their students are capable. However, it is not enough to simply believe in the children. Teachers must possess the knowledge to meet students' instructional needs. As intense professional development began in summer 2003, teachers began to feel empowered by the knowledge they were gaining realizing the *Reading First* grant would provide the instructional skills necessary to teach all students to read at or above grade level. With this knowledge, self-efficacy grew in staff members. The renewed belief in the students, compounded by the teachers' growing belief in their own capabilities to meet the students' instructional needs, produced measurable results almost immediately. Through professional development, our teachers have been empowered as educators.

6. **School Leadership:**

Our leadership structure represents distributed leadership with teachers taking leadership roles and the principal serving as instructional leader as we maintain constant focus on achievement. This structure is evident when one describes our culture: an empowering school culture with evidence of pervasive belief in students' capabilities; student/staff self efficacy; and dedicated staff who exhibit professionalism, cohesiveness, and collaborative effort.

Teachers embrace the ethical responsibility to ensure achievement for all children. They are positive and energetic, but there is an underlying seriousness as they work together to address students' needs. They are confident in students' abilities, set high expectations, and work diligently every moment of the year to enable students to meet expectations.

Data meetings, led by the principal as instructional leader, represent profound impact on our culture by providing a forum for strong collaboration, distributed leadership, and staff cohesiveness. These meetings impact school culture by: strengthening professionalism/collegiality while eliminating personal agendas; empowering teachers/ promoting distributed leadership; developing collective accountability resulting in an environment in which teachers hold one another to high expectations and commitment to ensuring all children

learn; leading teachers to take responsibility for all children on grade level and for their students as they progress through subsequent grade levels; and facilitating open professional dialogue between administrators and teachers.

Teachers expect excellence from themselves and each other; however, they support one another fully. They are not competitive, and there is no evidence of divisive cliques or professional jealousy. They work as teams, in unison with each other and the principal, focusing on actions prompted by "what is best for the children."

Data Meetings also promoted collective self-efficacy. We refer to this attitude shift as "an efficacious attitude is born" as we created a description of this change process occurring in our staff, over time, as follows: (1) When addressing the goal of increased achievement, initially the attitude was "*Impossible*, it cannot happen. It is out of our control." (2) The attitude changed to, "It is *improbable*. It is very unlikely, but it could inexplicably happen." (3) The attitude changed to, "It is *possibl*e. If all variables fall perfectly in line, it might happen." (4) The attitude changed to, "It is *probable*. Unless something goes wrong, it will happen." (5) Ultimately, the attitude changed to, "It is a *reality*. Through collaborative effort and distributed leadership, we will succeed."

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test
Edition/Publication Year: 2004 Publisher: Alabama State Department of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	93	96	88	95	76
Proficient Plus Advanced	73	64	64	73	45
Number of students tested	90	69	81	65	80
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Proficient	92	95	87	94	75
Proficient Plus Advanced	72	62	62	74	45
Number of students tested	74	60	75	55	75
2. African American Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient		79			60
Proficient Plus Advanced		43			60
Number of students tested		14			10
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Proficient		100		90	68
Proficient Plus Advanced		64		70	44
Number of students tested		14		16	34
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Proficient	93	100	94	94	75
Proficient Plus Advanced	73	72	78	75	50
Number of students tested	15	18	18	25	36

Notes:
Largest Other Subgroup - Asian

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test
Edition/Publication Year: 2004 Publisher: Alabama State Department of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	94	94	93	90	89
Proficient Plus Advanced	63	62	56	55	35
Number of students tested	90	69	81	67	79
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Proficient	95	93	92	89	88
Proficient Plus Advanced	59	60	55	56	34
Number of students tested	74	60	75	57	74
2. African American Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient		71			
Proficient Plus Advanced		29			
Number of students tested		14			
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Proficient		100		80	79
Proficient Plus Advanced		50		40	21
Number of students tested		14		16	34
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Proficient	100	100	94	88	83
Proficient Plus Advanced	67	44	61	56	25
Number of students tested	15	18	18	26	36

Notes:
Largest Other Subgroup - Asian

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 4 Test: Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test
Edition/Publication Year: 2003 Publisher: Alabama State Department of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	86	92	85	88	83
Proficient Plus Advanced	61	66	52	52	50
Number of students tested	77	87	81	80	82
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	98	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Proficient	83	91	84	88	82
Proficient Plus Advanced	56	63	51	53	46
Number of students tested	66	78	77	65	67
2. African American Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient	58		40		27
Proficient Plus Advanced	25		20		18
Number of students tested	12		10		11
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Proficient			80	89	88
Proficient Plus Advanced			30	58	47
Number of students tested			20	36	17
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Proficient	84	94	82	91	92
Proficient Plus Advanced	58	69	43	61	58
Number of students tested	19	16	28	44	24

Notes:
Largest Other Subgroup - Asian

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test
Edition/Publication Year: 2003 Publisher: Alabama State Department of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	92	95	93	90	89
Proficient Plus Advanced	56	70	57	50	54
Number of students tested	77	87	81	80	82
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	98	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Proficient	91	95	92	88	87
Proficient Plus Advanced	52	67	55	50	49
Number of students tested	66	78	77	65	67
2. African American Students					
Proficient	91				
Proficient Plus Advanced	36				
Number of students tested	11				
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient	58		40		37
Proficient Plus Advanced	8		10		9
Number of students tested	12		10		11
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Proficient			90	84	100
Proficient Plus Advanced			25	32	29
Number of students tested			20	36	17
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Proficient	95	100	93	91	100
Proficient Plus Advanced	53	75	39	39	38
Number of students tested	19	16	28	44	24

Notes:
Largest Other Subgroup - Asian

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test
Edition/Publication Year: 2004 Publisher: Alabama State Department of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	97	95	82	84	80
Proficient Plus Advanced	71	84	56	54	46
Number of students tested	92	73	82	83	67
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	98	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Proficient	96	94	82	81	78
Proficient Plus Advanced	69	81	55	44	45
Number of students tested	80	64	71	64	58
2. African American Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient					46
Proficient Plus Advanced					23
Number of students tested					13
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Proficient		92	89	90	78
Proficient Plus Advanced		69	47	40	50
Number of students tested		13	19	14	17
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Proficient	100	96	87	93	83
Proficient Plus Advanced	74	80	61	50	58
Number of students tested	19	25	31	21	23

Notes:
Largest Other Subgroup - Asian

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test
Edition/Publication Year: 2004 Publisher: Alabama State Department of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	96	91	88	89	91
Proficient Plus Advanced	77	73	63	77	53
Number of students tested	92	74	82	84	68
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Proficient	95	89	87	88	92
Proficient Plus Advanced	75	71	62	74	50
Number of students tested	80	65	71	63	58
2. African American Students					
Proficient	90				
Proficient Plus Advanced	50				
Number of students tested	10				
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient					79
Proficient Plus Advanced					21
Number of students tested					14
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Proficient		77	84	100	94
Proficient Plus Advanced		46	42	80	39
Number of students tested		13	19	15	17
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Proficient	100	88	97	100	92
Proficient Plus Advanced	74	60	68	86	54
Number of students tested	19	25	31	21	23

Notes:
Largest Other Subgroup - Asian