

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

Type of School: (Check all that apply) Charter Title I Magnet Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Lynne Jeffers

Official School Name: Ila Elementary

School Mailing Address:

150 Sewell Mill Rd
P.O. Box 48
Ila, GA 30647-0048

County: Madison State School Code Number*: 4050

Telephone: (706) 789-3445 Fax: (706) 789-2528

Web site/URL: http://www.madison.k12.ga.us/ila/ E-mail: ljeffers@madison.k12.ga.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. Mitch McGhee

District Name: Madison County Tel: (706) 795-2191

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. Jim Patton

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)
- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 5 | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| 1 | Middle/Junior high schools |
| 1 | High schools |
| | K-12 schools |
| 7 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 8459

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. 3 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	17	11	28	6			0
K	32	36	68	7			0
1	34	39	73	8			0
2	34	26	60	9			0
3	37	24	61	10			0
4	38	34	72	11			0
5	32	30	62	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							424

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
3 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
92 % White
2 % 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: 18 %

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.	42
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	33
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	75
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	413
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.182
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	18.160

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 59 %

Total number students who qualify: 249

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: 16 %

Total Number of Students Served: 67

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>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>8</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>23</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>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>23</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>13</u>	<u>3</u>
Support staff	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>
Total number	<u>54</u>	<u>17</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 18 :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%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	95%	97%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	5%	10%	5%	5%	6%
Student dropout rate	%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Embraced by the picturesque rural farms and tall pines of Northeast Georgia, Ila Elementary has established itself as a true beacon for its surrounding area. Ila Elementary was built in 1956. It is a small school with an enrollment of 424 students and a faculty and staff of 71. Ila Elementary takes pride in its strong “family style” environment involving students, parents, teachers, staff, and the community as a whole. Inclusive decision making and a strong bond between all stakeholders establishes a solid foundation conducive for building student success and professional growth. Consequently, the component which defines Ila Elementary is not just a building filled with busy children and adults...it is a state of mind and heart, a vision shared by all, a dream changing into reality, a walk through time hand in hand...“A Caring Family of Learners.”

Goals And Teamwork Offer Rewarding Success (GATORS).....

This very simple mission statement has directed the efforts of Ila Elementary School faculty and staff for the past several years to work in unity and collaboration in meeting the needs of all its students. The mission statement embodies the belief that all children, when taught by caring teachers who challenge and support their academic efforts, can indeed master the curriculum and set foundational goals to succeed in life. In addition to our mission statement, we embrace a set of common beliefs also centering around student success.

Student achievement, dedication of staff, shared decision making, and parental and community involvement all contribute to the success and tradition of excellence at Ila Elementary. Strong community ties, as well as a family oriented and stable faculty and staff strengthen the mission and beliefs of the school. All stakeholders work diligently to foster the academic, developmental, and social growth of our children. Ila Elementary’s administration, faculty, and staff work closely together to analyze data, identify strengths and weaknesses, plan instruction to meet the needs of all learners, and provide professional development for areas of need (see writing Part V, 5).

Ila Elementary School was originally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS/CASI) in 2001 and has maintained accreditation. We have made adequate yearly progress for seven consecutive years and have been recognized as a Title I Distinguished School for the past two years. (Prior to 2007, this recognition was not possible due to F/R status.)

Ila Elementary teachers consistently strive to maintain high personal and professional expectations. Students rise to the challenge of meeting and exceeding these high expectations. In the summer of 2008, Ila Elementary was recognized by the local newspaper for academic excellence by outperforming other elementary schools in the district on our state standardized tests. The main contributing factor is the shared vision and responsibility of all stakeholders.

Although difficult to define by “outsider” standards, “*Gator Pride*” contributes to school success. Many faculty and staff attended Ila as children and carry a mantle of pride. When looking back, the solid foundation provided at Ila has produced many currently successful alumni in productive careers.....doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, administrators, ministers, draftsmen, accountants, farmers, bankers, and dedicated parents and Partners in Education, to name but a few. Ila Elementary is proud to have taught two first graduates from the University of Georgia, the flagship school of our state!

It is with great honor and pride that we are educators at Ila Elementary. We seek daily to grow in knowledge, nurturance, and wisdom. We recognize the fine students and parents that encompass our school! We look to a bright future because of our bond of unity, caring, and commitment.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Students who attend public schools in the state of Georgia are required to take the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in grades one through five. The CRCT is designed to measure student acquisition of the knowledge, concepts, and skills set forth in the Georgia curriculum. This assessment serves a dual purpose: 1) diagnosis of individual student and school program strengths and weaknesses as related to instruction of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) where applicable and 2) a measure of the quality of education in the state, specifically in Ila Elementary. Over the past five years, Georgia has mandated a systematic phase out of the QCC and has trained all levels of education in implementing the new GPS. All elementary grades and subject areas are currently tested based on performance standards (GPS).

CRCT scores are described in three performance levels: “Exceeds” (Level 3), “Meets” (Level 2), and “Did Not Meet” (Level 1). The scores for the performance levels are:

“Exceeds” – Level 3 (QCC: at or above 350/GPS: at or above 850); “Meets” – Level 2 (QCC: 300–349/GPS: 800–849); and “Did Not Meet” – Level 1 (QCC: below 300/GPS: below 800)

In Reading, Ila performs with outstanding consistency, exceeding the current School Improvement goal of 80% of students meeting or exceeding grade level requirements in all reading domains as outlined by state guidelines or meet the goals and objectives outlined by their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). As data for the past five years has shown, first grade has 96–100% of students meeting or exceeding on the CRCT. Other grades follow respectively with second grade at 93–100%, third grade with 85–98%, fourth grade with 82–98%, and fifth grade with 91–98%. Over the past five years, an enormous degree of curricular changes in scheduling, instruction, resource and supplemental materials, and knowledge of best practices in the teaching of reading have proved this to be the “shining beacon” for academic success at Ila Elementary. The racial/ethnic subgroup scores are comparable, and do not reflect any disparity.

In English Language Arts, Ila Elementary scores exceed the School Improvement goal of 80% meeting or exceeding, with the exception of fourth grade in the 2005–2006 school year. This was the initial roll-in year for GPS in the CRCT and the test increased in rigor beyond expectations. This same group made a significant gain of 17% the following year with 86% of students meeting or exceeding test scores. As the GPS became better articulated and addressed in instruction, scores for all grade levels tend to fall in the 90% range for meeting or exceeding goals. The most evident need in English Language Arts would be the number of students “exceeding” the standards. While a marked number of students school-wide meet standards on the CRCT in this area, there is a reduced percentage of students exceeding. This has become a focus for the 2009-2010 school year as teachers instruct with greater rigor of instruction to improve this percentage.

Math is an area where we have made strides in improvement. First and second grade scores range from 91–100% of students meeting or exceeding goals. It is decidedly more difficult to maintain these percentages in upper elementary grades. However, with the exception of a single 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade year in the data tables, in which scores dipped below the 80% goal, scores remain strong and range from 81–100% meeting and exceeding. Considerable effort has been made in instructional practices to enable students to have a deeper, conceptual knowledge in math domains.

www.doe.k12.ga.us

2. Using Assessment Results:

Ila Elementary's stakeholders are regularly included in academic assessment decisions. After CRCT scores are received each spring, administrators compile homeroom charts of all domain scores, with highlighted scores reflecting Level 1 or those who scored within ten points of Level 1. Through grade-level collaboration and Professional Learning Communities, this data is analyzed to determine strengths/weaknesses evidenced by assessments.

In the fall, all students, first through fifth grade are given the *STAR Reading* assessment. All students K-5th are given the *DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)* Benchmark Assessments three times a year as a result of literacy gaps and as a universal screener. Ila's Literacy Coach provides an in-depth correlation of the students in first through fifth grades who perform below benchmark (grade-level) standards on year-end DIBELS compared to other assessments (*CRCT, STAR Reading, & Accelerated Reader*) and attendance/mobility issues. This document shows historical progress of all students and is helpful in setting annual goals.

County benchmark assessments are created by teachers and implemented quarterly. Other diagnostic, summative, and formative assessments are used to guide instruction and ensure that students are meeting/exceeding the standards. These assessment tools give teachers the opportunity to differentiate instruction as needed.

As a result of the implementation of the W2 writing standard in K-2nd, county rubrics have been developed by teachers to assess student writing. Using evaluative criteria, teachers score each genre and collect a sample for writing portfolios. Each spring, the data from the fifth grade State Writing Assessment is analyzed and the vertical alignment of our writing curriculum is reevaluated.

County math benchmark assessments are created by teachers and implemented three times a year in all grade levels. Accompanying this is a Curriculum Based Measure STEEP fact fluency assessment for 1st-5th grades. Other diagnostic, summative, and formative assessments are used to guide instruction and ensure that students are meeting/exceeding the standards. In 2009-2010, Ila Elementary will continue utilizing the *AIMSweb* assessment model with a select population from tiers 2, 3, and 4 of the Pyramid of Interventions. Data from these various assessment tools will be analyzed and used to drive math instruction.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Parents are informed of their child's progress on a regular, on-going basis. Teachers contact parents frequently by notes, phone calls, e-mail, and/or conferences to notify them of problems, as well as relaying positive information concerning their child's achievement. Parents are informed of their child's performance through agendas, communication folders, weekly signed papers, progress reports, and report cards. Progress reports are sent home every four and one half weeks, and report cards every nine weeks. Preschool progress reports are sent home in December and May. Ila's Student Support Team, as well as Speech/Language and Special Education programs, also communicate results through conferences and in writing.

Parents are informed regarding standardized assessments such as the Georgia CRCT, GAA, ITBS, GKIDS, 3rd grade Writing Assessment, and 5th grade Writing Assessment in the following manner: (1) when the assessments will be administered, (2) results are shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences or individually, (3) students will be administered the assessments at the school site, (4) the administrative team disaggregates the results to determine academic strengths/weaknesses by individual teacher, grade level, and individual student. Thereafter, parents are given verbal and written notification of how their child performed. Parents can then discuss results with individual teachers and/or administrators.

Scores or awards earned by the school are communicated to the community through local newspaper articles, as well as the school and district websites. A complete breakdown of system school scores as compared to RESA system and state are reported in the local newspaper by our system testing coordinator. Interpretations of data are written to make the information clear to community stakeholders. Morning news show announcements are another avenue used to communicate student performance and achievements. These morning announcements are viewed by all students, faculty, staff, and visiting parents or volunteers.

4. **Sharing Success:**

As a small rural community, Madison County schools share and celebrate in individual school successes. All system awards are shared by our system superintendent at monthly Principals meetings and Curriculum Supervision and Instructional (CSI) meetings. System principals are encouraged to share successes pertinent to their school at the monthly meetings. This is perhaps the quickest way to provide information concerning academic success. The information is then provided to each school via minutes of the meetings or by verbal recognition by the school principal at Leadership and faculty meetings. System school accomplishments are also shared at monthly Board of Education meetings. The Blue Ribbon nomination for Ila Elementary was celebrated with an after school reception. Members of the Board of Education, Partners in Education, School Council members, former teachers, system principals, and system Leadership personnel shared in this honor bestowed on Ila faculty and staff for exemplary teaching and recognition of student achievement and success. Staff from a local newspaper was present to report and provide press coverage of the celebration.

System Professional Learning Community meetings are scheduled monthly to collaborate about curriculum, instruction, and assessments. The primary goal of these meetings is to improve student achievement. Time is provided to hear feedback from any teacher or school enjoying success pertinent to instruction. This is an avenue to share successes among teacher comrades and peers. Our school and system website reflects celebratory “news,” as well as the use of our school marquee for quick deliverance of information. Another consistent source of information is our monthly “*Gator Gazette*” newsletter.

At Ila, we consider our door to be “open” to visitors from other schools desiring to observe or gather information concerning successes. We welcome the opportunity to share with other schools, as this has proven to be a valuable source of assistance for us as a school.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Ila Elementary School faculty and staff are committed to ensuring that opportunities for all students to meet or exceed Georgia Performance Standards for learning are planned in advance and implemented throughout the curriculum. Our faculty is dedicated to using scientifically research-based instructional programs and strategies to raise student achievement. Teachers utilize and follow county pacing guides and design instruction based on the Georgia Performance Standards. Best practice and *Learning-Focused* strategies are embraced across grade levels throughout the school.

To continue increasing achievement in reading, Ila Elementary relies on the assistance of the county-wide literacy coach, as well as our half-time school literacy coach. Ila Elementary endorses a balanced literacy program in which scientifically research-based programs and strategies are used to provide whole-class, core reading instruction (*Houghton Mifflin*) and small-group, differentiated instruction. Grade level schedules are purposefully designed to incorporate a core reading block, as well as a supplemental block in which guided reading and literature circles are being implemented. To support the integration of science (*Houghton Mifflin*) and social studies (*Houghton Mifflin*) into reading, the guided reading lab houses non-fiction leveled books to supplement Georgia Performance Standards in these content areas, as well as provide reading across the curriculum.

To support the core program (*Houghton Mifflin*) and meet our language arts needs, an interactive, research-based program called *Grammar Calendar* is being implemented in several grades. To strengthen writing, classroom schedules are planned based on current research practices to include a minimum of forty-five minutes of writing time for at least three consecutive days per week. All writing teachers, kindergarten through fifth grades, as well as support staff, have the opportunity to participate in professional development with an outside literacy consultant to enhance writing instruction. Writing portfolios are used to compile quarterly writing samples scored with rubrics. These are used to track progress and follow the student from grade to grade.

To continue increasing achievement in math, Ila Elementary relies on the assistance of the county-wide math coach, as well as our half-time school math coach. Ila's math coach meets with grade levels to ensure that Georgia Performance Standards are taught and mastered through the *Math Expressions* core math program, *Exemplars*, and other supplemental resources. To better prepare our students, *CRCT Coach* books, *Exemplars*, supplemental trade books for the *Math Expressions* core math program, and other supplemental materials have been purchased to enhance math instruction in the classrooms. Over the past two years, K-5 teachers, EIP math teachers, and Resource teachers received professional development through a county-wide math grant. To determine the effectiveness of our core math programs and instruction, county benchmark assessments are being implemented in each grade level.

To ensure that our at-risk students have the layers of support to meet or exceed Georgia Performance Standards, students scoring in performance Level 1 on the CRCT are qualified and served in the Early Intervention Program (EIP). EIP teachers implement the use of supplemental, scientifically research-based reading programs called *Soar to Success* and *Early Success* to enable students to become independent readers. *Sidewalks*, a kindergarten curriculum, has been purchased to foster phonemic awareness, letter recognition, and emerging reading in at-risk students. Students in the EIP math program receive supplemental instruction through the use of research-based programs such as *Math Steps*, *Accelerated Math*, *Fastt Math*, and *Extending the Lesson* activities from our *Math Expressions* core math program.

Instruction for fine arts, music, physical education, media, and technology (Quality Core Curriculum) are offered on a daily rotating basis for all students. There are two mild-moderate handicapped self-contained classrooms at Ila Elementary. In an effort to meet Individual Educational Plans (IEP), a variety of research-based programs and resources are used. These students are augmented into regular classrooms using the inclusion model to the maximum extent possible.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

In today's technologically advanced society, it is crucial for every child to have the fullest opportunity to become an accomplished reader. Anyone unable to read and write proficiently faces enormous challenges. In order to ensure that all children at Ila Elementary become successful readers, we have adopted a balanced approach encompassing the reading components of shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and word work.

After evaluating many research-based core reading programs, we adopted *Houghton-Mifflin Reading Nations Choice* for shared reading. This was chosen based on a careful analysis by teachers of programs that met the qualification of what researchers discovered about how to successfully teach children to read. Our program includes all five areas of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Shared reading is our avenue to teach on-grade level instruction to all children.

A second component of our balanced reading program, which is crucial for differentiation of instruction, is guided reading. Guided reading is a strategy that helps students become good readers. In guided reading, the teacher selects books that are both on the instructional reading level of the child and of high interest to the students. Ila Elementary utilizes a guided reading lab that houses over 1800 titles leveled according to Fountas and Pinnell leveling system. Teachers provide support in small groups as they learn to apply various reading strategies (context clues, letter/sound relationships, word structure, comprehension strategies, etc.). Differentiation extends to upper grades where Literature Circles are incorporated into small group work. By providing small groups of students the opportunity to learn various reading strategies with scaffolding from the teacher, they will possess the skills and knowledge required to read increasingly difficult texts on their own, and ultimately become successful, independent readers.

Additionally, we believe that independent reading is a must and without practice, students are less likely to become successful readers. We encourage independent reading through the *Accelerated Reader* program for motivation of the reader and documentation for the teacher.

A variety of assessments are utilized to track achievement in reading and identify students below benchmark in specific domains such as reading comprehension. Struggling readers are progress monitored regularly to track performance. Research-based interventions are implemented, when appropriate, in order to close the learning gap and ensure that all learners have the opportunity to master the standards.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

We live in an increasingly complex society, one in which the level of mathematical competency required of citizens is constantly on the rise. Math is an integral part of our lives. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) makes this profound statement in the introduction to the NCTM *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (2000): "Math competence opens doors to productive futures. A lack of mathematical competence closes those doors."

Elementary classrooms are where the foundation for mathematical understanding and competence is laid. Elementary math classes provide access to rich learning environments that engage students in hands-on

activities and tasks that deepen conceptual understanding while providing a good balance of learning basic skills.

Ila Elementary supports the development of a balanced approach to the teaching of mathematics. We are committed to teaching math conceptually in standards-based classrooms, guided primarily by the Georgia Performance Standards. Students at every grade level are actively engaged in math classes that emphasize problem-solving, reasoning, making connections, representing, and communicating math thinking. Our system adopted the research-based series *Math Expressions* as a resource to support teachers in fulfilling the expectations of the Georgia standards. We also rely heavily on the Georgia Department of Education's *Math Frameworks* to guide our instruction. As a supplemental component, the district additionally adopted *Exemplars* problem-solving materials to further develop students' reasoning and critical thinking skills. Scheduling at Ila devotes a block of time for core instruction, as well as an additional block for supplemental, small group math instruction and centers for hand-on, enduring understandings. Differentiation extends through both blocks offering varied instructional methods. Our balanced approach of teaching for conceptual understanding and of teaching basic skills offers Ila students the opportunity to gain the necessary mathematical tools to fulfill the school mission of success for all students.

4. Instructional Methods:

It has been said, "It takes a village to raise a child." This statement is true in many ways, but is particularly accurate in the need for a variety of instructional methods for individual student needs and learning styles. At Ila Elementary, we utilize many instructional methods and opportunities for differentiated instruction. A few of the more common forms of methodology are described below.

Direct instruction, particularly in reading, math, and writing, is the most common form of delivery due to the fidelity of instruction. This method is focused on systematic curriculum design and skillful implementation of scripted lesson plans. Teacher-led instruction includes whole-class, small group, and individual instruction.

Contextual learning is a methodology that is used at Ila in the teacher preparation of lesson planning. As research indicates, this method of instruction is important for learners who tend to start with the end in mind, and for teachers who plan instruction according to the backwards design process. In this style, hands-on problem solving, organization around real world experiences, and collaborative learning are encouraged.

As in conceptual instruction, teaching for understanding has become a major goal of mathematics instruction in today's classrooms. The days where math instruction consisted primarily of using traditional algorithms proficiently with paper-and-pencil computation are over. Instead, the focus is now a deeper understanding (the why) of concepts, not just procedures or steps (the how).

Flexible grouping is instrumental in providing for effective instruction in Guided Reading. Students are grouped K-3 formally and informally according to ability levels, interests, and learning styles. We believe that the instruction in small groups provides opportunities for working with students who have common needs, require reinforcement of literacy weaknesses, or benefit from enrichment activities.

Through the impact of many instructional methods, we feel that the diverse learning needs of all subgroups are met. This is evidenced in the data tables as there is little discrepancy between subgroups and the entire population.

5. Professional Development:

Professional development at Ila Elementary revolves around areas outlined in the School Improvement Plan. On an annual basis, professional development needs are identified from data extracted from test results, staff surveys, and needs assessments. An analysis of the past five years professional development reflects a heavy

emphasis on reading from 2004 – 2006. Learning Focus Strategies, DIBELS training, Differentiated Instruction, and substantive training in the area of Guided Reading and Literature Circles proved to be the bulk of training to enable teachers to provide quality additional and supplemental instruction in core reading.

The 2006-2007 school year reflected a variety of professional development, inclusive of a continuation of guided reading practices, administrative training on Professional Learning Communities, collaborative grade level meetings to address current instruction practices, and an initial view of the upcoming Pyramid of Interventions. The professional development with the greatest impact on student achievement would be the beginning of a writing workshop series conducted by an outside expert consultant. This would continue for the next several years, evolving into ever-improving writing scores across all grades at Ila Elementary. This is an area in which we chose to become “transparent” and seek guidance for a subject area that was undergoing changes in performance standards and that we felt was a weak area.

The years 2007–2009 continued the writing workshops at Ila Elementary with in-depth guidance for all genres and domains of writing. This intense learning culminated in 99% of the 2008 – 2009 fifth graders meeting or exceeding writing standards. Ila Elementary led the district in celebrating outstanding scores and effort! Math training intensified for these two years with all teachers trained in teaching conceptual mathematics in a standards-based classroom and exploring Exemplars to improve problem solving abilities in all students. Rigor in mathematics standardized testing, and an initial drop in subsequent upper grade math scores, contributed to the need to make adjustments in teaching to improve student achievement.

6. School Leadership:

The Leadership structure at Ila Elementary is one of democracy. The current administrators, after working in tandem for three years, endeavor to create an empowered leadership team that consists of stakeholders from all areas of our school environment. This diverse group allows decision-making to be carried out in an efficient manner.

In a form of “Instructional Leadership,” our administration believes in characteristics of high expectations of students and teachers, a strong emphasis on instruction and best practices, a reciprocity of trust, provision of professional development, and use of data to evaluate students’ progress and achievement. School reform measures over the past few years have promoted increased teacher participation and leadership in our school. Important information is brought to the Leadership Team. It is in this setting that the team sifts through the information and brainstorms suggestions as to how to make the best decision for our school and student body. Once consensus is reached, each team member then filters the information to individual groups (grade levels, paraprofessional, support staff, etc.). This process advocates that each person in the building has a voice. With a high level of trust, decisions, even tough decisions involving change, are embraced by the entire faculty and staff.

This sense of unity impacts other areas in our educational system – such as student achievement. Student achievement is the driving force of our daily routine. We will not be satisfied with a “spirit of mediocrity.” We fully expect that every student can and will learn at Ila Elementary! It is our belief that as the percentage of economically disadvantaged students’ increases at Ila, scores will remain high and continue to exceed school improvement goals! Due to teacher leadership roles, we all foster a shared vision and value each other as worthy partners. We are proactive in meeting the academic and emotional needs of students. With a collaborative leadership style, we carry the same focus to provide a safe and positive learning environment that will prepare our students to be productive citizens in a democratic society.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 1 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)
 Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009 Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill
 Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	100	97	92	96	98
Exceeds	46	44	31	50	65
Number of students tested	59	70	71	70	79
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	100	95	91	94	97
Exceeds	42	32	18	32	60
Number of students tested	38	38	33	37	35
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: For testing years 2006-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2006, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 1 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	98	100	99	96	97
Exceeds	49	60	58	47	70
Number of students tested	59	70	71	70	79
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	100	100	96	92	94
Exceeds	37	45	48	41	63
Number of students tested	38	38	33	37	35
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: For testing years 2006-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2006, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 2 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	99	94	97	96	91
Exceeds	35	22	28	44	38
Number of students tested	66	69	61	73	72
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	97	93	97	95	85
Exceeds	21	19	22	42	19
Number of students tested	38	27	32	36	32
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

For testing years 2006-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2006, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 2 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	100	99	99	98	93
Exceeds	50	54	69	64	71
Number of students tested	66	69	61	73	72
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	100	97	97	100	90
Exceeds	34	41	63	67	56
Number of students tested	38	27	32	36	32
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

For testing years 2005-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2005, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	81	70	98	100	93
Exceeds	38	26	49	36	38
Number of students tested	69	66	68	69	65
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	69	60	97	100	91
Exceeds	30	14	38	24	26
Number of students tested	33	35	29	33	34
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

For testing years 2007-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2007, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	97	91	97	93	98
Exceeds	42	35	62	39	69
Number of students tested	69	66	68	69	65
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	94	86	97	91	97
Exceeds	33	29	52	36	65
Number of students tested	33	35	29	33	34
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

For testing years 2005-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2005, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	87	86	84	79	87
Exceeds	21	21	21	18	22
Number of students tested	61	68	67	62	68
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	80	86	82	78	79
Exceeds	15	10	18	13	21
Number of students tested	34	29	33	31	24
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

For testing years 2007-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2007, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	98	96	98	82	97
Exceeds	44	56	31	27	51
Number of students tested	61	68	67	62	68
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	97	93	97	84	96
Exceeds	41	41	27	13	42
Number of students tested	34	29	33	31	24
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

For testing years 2005-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2005, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	100	82	88	90	88
Exceeds	56	11	21	24	18
Number of students tested	64	72	58	80	73
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	100	80	87	83	89
Exceeds	35	11	13	12	19
Number of students tested	26	36	31	34	37
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

For testing years 2007-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2007, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Riverside Publishing 2004-2006; CTB McGraw-Hill Publishers 2007-2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	98	97	91	94	95
Exceeds	42	19	19	23	40
Number of students tested	64	72	58	80	73
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets/Exceeds	100	95	87	88	97
Exceeds	35	17	6	12	38
Number of students tested	26	36	31	34	37
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets/Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

For testing years 2005-2009, the CRCT was based on a phase-in of the Georgia Performance Standards. For testing years 2004-2005, the CRCT was based on the Quality Core Curriculum.