



## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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11NC3

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 2010-2011 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 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
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

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All data are the most recent year available.

## DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 9 Elementary schools  
 (per district designation) 3 Middle/Junior high schools  
4 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
16 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 8815

## SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Rural
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		<b>6</b>	0	0	0
K	19	18	37		<b>7</b>	0	0	0
1	22	20	42		<b>8</b>	0	0	0
2	23	17	40		<b>9</b>	0	0	0
3	25	19	44		<b>10</b>	0	0	0
4	15	17	32		<b>11</b>	0	0	0
5	17	13	30		<b>12</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>								<b>225</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
0 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
0 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
96 % White  
1 % 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 2009-2010 school year: 11%

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, 2009 until the end of the school year.	9
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	16
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	25
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	234
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.11
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	11

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 0%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 0

Number of languages represented, not including English: 1

Specify languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 48%  
 Total number of students who qualify: 109

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-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 17%  
 Total number of students served: 38

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>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>18</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>4</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>28</u>	<u>12</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: 19:1

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

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	97%	91%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	10%	19%	12%	11%	5%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

2008-09 teacher turnover rate of 19.1% was due to the loss of 4 out of 21 teachers: 1 resigned to raise a new baby, 1 married and moved away, 1 left the teaching profession, and 1 transferred due to a decrease in enrollment.

Teacher attendance rates are based on their attendance on the 180 student days. The rate for 06/07 is 91% due to two teachers being out for extended maternity leave and another teacher out with her eight year old son undergoing cancer treatment.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

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	_____ %
<b>Total</b>	<b>_____ 0%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Riverbend Elementary is a small elementary school with an enrollment of 226 students located in a rural region of Haywood County in the western mountains of North Carolina. As evidenced by state testing results, Riverbend has performed at the highest levels year after year. Last year, Riverbend had the highest K-5 composite in North Carolina Region 8 (97.177) and the 4th highest composite in the state among schools that also made high growth.

The stakeholders of Riverbend Elementary are united in their mission: School, parents, and community working together to provide each student an appropriate learning experience in a positive, secure environment. They believe in providing stimulating experiences for all children to reach their fullest potential within a positive, secure environment. We also believe a successful school is a community of learners who contribute positively to the school, the community, and the world. In addition, a prosperous school is one that encourages involvement, fosters communication, and welcomes support from students, teachers, parents, and the community, which it serves.

The principal, lead teacher, School Improvement Team, and other teacher leaders provide instructional leadership for the school. They work together to stay abreast of the latest educational research and communicate high expectations for staff and students. Additionally, the teaching staff maintains very high expectations for themselves in their job responsibilities. The school collectively shares a vision of what the school should be and a plan to achieve that vision. The school has been very successful in achieving one of the school's highest priorities, which is to hire the very best possible staff to work at Riverbend. The principal and school leadership promote a positive atmosphere for the students and faculty and is very supportive of them – they are a family.

The staff at Riverbend keeps up-to-date with current issues and trends in education through their professional reading and attendance at meetings, workshops and conferences. They also have professional learning communities at their school to share the expertise they each have. Two staff members provide system level staff development in Math Partners. Currently a fifth grade teacher is nominated as a North Carolina finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching.

When visiting a classroom at Riverbend you will see students engaged in learning through the effective use of hands on, real life instructional methods and strategies. Through formative, benchmark and summative assessments teachers know exactly each child's strengths and areas of need. Expectation for student learning is high and students live up to those expectations.

Riverbend had the good fortune to be involved in a major technology project during the 05-06 school year which changed the learning environment at Riverbend from the time of its conception to the present and on into the future. The North Carolina Education Foundation with leadership and support from Congressman Charles Taylor, Senator Elizabeth Dole and former Senator John Edwards, developed a competitive grant, the Technology Demonstration Project. Riverbend's media specialist with support from the county technology department, central office leaders and the principal, spearheaded the application process. After being awarded the IMPACT grant, Riverbend underwent a transition with technology at the core. They were able to outfit every classroom from kindergarten to fifth grade with some of the newest hardware and software and training available. The entire experience was very rewarding and the students are still reaping the benefits.

Riverbend's approach with parents and students has been to build relationships of unity and trust for the advantage of everyone connected. The school maintains an active Parent Advisory Council. This group is comprised of a cross section of community and parents, the principal, lead teacher, and a teacher representative who is the teacher of the year. They provide an avenue of two-way communication so that

there is a common body of information for everyone. The school can glean from this council the wants and suggestions of the community and also enjoy the opportunity to clear up any misinformation.

Finally, the most important thing that makes Riverbend successful is their efforts to put together the “right” team to make the school a place where students want to go and teachers want to work. The staff at Riverbend shares the same vision. They want Riverbend to be the best school in the county, the region, and the state. They want their students to leave well prepared for the next level and want them to stand out when they get there. They want their students to feel safe and comfortable at school and want their parents to know they take good care of their children. They want their students to graduate from high school and find their places in the world. They want their students to be lifelong learners and contribute to society in a productive way.

### 1. Assessment Results:

There is a positive five-year trend for Riverbend Elementary School reading and math proficiency. During the last five years, two significant changes have occurred regarding the North Carolina elementary school reading and math assessment procedures. During 2007-08, the state implemented a new reading assessment that included adjusted proficiency standards. This resulted in decreased reading proficiency scores across North Carolina. During 2008-09, the state allowed retesting scores to be used when calculating student proficiency and school performance. This resulted in increased scores in reading and math across North Carolina.

An examination of the most recent year's data reveals a small gap between the test results for all students and the test results for measurable subgroups. The Riverbend Elementary School math proficiency rate for all students was 97.115%. The lowest performing measurable subgroup in math was Students with Disabilities at 93.8%. The Riverbend Elementary School reading proficiency rate for all students was 96.154%. The lowest performing measurable subgroup in reading was Economically Disadvantaged Students at 93.6%.

The five-year trend for math shows consistent academic gains from year-to-year as well as increases for groups of students as they progressed through each grade level. The overall math proficiency scores increased from 75.76% in 2005-06 to 97.12% in 2009-10. During the five-year period math proficiency showed gains of over twenty percentage points with no year-to-year losses.

The five-year trend for reading shows positive academic gains in reading proficiency. The overall reading proficiency scores decreased to 80.92% during 2007-08 when new test proficiency standards were established. Despite the increased proficiency standards implement in 2007-08, Riverbend Elementary School had a five percent increase in reading proficiency over the five-year period with a gain of over fifteen percent in reading proficiency during the last three years. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website containing all disaggregated data is <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs/>.

Four proficiency levels are used to measure student performance in North Carolina. The proficiency level descriptors are: Level 1 – insufficient mastery, Level 2 – inconsistent mastery, Level 3 – mastery, and Level 4 – superior mastery. Students achieving Level 3 are considered at grade level. Students achieving Level 4 are considered above grade level. School Performance Composites reflect the percentage of students achieving Levels 3 and 4.

In North Carolina, schools are measured using academic growth and the performance composite. Student academic growth data are aggregated for each school. School academic growth receives one of three recognitions (1) No Recognition (2) Expected Growth, or (3) High Growth. Each school's performance composite level is recognized as (1) Low Performing – below 50% (2) Priority School – 50% to 59% (3) School of Progress – 60% to 79% (4) School of Distinction 80% to 89%, or (5) School of Excellence 90% to 100%. Achieving Expected Growth and receiving recognition as a School of Progress is considered meeting the state standard.

The five-year trend for Riverbend Elementary School is excellent. From 2005-06 through 2008-09, the school was recognized as a "School of Distinction" for high academic growth among individual students plus a proficiency or "composite" score in reading and math that was over eighty percent (81.9% - 88.4%). In 2009-2010, Riverbend Elementary School was recognized as an "Honor School of Excellence" for high academic growth among individual students plus a proficiency or "composite" score in reading and math that was over ninety percent (97.18%). Riverbend Elementary School is a high academic growth and a high performance composite level school.

The extent of Riverbend Elementary School's academic success over the last five years can only be fully appreciated when one considers all of the measures of academic performance used in North Carolina. Riverbend Elementary School met federal Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last five years. This means that all measureable subgroups did well in reading and math. The school had "high academic growth" each of the last five years. While this is not a federal accountability measure, it indicates that the school is helping individual students grow each year. Lastly, Riverbend Elementary School's combined reading and math proficiency composite has increased each year for the last five years. Not only has the performance composite increase each year, there has been a fifteen percent (15%) increase from 81.9% to 97.18%.

It is rare to find schools that achieve all of the previously indicated measures of success in a single year. It is very unique when this level of academic growth and proficiency achievement has occurred at the same school for five consecutive years. This level of academic success is amazing when one considers the five-year trend began with a combined reading and math proficiency rate over eighty percent (81.9%) and ended with a combined reading and math proficiency rate over ninety-seven percent (97.18%).

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

An Academic Needs Assessment is completed near the end of each school year to examine strengths and weaknesses in student performance. The academic needs of our students are determined by K-2 assessment results and 3-5 End of Grade (EOG) test scores. Based on this Needs Assessment, a prioritized plan is then created that addresses those identified needs. This plan includes student achievement goals, action steps, types of assessments and/or other methods that will be used to monitor progress and determine outcomes. Human and material resources are assigned to help improve student performance. Our School Improvement Plan is also developed based on this Needs Assessment.

Personalized Education Plans (PEPs), as required by the state, are created by classroom teachers for students who are not performing at grade level. These PEPs address students' strengths and needs, and are used to create an intervention plan for each student who is at risk of academic failure. The intervention plan includes at least one instructional focus, one research-based strategy, and one method of monitoring. Results of student learning as offered in the PEPs determine the degree of further interventions and CARE team referral. Results from intervention plans are utilized in CARE team meetings when a student is being referred for more in depth academic testing. If further testing occurs, it may be determined that a student qualifies to enter the Exceptional Children's Program and develop an Individualized Education Plan.

The growth of Riverbend's "community of learners" is a process of continuous reflection of instruction. Formative assessment data is obtained from various assessments including Developmental Reading Assessments, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Assessments, Scholastic Reading Inventory, 18 and 27 week benchmark assessments, ClassScape and teacher-made tests and quizzes. In addition, Riverbend is currently training teachers to implement mCLASS:Reading 3D, a diagnostic reading assessment that is part of a statewide initiative. All data is utilized by teachers in making recommendations for more intensive remediation. Remediation may be provided by classroom teachers, tutors, assistants, volunteers, Title 1 services, and the special education teacher to help ensure student success. Teachers also use assessment information to form flexible learning groups within their classrooms. These groups may be formed for any curricular area based on students' needs. Specific concepts and skills are targeted and practiced within these flexible groups providing students with extra support to achieve.

## **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

One of the most comprehensive ways academic performance is communicated to parents and the community is through the North Carolina School Report Card. It includes information about our school's class size, attendance, safety, facility, instructional resources, and more. The report cards are available on the Report Card Website at [www.ncreportcards.org](http://www.ncreportcards.org), in both English and Spanish. A two-page summary,

called the Report Card Snapshot, is sent home in the fall with every child, along with a letter from the superintendent and a letter from the principal about our school's progress.

Parent representatives are invited to serve on the School Improvement Team as well as the Parent Advisory Council with the purpose of providing two-way communication between parents and the school.

Riverbend teachers strive to build relationships with parents by providing ongoing communication about student performance through face-to-face conversations, phone calls, emails, blogs, daily notebooks, agenda books, and learning logs. They are available for conferences throughout the year and initiate conferences when there is a concern about a child's academic performance. Report cards are sent home quarterly for students in first through fifth grades and progress reports are sent home mid-quarter. Each grade level hosts an orientation night at the beginning of each school year to provide information to parents and students about content, expectations, and benchmarks. During this parent meeting, evaluation methods are also communicated. At the end of the year, teachers make every effort to conference with parents concerning assessment results in primary grades and End-of-Grade (EOG) testing results in the upper grades. An explanation of the individual student report is sent home with each child in third through fifth grades to assist parents in understanding EOG testing information.

Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) are created by classroom teachers to provide differentiated intervention strategies for students performing below grade level. In addition, 504 plans may be developed for students with disabilities. Students may be referred to the CARE team, a small group of certified staff members, who collaboratively problem-solve intervention strategies and progress monitoring methods to meet individual needs. Parents are included in all PEP, 504, and CARE team meetings where assessment data is discussed. Sometimes it may be necessary to complete further academic testing. The testing results may determine eligibility for special education services. . Parents, and sometimes students, are included in determining appropriate accommodations and modifications that will allow students to access the curriculum.

#### **4. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Riverbend Elementary provides leadership for our school and the school system in all curricular areas but especially in the area of mathematics. Two of our teachers, were selected by the county to be trained as trainers for elementary mathematics staff development. They have provided staff development for Math Partners for all Haywood County elementary teachers for the past three years. Math Partners is a collaboration of NC Department of Instruction and Meredith University to provide workshops to increase teacher mathematics content knowledge and how to relate this knowledge to expectations. These teachers also lead Professional Learning Communities at our school to further support our mathematics instruction.

Additionally, one teacher is a state trainer for Math Partners. During the summer she travels throughout the state providing training for teacher leaders. She also serves as the Co-Program Chair for the North Carolina Teachers of Mathematics. She has also served on the Mathematics Curriculum Descriptors Committee, and has been nominated for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching.

Teachers at Riverbend also serve as members of our County Curriculum Council. The purpose of Curriculum Council is to develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive curriculum that is aligned vertically and horizontally and supported by adequate resources. Grade level teachers meet monthly with the Elementary Supervisor and Lead Teachers to develop pacing guides and instructional resources in every curriculum area.

The Media Specialist, has provided leadership and training in the county for flexible scheduling. Riverbend has led the way moving toward improving the use and delivery systems from the media center.

Many teachers at Riverbend serve as model teachers and are available for new and novice teachers to observe. These observations are arranged through the Central Office and the Instructional Coaches.

Greg Parker, principal of Riverbend serves as a mentor and coach for new administrators in the system. His years of experience and expertise make him an invaluable part of our administration team. He serves on many county committees (Calendar Committee, Policy Committee, School Foods Advisory, Long Range Planning Committee and Elementary Group-alike) providing leadership.

## 1. Curriculum:

Teachers at Riverbend Elementary deliver a balanced curriculum including all areas of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Instruction is provided in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, Healthful Living, and Physical Education. English Language Arts is integrated into all areas of the Standard Course of Study and other core curricular areas are interwoven as appropriate.

The English Language Arts program reflects the integrated nature of a comprehensive, balanced approach. Students explore a variety of texts, both assigned and student selected. Texts include leveled books for guided reading, basal reader anthologies for shared reading, non-fiction texts, non-fiction magazines, and children's literature collections for literature study. Instruction is provided in reading, writing, language, and word study. The balanced program encompasses writing instruction which includes the writing process, writer's craft, spelling, grammar, and independent writing.

The goal of the Mathematics program at Riverbend is for all students to achieve mathematical proficiency by developing both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. We want our students to think and reason mathematically and use mathematics to solve problems in authentic contexts. Pacing guides that follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study are used as a tool to guide instruction and provide essential questions as well as key vocabulary for each curriculum goal and objective. Our school utilizes *Investigations*, a research based, flexible program that offers activity-based mathematics that encourage students to think creatively, develop *and articulate* their own problem-solving strategies, and work cooperatively with their classmates. Our students are engaged in high quality tasks that help them make sense of the big ideas in mathematics—rational numbers, geometry, measurement, data, and early algebra—and be able to make connections among them. Manipulatives are utilized in every grade level to provide students with a hands-on experience and increase their comprehension of concepts and ideas.

Science instruction models and provides opportunities for students to participate in scientific inquiry as they investigate and explore hands-on materials and collaborate with classmates and teachers. Process skills are integrated as students conduct investigations, gather data, organize information and communicate results. Students acquire information through rich, non-fiction texts as they are integrated into literacy instruction. Science extended curriculum guides that provide essential questions, vocabulary, and hands-on activities for each curriculum goal, are utilized in all grade levels. Riverbend students make meaning by investigating, writing, talking and reading science.

Teachers help children develop Social Studies knowledge throughout the day and across the curriculum. Social Studies come to life through a bounty of resources. Maps, globes, newspapers, periodicals, leveled non-fiction guided reading books, picture books, and multimedia resources are some of the materials teachers use to facilitate learning. Students are able to make connections to the world around them as they learn content through reader's theater, projects, guest speakers, role play, quality literature, and field trips.

Students participate in a visual and performing arts program through the art and music curriculum. Part-time music teachers in primary and upper grades meet with students on a weekly basis. Students are involved in singing, dancing, speaking and playing musical instruments. They participate in at least two musical performances each year. Our art teacher, who is also part-time, meets with all grade levels bi-weekly. Students create products while exploring texture, patterns and design. They experience visual art as artists and as an audience. Classroom teachers coordinate lesson planning with the art and music teachers to integrate instruction in the arts to enrich learning in the classroom.

Physical education instruction is delivered by a certified specialist two days per week and by the classroom teacher as part of the regular instructional program. Students participate in daily physical activity for a minimum of 150 minutes per week through physical education class or recess. Various quality instructional resources are also utilized to enhance the healthful living program.

Teachers provide instruction through teacher directed and student directed methods. Learners are engaged in inquiry-based learning as they participate in various methods of problem solving to construct meaning and understanding of skills and concepts. Conversation and discussion with partners, groups, and the class is commonplace at Riverbend. Students are encouraged to verbalize and share their ideas with the class making them active participants in their learning. Students are assessed formally and informally on a regular basis. Teachers respond to information collected during the assessment process and plan differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students. Flexible grouping is utilized in all grade levels as a means to provide differentiated activities where students can make connections and apply their learning.

The professional staff at Riverbend knows how and when to provide these activities. This “just right” combination of authentic tasks provide an array of learning opportunities with respect for differences in learning styles and learning rates to meet individual needs.

## **2. Reading/English:**

The reading curriculum reflects an integrated, balanced approach that links reading to other content areas. Based on the research of Fountas and Pennell, our teachers focus on providing students with four types of reading experiences: reading aloud to children, shared reading with the entire class, guided reading instruction with small groups, and independent reading.

A “read aloud” experience gives our teachers the opportunity to develop the enjoyment of reading in our students as they work to develop vocabulary knowledge, listening skills, and critical thinking skills. Our teachers model what good readers do in asking questions, making predictions, and determining importance of a particular selection. Teachers interact with our students before, during and after the reading to help them comprehend and make a variety of connections with the reading material.

One way we move our students from dependency to independency is through shared reading. Teachers model strategies and support students in the reading process while all students join in reading the text. Our less confident readers experience success through a shared reading experience while practicing reading strategies and skills with more competent readers.

Riverbend students receive focused, differentiated instruction in small guided reading groups based on instructional levels in every grade level. Our teachers recognize the importance of matching books to readers to allow children to read for meaning. Teachers make use of our bookrooms to choose “just right” leveled text for small group guided reading instruction.

We believe students make great contributions to their own learning when they are given some ownership of the reading process. Our students self-select and independently read appropriate books at their independent reading levels. The independent reading level is determined by the running record assessment and is defined as 95% to 100% accuracy on this assessment. Students’ independent reading materials are read without teacher support as a means to improve comprehension and fluency while extending their vocabularies.

Our teachers have a strong understanding of appropriate techniques to provide specialized instruction for students performing below grade level. They are aware of their students’ strengths and weaknesses and strive to identify struggling students early on. Through progress monitoring, teachers create intervention plans immediately to meet the individual needs of our students. Struggling readers receive targeted intervention instruction daily. Our Title I reading specialist, Title I tutors, and exceptional needs teacher are also resources we utilize to help students receive additional, differentiated reading instruction.

### **3. Mathematics:**

Our math curriculum is based on state and national standards. Lessons are derived from a plethora of resources including Partners in Mathematics Learning, Math Their Way, Teaching Student-Centered Mathematics, Department of Public Instruction Supplemental Materials, and Investigations (adopted textbook). All of the teachers at Riverbend make extensive use of a constructive approach to mathematics learning. This means that students develop their own knowledge of concepts and processes by revising their understandings based on engagement in high-quality tasks provided in the classroom. Students work with materials to solve problems and deepen understanding. Students also work together daily in small cooperative groups to explore ideas and solve problems. Students and teachers engage in daily formative assessment practices including self & peer assessment, observations, and conversations. These assessments drive instruction so that lessons move at a pace appropriate to the needs of students in each individual classroom. Students demonstrate their understandings of mathematics through formative and summative assessments including products with rubrics, narrative journal entries, peer conversations, and class discussions.

Teachers at Riverbend create a dynamic safe classroom environment where students enjoy mathematics and feel confident to take risks as they grow mathematically. They regularly work together in professional learning communities, grade levels, and formal “math chats” to share ideas, explore materials, and plan instruction. All teachers at Riverbend are involved in ongoing professional development on best practices in mathematics instruction.

Teachers at Riverbend go above and beyond to help students who are struggling in math. Riverbend makes exceptional use of staff including teacher assistants, the Exceptional Children’s teacher, the Title I teacher & Title I assistants. Classroom teachers work collaboratively with Title One and Exceptional Children’s faculty to design, implement, and assess instructional and remedial strategies that best meet the needs of each student. Teachers frequently engage in conversations with one another to develop interventions designed for the needs of specific students.

Riverbend’s use of small class size allows teachers to have better awareness of the specific needs of each student. Struggling students often have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a teacher. This also allows teachers to more easily differentiate instruction. In addition, school funding is used effectively to purchase a variety of math manipulatives and other materials that allow teachers to design varied activities based on the specific needs of students, including those performing below grade level. Students with learning disabilities also engage in multi-sensory mathematics activities with the Exceptional Children’s teacher.

### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Riverbend Elementary shares the district mission: “Working together to ensure the success of our students with preparation for tomorrow and learning for a lifetime.” Technology has the potential to fundamentally determine educational success and is imperative in preparing our students for 21<sup>st</sup> Century expectations. Riverbend regards technology as an essential catalyst, rather than a curriculum area to be taught in isolation, and therefore makes every effort to acquire current tools, train and educate both students and teachers, and integrate technology seamlessly into all core disciplines.

Riverbend maintains a current technology plan which reflects the school’s educational goals and objectives and correlates with both the district technology plan and the state’s Information and Technology Essential Standards. We actively seek additional funding through grants, community involvement, and fundraising in order to ensure equitable access to current and innovative technology tools and conquer the digital divide that is present in our rural community. The current ratio of computers to students is 1:1.7.

Technology is utilized daily to enrich the curricula and encourage higher level thinking skills. As the information landscape becomes more complex, technology has become an essential tool for information

literacy in all curriculum areas. A general research process is used throughout the school to establish a foundation in self-directed learning, informed evaluation of resources, application of knowledge and ethical behavior in the appropriate use of information. Riverbend students participate in activities that utilize technology while incorporating inquiry, diverse perspectives, critical thinking, and self-assessment and reflection. Knowledge is then applied to new situations, using technology tools such as digital still and video cameras, document cameras, projectors, webcams, etc. to creatively present and communicate new information for audiences within and beyond the school.

Technology is also used to extend resources and broaden student experiences with opportunities that our school could typically not afford. Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, webcasts and other resources allow distant learning opportunities with authors, artists, musicians, scientists and experts in any field. Students can participate in a variety of virtual field trips, increasing cultural and global awareness and extending learning beyond the walls of the classroom.

Growing disparities in funding for technology while state mandates and societal demands continue to increase is an issue Riverbend Elementary faces with determination, creativity and vision. Riverbend students are prepared to enter society with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> Century tools.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

Over 95% of the student population at Riverbend Elementary fit into three major subgroups. Historically, the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup have been our lowest performing students, however the school was not allowed to identify them individually due to privacy issues. So basically we do not identify students according to subgroup but rather any and all students who are not performing at grade level and need extra support.

Riverbend staff work as a cohesive team to provide differentiated, targeted instruction to meet the diverse needs of our students. Teachers share a common belief in making academic decisions based on improving student achievement. Our students are given access to skills through a blend of small group, whole group, and individual instruction. Instruction is adapted to meet the needs of learners while maintaining high expectations. Flexible learning groups are utilized throughout all grade levels in all curricular areas to provide additional, focused instruction. Groups are formed based on information attained from formative assessments. These groups enable teachers to modify activities based on student readiness.

One of our targeted groups for supplemental instruction is our Exceptional Children. A multi-sensory approach to teaching reading is utilized based upon the Orton-Gillingham philosophy. Our students receive direct instruction that follows a logical, sequential order building on steps already learned. A multi-sensory approach is also utilized in math. Concepts are broken down into manageable units and students are given multiple opportunities for practice and application of skills taught. The Number Worlds math program is also used to teach foundational math skills.

Our Title 1 teacher provides supplemental instruction to small groups of students based on their needs. The research-based Sonday System is utilized in teaching early literacy skills. Guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading are also used with these groups to provide additional practice.

Student achievement is the basis for decisions that are made concerning funding resources. Therefore, money resources are used to hire certified tutors who meet with small groups of students and/or individuals to target specific learning needs and provide modified instruction to help students experience success.

Personalized Education Plans (PEPs), as required by the state, are created by classroom teachers to address students' strengths and needs. Differentiated instruction is provided to individual students based on those needs. 504 plans may be developed for students with disabilities who need further or more intensive classroom modifications and/or accommodations to ensure success.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Providing quality, focused instruction to meet students' individual needs is a priority for professional staff at Riverbend Elementary. Therefore, teachers engage in professional development and collaboration activities designed and facilitated to improve teaching, instruction and student achievement. Haywood County analyzes, develops and implements staff development/in-service programs that address critical needs in instructional areas. The expectation for staff at Riverbend is that they have 100% participation in staff development opportunities offered and required by the system. These include Guided Reading, The Comprehension Toolkit, K-2 Assessment Training, Math Partners, Units of Primary Writing, Formative Assessment and the North Carolina Writing Assessment training. All staff development is ongoing and research based.

All teachers on staff are a part of the School Improvement Team. Staff development is planned based upon the needs assessment and are addressed in the School Improvement Plan. Based upon the school needs, the staff has had training on the Development Reading Assessment, Teacher College Press Assessment, Photostory, Movie Maker, InterWrite, Document Camera, Quizdom and Creating Blogs.

Professional Learning Communities at the school often participate in book studies. Studies are lead by selected members of the staff. Book studies include *Teaching Student Centered Math*, *Good-bye Round Robin*, *The Energy to Teach*, and *The Fluent Reader*.

Individual teachers attend the NCSLMA State Conference, NCTIES Conference, NCAEYC Conference, ALA National Conference, NC Elementary Conference and NC Science Teachers Association Conference.

Riverbend was chosen by the state to pilot a diagnostic reading assessment. All teachers K-5 are being trained to use *Reading 3D* to assess and progress monitor students.

Teachers grow professionally as they are provided with weekly common planning times where they meet on grade levels to collaborate, discuss best practices, and plan instruction together with the lead teacher and media specialist. Teachers have flexible access to information and technology resources. The media specialist is accessible to teachers and students at the point of need providing greater opportunity to support and enhance classroom instruction with the integration of technology in all content areas. Riverbend teachers plan, collaborate, and schedule instruction across curricular units that may be provided by at least two teachers, the classroom teacher and media specialist. All classroom teachers coordinate lesson planning with the art and music teacher to integrate instruction in the arts to improve learning in the classroom.

## **7. School Leadership:**

In building a cohesive team and promoting a unified effort, the principal must facilitate the development of a clear vision and mission for the school. Seeking ideas from all stakeholders ensures that our vision and mission are representative of everyone in our school community. At Riverbend, we are very fortunate that our school is small enough to enable our staff to know and support each other, our students and their families.

Collaboration among teachers within grade levels as well as across grade levels is the norm. This collaboration over time has resulted in strong professional learning communities of teachers focused on continually monitoring student achievement through multiple sources of formative and summative data to improve day-to-day instruction. Improvement in instruction that ultimately results in improved student achievement requires continuous, focused allocation of resources and close examination of instructional programming, practices and policies by the principal in collaboration with the School Improvement Team.

Relationships of unity and trust with students and their families are vital to the success of the school. Parents are welcome in the school, and teachers provide regular opportunities for parents to be engaged in

their classrooms through a variety of activities including volunteering, attending student presentations of projects or attending parent education nights.

Each quarter the principal and teacher representatives meet with the Parent Advisory Council. This group is charged with assisting in delivering the vision and mission of the school into the community as well as keeping us informed as to the “word on the street” regarding our school’s effectiveness.

As principal, I ensure that our resources are maximized to meet our students’ needs. Once the School Improvement Team has developed our plan, it is my responsibility to make sure all of our resources are directed in support of that plan. We use our resources to provide a learning environment rich with the most effective instructional methods and materials as well as up-to-date technology in every classroom.

Finally, the most critical element of our success is making sure we put together the “right” team to make the school a place where students are excited about learning and teachers want to work. It is not unusual for visitors to comment that we have such a “happy” school that feels like a wonderful place to spend each day!

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: 3      Test: NC State End of Grade

Edition/Publication Year: 2009 Publisher: NC Department of Public Instruction

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	97	89	88	84	79
Advanced Level 4	37	42	38	34	16
Number of students tested	35	36	40	50	43
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	0	6	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	6	0	12	5
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	100	81	83	76	46
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	17	16	12	21	13
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> NC defines proficiency as students achieving Level 3 or 4 on State Assessment. Advanced is defined as Level 4.					

11NC3

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: NC State End of Grade

Edition/Publication Year: 2007 Publisher: NC Department of Public Instruction

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	94	86	83	86	91
Advanced Level 4	26	33	35	50	53
Number of students tested	35	36	40	50	43
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	2	5	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	6	5	10	5
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	94	88	67	81	69
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	17	16	12	21	13
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> NC defines proficiency as students achieving Level 3 or 4 on State Assessment. Advanced is defined as Level 4. Retest scores were included in proficiency starting in 2008-09. New Reading Test Edition was implemented in 2007-08 School Year.					

11NC3

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: 4      Test: NC State End of Grade

Edition/Publication Year: 2009 Publisher: NC Department of Public Instruction

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	97	92	84	90	66
Advanced Level 4	55	38	24	28	16
Number of students tested	29	39	50	39	38
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	4	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	7	0	8	0	3
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	100	92	74	64	56
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	11	13	19	11	18
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> NC defines proficiency as students achieving Level 3 or 4 on State Assessment. Advanced is defined as Level 4.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: NC State End of Grade

Edition/Publication Year: 2007 Publisher: NC Department of Public Instruction

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	97	85	76	85	87
Advanced Level 4	55	38	38	59	45
Number of students tested	29	39	50	39	38
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	2	7	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	7	5	14	0	3
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	91	77	68	55	78
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	11	13	19	11	18
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> NC defines proficiency as students achieving Level 3 or 4 on State Assessment. Advanced is defined as Level 4. Retest scores were included in proficiency starting in 2008-09. New Reading Test Edition was implemented in 2007-08 School Year.					

11NC3

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: 5      Test: NC State End of Grade

Edition/Publication Year: 2009 Publisher: NC Department of Public Instruction

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	98	92	93	84	80
Advanced Level 4	45	47	38	38	25
Number of students tested	40	53	40	37	51
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	4	0	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	8	0	3	4
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	95	95	73	81	77
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	19	21	11	16	22
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> NC defines proficiency as students achieving Level 3 or 4 on State Assessment. Advanced is defined as Level 4					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: NC State End of Grade

Edition/Publication Year: 2007 Publisher: NC Department of Public Instruction

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	98	85	85	97	96
Advanced Level 4	33	30	25	62	57
Number of students tested	40	53	40	37	51
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	5	2	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	9	5	3	4
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	95	71	73	94	96
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	19	21	11	16	22
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<p><b>NOTES:</b> NC defines proficiency as students achieving Level 3 or 4 on State Assessment. Advanced is defined as Level 4. Retest scores were included in proficiency starting in 2008-09. New Reading Test Edition was implemented in 2007-08 School Year.</p>					

11NC3

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	97	91	88	86	76
Advanced Level 4	45	43	32	33	20
Number of students tested	104	128	130	126	132
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	6	4	7	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	5	3	6	4
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	98	90	76	75	62
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	47	50	42	48	53
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	94	75	74	56	50
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	16	20	19	16	16
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> NC defines proficiency as students achieving Level 3 or 4 on State Assessments. Advanced is defined as Level 4. Retest scores were included in proficiency starting in 2008-09 school year.					

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	96	85	81	90	92
Advanced Level 4	37	34	33	56	52
Number of students tested	104	128	130	126	132
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	9	11	6	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	7	8	5	4
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	94	78	69	79	83
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	47	50	42	48	53
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4	94	60	79	56	75
Advanced Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	16	20	19	16	16
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient Level 3 or 4					
Advanced Level 4					
Number of students tested					
<p><b>NOTES:</b> NC defines proficiency as students achieving Level 3 or 4 on State Assessment. Advanced is defined as Level 4. Retest scores were included in proficiency starting in 2008-09. New Reading Test Edition was implemented in 2007-08 School Year.</p>					

11NC3