

2003-2004 No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program Cover Sheet

Name of Principal Mrs. Judy Beard
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Carolina Forest Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 285 Carolina Forest Blvd.
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Myrtle Beach South Carolina 29579-3204
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. (843) 236-0001 Fax (843) 236-0152

Website/URL www.hcs.k12.sc.us/elem/cfe/ E-mail jbeard@cfe.hcs.k12.sc.us

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

Date
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Gerrita Postlewait
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Horry County Schools Tel. (843) 488-6700

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

Date
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Will Garland
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, 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.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

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

- Number of schools in the district:

24	Elementary schools
8	Middle schools
0	Junior high schools
12	High schools
1	Other (Briefly explain-Alternative Placement School)
45	TOTAL

- District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$7,546
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$7,010

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- 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

- 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 _____ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

- Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
K	73	71	144		7			
1	102	78	180		8			
2	73	67	140		9			
3	80	86	166		10			
4	68	85	153		11			
5	97	91	188		12			
6					K-4	11	9	20
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →								991

6. Racial/ethnic composition of 76 % White
 the students in the school: 15 % Black or African American
5 % Hispanic or Latino
3.4 % Asian/Pacific Islander
0.6 % American Indian/Alaskan Native
100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 30 %

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	153
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	100
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	253
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	851
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.30
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	30

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 3.5 %
35 Total Number Limited English Proficient
 Number of languages represented: 6
 Specify languages: Spanish, Bulgarian, Chinese, Icelandic, Portuguese, Korean

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32 %
316 Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method does not produce a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch 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: 11.5 %

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<u>0</u> Autism <u>0</u> Deafness <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment <u>0</u> Mental Retardation <u>16</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired <u>45</u> Specific Learning Disability <u>46</u> Speech or Language Impairment <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
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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>59</u>	<u>5</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>10</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>85</u>	<u>6</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 22:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Daily student attendance	96.3 %	96.5 %	95.2 %	96.4 %	95.2 %
Daily teacher attendance	95.5 %	96 %	94 %	95 %	95%
Teacher turnover rate	17.1 %	13.3 %	10.5 %	7.6 %	6.9%
Student dropout rate	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Student drop-off rate	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Part III – Summary

Carolina Forest Elementary, built in 1996 to relieve overcrowding in neighboring schools and to serve a new community, is located in a suburban area between Myrtle Beach and Conway, South Carolina. The school serves a diverse and growing population of 991 students in grades Pre-K through five from varied socioeconomic backgrounds ranging from affluent to impoverished. Thirty-two percent of our students receive free or reduced lunch. The ethnicities represented are 76% Caucasian, 15% African American, 5% Hispanic and 4% Other. Our attendance area includes two large federally subsidized apartment complexes, five mobile home parks, and numerous subdivisions. The majority of our parents hold hourly-wage or professional positions. The mission of Carolina Forest Elementary is to ensure that all learners attain a lifelong love of learning, by giving the best of our minds and hearts in personalized, innovative, challenging curricula. This mission statement challenges the staff to develop instructional programs that will ensure all students learn. The staff's commitment to the mission statement, despite the challenges of a growing student population, represents quality education on the cutting edge in South Carolina and the nation. The atmosphere is positive, the expectations are high, and the surroundings promote a feeling of belonging and safety for the students. Expectations are consistent throughout the building through the use of life skills and lifelong guidelines. Instruction is organized through the use of daily agendas and classroom procedures, and curriculum is delivered using district literacy and numeracy models, as well as thematic units in social studies and hands-on experiences in science.

Academic rigor is our priority using the South Carolina standards to plan instruction. Staff development is continuous, providing teachers and para-professionals the latest information on best practice. Student assessments are used to gauge the effectiveness of teaching and to identify student needs. Data is disaggregated from assessments to measure student and teacher performance. Personalized learning plans are developed for all students based on assessment results and performance goals. Conferences are held with 100% of the parents to give and receive feedback on each student's progress towards goals. Children who experience difficulty reaching the grade level performance goals are referred to the Student Study Team for the development of strategies to assist the student in reaching mastery. Additional invention strategies are provided through consultation with the school nurse, instructional coaches, teacher specialists, and district learning specialists. A differentiated curriculum is offered for advanced learners in grades three through five. After school tutorial programs are offered for students in addition to enrichment programs.

Parents and community volunteers are actively involved in helping the students reach their personal goals whether during the school day or after school hours. Strong partnerships with local businesses as well as nearby Coastal Carolina University benefit our students. Our guiding belief that all children can learn keeps decisions focused on our goal for all students to experience success. At Carolina Forest Elementary we make sure that no child is left behind.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. The South Carolina Accountability Act of 1998 (EAA) set forth the administration of the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) for all students in grades three through eight. This rigorous assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics evaluates how well the students can demonstrate mastery of the South Carolina Curriculum Standards. Last year the PACT included for the first time assessments in Science and Social Studies. PACT is a criterion-referenced test correlated to grade level standards. There are four performance levels: Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic. A student who scores Advanced has exceeded grade level expectations and is ready for accelerated work at the next grade level. A student who scores Proficient has met expectations for grade level and is well prepared for success at the next grade level. A score of Proficient is the long-term goal for student performance in South Carolina under the requirements of No Child Left Behind. A student who scores Basic has passed the assessment and is minimally prepared for work at the next grade level. A student who scores below basic has not met the minimum grade level expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards set by the State Board of Education. The student is not prepared for work at the next grade level and an academic assistance plan is developed to delineate the steps needed to ensure student success at the next grade level. The student is eligible for assistance through the after school program and the summer school program. At the end of the school year, if the student's work has not been at grade level or if the terms of the academic plan have not been met, the student may be retained or required to attend summer school for grade promotion. The PACT assessment is administered over a two week period in May, with a different test each day and makeup tests for students who are absent, so that 100% of students in grade three through eight are tested. Additionally, PACT is administered and scored by the District for students in grades one and two. Score reports are received over the summer and the data is analyzed by teachers and administrators to plan instruction, provide interventions, and schedule professional development. Fall conferences are held to discuss the results with the parents and parents are provided with a copy of their child's assessment results.

The English Language Arts PACT assessment is divided into three parts: Reading, Writing and Research. The Reading and Research components require responses to multiple-choice questions, constructed response questions which require a brief written response, and extended response questions which require a lengthy written response from students. The writing test is administered on a separate day and students respond to a writing prompt on a specific grade level topic. The writing prompt is graded on a rubric. The Mathematics assessment organizes items under the five strands of number and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, and data analysis and probability. Students must demonstrate knowledge and skills on completing and interpreting charts, tables and pictorial diagrams, completing graphs and interpreting graphs, solving problems and showing their work, writing explanations and conclusions, and applying mathematics concepts to real-world situations. There are two types of test items: multiple choice and constructed response.

Students with disabilities also participate in the PACT assessment. The student's Individual Education Program (IEP) committee may determine that the child may need accommodations or modifications to be successful on the assessment. Small group settings, oral administration, and the use of technology for extended responses are options to be considered. Additionally, students who are identified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are assessed using the PACT for their appropriate grade levels.

Students at Carolina Forest Elementary have exceeded the state scores for the past five years in English Language Arts and Mathematics at each grade level. This is true for all of the sub-groups represented and resulted in Carolina Forest Elementary meeting all 21 objectives to gain the award of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the 2002-03 school year. Additionally, Carolina Forest Elementary was recognized by the Education Oversight Committee for making significant gains and closing the gap for African American students in Mathematics for the 2002-03 school year. Carolina Forest Elementary has received a report card rating of "Excellent" for the past three years. These recognitions point to the dedication of the staff in making sure that all students make academic progress.

2. At Carolina Forest Elementary, the plan, do, study, act model is utilized to continually assess teacher performance and student achievement with the underlying belief that all children can learn. The staff's high expectations and commitment to excellence set the foundation for continuous school improvement. Prior to the beginning of the school year, the teachers spend three days disaggregating the PACT results to determine strengths and weaknesses in instruction for the previous year's students as well as student performance for the coming school year. This analysis also identifies instructional standards that need to be targeted for improvement for the upcoming school year, as well as each individual teacher's results. By the time the students arrive for the first day of school, the teachers have mapped out the curriculum standards for the entire school year. Decisions on professional development and use of instructional funds are made based on test data analysis. The data is reviewed continuously throughout the year and benchmark tests are given quarterly to gauge student progress.

Teachers in each grade level share common planning times each day. One day per week is devoted to collaborative time with the instructional coach to systematically analyze and interpret assessment data in order to implement the most effective instruction. Administrators also attend these meetings to confer and affirm curriculum alignment. Successful strategies are shared in addition to professional readings on the most effective practices of pedagogy. Professional dialogue pinpoints those standards which have not been mastered in order to strengthen both teacher and student performance. Additionally, two Mondays per month are devoted to professional development for the entire staff. Sessions focus on improving results through best instructional practice including numeracy, literacy, brain research, motivation of students and educational change. The staff believes that all members have a role to play in the success of each student.

Assessment data is also used to identify those students who are in need of interventions to be successful. Based on last year's PACT assessment and current year benchmark tests, students are identified for the after school program, the enrichment program, and small group instruction within the school day. A mentor is assigned to those students who need additional encouragement and support. Students not meeting grade level expectations are given intensive small group instruction either with a staff member or a volunteer to provide additional support towards meeting the expectations of each grade level. Assessment data is also used to identify those students who have moved to South Carolina and are in need of additional instructional support. This year we have participated in a Curriculum Calibration Project offered through the State Department of Education to evaluate the alignment of our assessments with the grade level standards. Analysis of assessment data is an ongoing process that is used to drive instruction throughout the school year. At Carolina Forest Elementary, we believe that data analysis is the heart of school improvement.

3. Communication is the school's vital link to the parents, students and community. At the beginning of each year, every student receives a District handbook that contains the South Carolina Curriculum Standards and the District's performance goals for each grade. Additionally, the curriculum standards may be accessed through the District and State web sites. In the fall, the State Department of Education releases the annual school report card to parents, the media, and the community. For the past three years, Carolina Forest Elementary has received a rating of "Excellent", the highest rating a school can receive. The report card also contains demographic data, subgroup performance on the state assessment, and information about student's demographics and staff credentials, as well as survey results from students, parents, and staff providing feedback on the school's learning environment, social and physical environment, and home-school relations. For the first time this year, the report card reported that Carolina Forest Elementary met 21 of 21 objectives for Adequate Yearly Progress. Information from the school report card is printed in the local newspapers, the school's weekly newsletter, and posted on the District and state web site. Additionally, before the end of the first nine weeks of school, teachers conference with parents to share assessment results and write individual learning plans for the year. At this conference, parents receive a score report with their child's state assessment results. Home visits are made by teachers, administrators and the guidance counselor to share results with those parents who are unable to attend a conference, as our goal is to conference with 100% of the parents. Assessment results are reported quarterly on school progress reports. Parents also receive weekly updates from teachers on classroom assessments. Mid-quarter interim reports are sent home to parents of students experiencing difficulty. State assessment results are reported by the Principal at the first PTO meeting in the fall. Additionally, PACT performance results are reported in the annual School Summary Report and presented to the School Improvement Council, the Advisory Board, the PTO and the school board. Friends of the Forest PTO meetings provide communication to parents on the school's performance goals, the requirements of No Child Left Behind, and the state assessment. Parents meet in grade level meetings to hear information about grade level expectations, standards, and assessments. Orientation meetings are held twice a year with parents new to the area to provide them with information on the school's past performance and expectations for student performance. With such a large student population, communication is critical to the school's continued success.

4. At Carolina Forest Elementary we feel that collaboration within the school, as well as the District, State and Nation is vital to our success. Over the past eight years, our school has won numerous awards and recognitions that have garnered interest in the school and its instructional programs from across the nation. When the school opened in 1996, educators from across the nation attended workshops on Integrated Thematic Instruction hosted by Carolina Forest Elementary. They were especially interested in the conditions for learning that were evident in the classrooms and the school environment, since the new building was decorated in accordance with the latest brain research recommendations. The school has been host to numerous workshops for teachers across the District and State in literacy, numeracy, science, technology, media services and learning disabilities. The annual Authors on the Beach conference attracts over 600 teachers from across the state and nation to meet outstanding writers and illustrators of children's literature. Participants are provided an "open door" tour of the school and its instructional programs. This also provides our educators the opportunity to interact and learn about best practice and educational reform from our visitors.

Our staff and administrators are frequently invited to present at District, State and National Conferences. Staff members have presented literacy focus lessons at District workshops, at least ten staff members were invited to participate in the South Carolina Reading Initiative Program, and the principal was asked to present at a principal workshop on Leading Educational Change, as well as participate in a panel discussion at the national conference for the Administration for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Additionally, the principal was selected to be a participant in the prestigious South Carolina Leadership Executive Institute at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, NC. Nine of our teachers have gained National Professional Teacher Certification, and serve as teacher consultants for other teachers in the District who are seeking certification. One of our kindergarten teachers is a contributing member of the National Council for Diversity and has presented at their national conference for the past two years. Six of our teachers were participants in the Schools Around the World Science Project. Carolina Forest Elementary has won the Palmetto Gold Award for the past three years for outstanding student achievement and the Red Carpet Award for family friendly service from the State Department of Education. As a result of these recognitions, the school is frequently contacted to provide tours of the facility for educators across the state and nation. The school has been featured in local, state and national media reports including ABC and PBS spotlighting education.

Collaboration between schools within the District is evident through the sharing of successful instructional approaches and innovations in programs. Administrators gather once a month to brainstorm ideas and evaluate approaches that are getting results. We will continue to share our successes and seek input from others as we focus our energies on raising student achievement. The Blue Ribbon nomination has already generated additional interest from across the state. The school newsletter now contains a "Blue Ribbon" suggestion box which is also posted on our web page. As a member of the Blue Ribbon program, we anticipate attending the annual conference next year to gain additional opportunities to hear success stories. We look forward to being a part of the Blue Ribbon family.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. The mission of our School District is to guarantee that all students are fully prepared, successful contributors in a rapidly changing global society through the aggressive pursuit of personalized, achievement-based, student-centered teaching and learning. At Carolina Forest Elementary, the school's curriculum fulfills this mission by providing students a comprehensive approach for success through a culture of high expectations across the curriculum. The core curriculum and essential learnings for each student are set through state standards in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and the arts. Conditions for learning are set to create a classroom in which true learning can occur. These conditions which include active student engagement, supportive relationships, adequate time, high expectations, student responsibility, reflection and sharing, choices, clear expectations and feedback, relevant learning, student accountability, and continuous improvement, set the atmosphere needed for student success.

Language Arts instruction is focused on a balanced literacy program as prescribed by the District's Five-Block Literacy Model. Our belief that reading is the key to future success is reflected in the fact that students spend a minimum of two and one-half hours each day in language arts activities including self-selected reading, guided reading, shared/teacher directed reading, writing workshop and word study. Teachers assess the beginning reading level of each student and establish target goals for each student. Reading instruction provides students with strategies to enhance comprehension through individual, small group and whole class instruction. Daily writing workshops focus on individual writing skills and writing goals. This format is especially effective in meeting the needs and levels of all children as each student is able to work at his/her own level and pace as do artists in an art studio. Teachers use mini-lessons to focus on content and development, organization, voice, and conventions. Students work with partners to develop revision and editing skills and teachers regularly confer with students about their writing.

Mathematics instruction is delivered through the Everyday Mathematics program, a K-5 curriculum that coordinates with our District's numeracy model. This comprehensive program was identified as a "Promising Mathematics Program" by the U.S. Department of Education. It addresses a broad range of mathematical concepts organized into the six strands of numeration systems including numerical concepts and operations, patterns and relationships, geometry, measurement, and probability and statistics, and algebra. This spiral curriculum begins in kindergarten with pre-algebra concepts that are reintroduced and reinforced in each grade a minimum of ninety minutes daily through the use of direct instruction, games, math boxes, and real world problem solving

The school's Science curriculum involves "being there" experiences and hands-on applications based on South Carolina Curriculum Standards for Science. Students experience the scientific method and the science process skills of observing, classifying, communicating, predicting and inferring through our courtyard habitat, nearby wetland studies, and study trips within the county and state. The school's Social Studies standards are addressed through integrated, thematic units of study that incorporate the concepts of citizenship, history, economics and geography from the South Carolina Curriculum Standards for Social Studies. Guest speakers are utilized, as well as novels that focus on certain events in history and field studies to local sites of interest. Multicultural themes are explored to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of a variety of perspectives and contributions. Carolina Forest's related arts program includes physical education, music, art and Spanish. Through participation in the physical education program, students experience the lifelong adult leisure skills of volleyball, bowling and tennis, while learning teamwork and cooperation. Our music and art programs are based on the South Carolina Frameworks for the Arts standards. The music and art teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to align their instruction with grade level standards to assist the students in making vital connections in their learning. Two Spanish teachers immerse students into a rich language experience that integrates the components of language, geography, customs and music into the foreign language program. Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. Through the delivery of a rigorous and engaging student centered curriculum, we believe our students will be intrinsically motivated to be successful learners.

2.The Reading Curriculum

Carolina Forest Elementary's reading program is based on the work of Cunningham, Fountas, Pinnell, Routman and Miller. The foundation of the program is our belief that reading is the key to future success, so we focus on students in grades K-2 *learning to read* while instruction in grades 3-5 focuses on *reading to learn*. Our comprehensive reading program offers students a structured, consistent, developmentally appropriate instructional program in reading and writing for two and one-half hours each day in a print-rich environment. The rigorous South Carolina Curriculum Standards for language arts encompass challenge for all students in the areas of reading/literature, listening, speaking, writing, and research. Our balanced literacy program includes time for self-selected reading, shared/teacher directed reading, word study, guided reading, and writing. Daily teacher read alouds expose children to a variety of authors and foster of love of reading for students. Trade books, novel sets, magazines anthologies, newspapers and multi-cultural classroom libraries are found in each classroom. Book baskets outside each classroom door provide early morning arrivals with plenty of reading materials. During self-selected reading time, students choose a book from baskets containing leveled books of diverse genres. Word study in grades K-2 focuses on letter recognition, spelling patterns and phonemic awareness while in grades 3-5 vocabulary development is the focus through the study of Latin stems and multiple meaning words. Small guided reading groups meet with the teacher for additional instruction on specific skills and comprehension strategies. During shared/teacher directed reading time, the teacher reads with the students to help them develop fluency, understand story elements, and develop comprehension skills. Literature circles are utilized in grades 2-5 to enhance student discussion groups. All students have monthly reading goals. Reading progress is frequently assessed through the use of rigorous teacher-made assessments, the Developmental Reading Assessment and the computerized STAR assessment program. Progress is monitored by the students, teachers and the administration, and instructional targets are set for areas of weakness. All students participate in the Accelerated Reader program. To assist students in meeting their goals and to emphasize the importance of reading fluency, all students have nightly reading homework. All staff members work with small groups of students to assist them in meeting their grade level performance goals. The staff has adopted a team approach to making sure all students can read. Additionally, the school's media center is open one night each week for Family Reading Night. Visiting authors and illustrators share their work with students through programs and classroom visits. Two on-staff curriculum coaches provide professional development focusing on improving instructional practices in reading through book studies including Reading Essentials, Mosaic of Thought, Strategies that Work, How to Differentiate Instruction, Reading with Meaning and the ASCD video series, *The Brain and Reading*. Additionally, these coaches write focus lessons for teachers to use daily to target teach to the weakest grade level standards. Technology programs reinforce skills through the use of Wiggle Works, Publisher, PowerPoint presentations, and Accelerated Reader. Reading is the foundation for everything that is taught at Carolina Forest Elementary, so it is our number one priority in achieving our school's mission.

3. The Mathematics Curriculum

Mathematics: Our mathematics curriculum is rooted in the South Carolina Curriculum Standards and is delivered through a program called Everyday Mathematics, a K-5 program developed at the University of Chicago. When the school opened in 1996, we were the first school in our District to use this mathematics program. Three years later, every school in the District adopted the program based on the results gained at Carolina Forest Elementary. The curriculum is a spiral-based curriculum that introduces children to all major mathematical content – number sense, algebra, measurement and geometry, statistics, data analysis, and probability – beginning in kindergarten. It allows children to move beyond basic arithmetic and to nurture higher-order and critical thinking skills, by using everyday, real world problems and situations. Students receive a daily checkup of skills followed by direct instruction, guided and independent practice and exploration. Numerous opportunities are incorporated that integrate the skills of reading and writing through mathematical problem solving. Teachers use manipulatives to enforce basic mathematical principles. Geoboards, protractors, calculators, compasses, rulers and math kits that include pattern blocks and base ten sets are routinely used in classrooms. Projects are also integrated including the popular 5th grade “Million Dollar Project” where students conduct research on a project with a million dollar budget. Throughout the year, parents in grades K-5 receive letters to keep them informed of the mathematical content studied in each unit. These “home links” are vital in communicating to parents the expectations for skills to be mastered in the units, as well as family activities to support the concepts that are being learned. A student reference book is used to explain mathematical terms and sample problems to assist at home. Student work is completed in journals and the skills are built from grade to grade with the use of manipulatives, games and real world connections. Students spend a minimum of 90 minutes per day in mathematics instruction and all students have nightly math homework. Higher order thinking skills are evident instead of rote drill and practice. For students who need additional instruction or are new to our District, an after school program in mathematics is offered. Enrichment activities are also offered through the Continental math program and on-line pre-algebra is offered for high achieving fifth graders. Additionally, students apply mathematical skills in grade level math focus days such as measurement day or geometry day. On these days, students rotate to different classrooms and participate in mathematical stations to further explore mathematics concepts. Students receive intensive interventions on skill areas not mastered. New teachers receive an orientation to the Everyday Mathematics Program. As a result of this curriculum, student performance for all sub-groups on the state assessment continues to increase. Carolina Forest Elementary was cited as an exemplary school for closing the gap for African American students in mathematics on the state assessment by the South Carolina State Legislature for the 2002-03 school year. We continue to believe strongly that the Everyday Mathematics program is making a difference in the achievement levels of all of our students and that our students will have the essential mathematical skills and knowledge to be successful in school and in their future careers.

1. Instructional Methods

At Carolina Forest Elementary, we believe that all students can learn by implementing a variety of instructional methods. Before the students begin the first day of school, the staff has analyzed student results to identify each child's particular strengths and weaknesses. Teachers keep this data in mind when planning their instructional approaches in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Classrooms are set up to enhance the learning environments, providing an environment built on trust, safety and mutual respect. Classroom rules and procedures are developed with the students the first day of school. Daily agendas organize a framework for teachers and students to follow. Engagement of students in meaningful, relevant learning is a priority at Carolina Forest Elementary. Teachers incorporate a variety of brain-compatible approaches to enhance the learning for students and to keep students intrinsically motivated to do their personal best. Students are organized into learning clubs to promote collaboration, teamwork and cooperative learning with four to six desks arranged to form groups. Students and teachers practice the lifelong guidelines of trust, mutual respect and personal best to enhance communication within the classroom. Through this environment, students feel safe to be risk-takers or to admit they don't understand what is being taught. Learning is student-centered and integrated when possible, with the teacher serving as the facilitator of the learning. Brainstorming is used to introduce a new concept. Graphic organizers and concept maps are used by the students to organize their thoughts and the content that is being learned. Teachers use a variety of instructional approaches including whole group, small group, and one-on-one, modeling, guiding, demonstration, role playing, guest speakers, media resources and when necessary, reteaching. By focusing on the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, students are familiar with the skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. We believe that frequent feedback is critical to student success. Pre-assessment is used to decide which skills need in-depth study and rigorous post assessments are used to measure learning outcomes and to provide the student with feedback as well as the teacher. Teachers check frequently for understanding. Time is given for students to think and write about their work and to talk with each other about it. Choices are given when it comes to producing the final product in a unit of study. Through professional development, teachers know that new concepts must be related to prior knowledge learned, so sequencing of ideas is critical to understanding. The metacognitive skills of making connections, determining importance, asking high level questions, using sensory images, inferring and synthesizing all play a role in successful thinking and learning and are also implemented into lessons. Hands-on experiences, the use of manipulatives, and field studies help to clarify what has been learned. Finally, students must be given adequate time to master skills and concepts. Pacing of instruction and reteaching is considered if students need more time to master new content. Acceleration is also used when students have the skills necessary to advance. Collaboration among teachers in and across the grade level is critical to foster student success. Instructional coaches provide feedback and model lessons for teachers to observe. New instructional methods are demonstrated through professional development opportunities and the staff is engaged in the relentless pursuit of how to make learning relevant for students. This dedication to finding the best possible methods to use contribute greatly to our success.

2. Professional Development

The development of a professional learning community at Carolina Forest Elementary has focused the energy of the staff on the work of improving instruction to achieve success for all students. Teachers spend the first three days of professional development analyzing test data and making curriculum maps for the upcoming year. Grade levels share common planning times daily and once a week meet with the instructional coach for professional study. This year we have read and discussed in study groups the following books: Who Moved My Cheese, Mosaic of Thought, How to Differentiate Instruction and Reading Essentials. We have also participated in two video studies from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development on *Reading and the Brain* and *Motivating Students for Success*.

Ten of our teachers have participated as members for three years of the South Carolina Reading Initiative and they have shared what they have learned with the staff. Monday afternoon staff meetings are devoted to professional development activities. All staff members are in attendance as we firmly believe that we must work together as a team to achieve results. Through collaboration and mutual respect, grade level teachers meet weekly to plan standards driven instruction. Our staff has been trained in Susan Kovalik's brain compatible learning model, known as Integrated Thematic Instruction, as well as receiving District training on the literacy and numeracy models. Reading Recovery trained teachers have conducted workshops to share strategies with their first grade peers. During the current school year, our focus has been on improving reading comprehension and analyzing data to set benchmark goals with students. District learning specialists have also been utilized to provide additional training on how to design rigorous assessments, how to ask higher-level questions of students, and how to utilize the metacognitive skills of comprehension. Teacher teams have attended state and national conferences and have brought back information to share with the staff on differentiated curriculum, learning disabilities, strategies for Limited English Proficient students, problem solving and classroom management. As the student population at Carolina Forest Elementary continues to grow, teachers have sought creative strategies to meet the learning needs of all of the subgroups of students. Through professional development teachers have learned how to personalize instruction through choice and intrinsic motivation to enhance learning through real world applications. Thirteen days each year are devoted to professional development. We believe that learning never stops for teachers and that improved student achievement is a direct outcome of continuous, quality professional development. As Harry Wong says, "It's the teacher who makes the difference." We agree!

GRADE 3
Test: Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test – English Language Arts

Edition/Publication Year 1999-2003

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed?

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PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Four performance levels have been established for PACT – Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic. These levels indicate how an individual student is performing based on the curriculum standards assessed by the PACT.

ADVANCED

A student who performs at the ADVANCED level on the PACT has exceeded expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is very well prepared for work at the next grade.

PROFICIENT

A student who performs at the PROFICIENT level on the PACT has met expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is well prepared for work at the next grade. The PROFICIENT level represents the long-term goal for student performance in South Carolina under the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

BASIC

Performance at the BASIC level means a student has passed the test. A student who performs at the BASIC level on the PACT has met minimum expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standard approved by the State Board of Education. The student is minimally prepared for work at the next grade.

BELOW BASIC

A student who performs at the BELOW BASIC level on the PACT has not met minimum expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is not prepared for work at the next grade.

**ASSESSMENT DATA
CAROLINA FOREST ELEMENTARY
PALMETTO ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE TEST
GRADE 3 – ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Testing Month	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORES	318.6	315.8	313	313
At or Above Basic	98.4	92.7	89.5	87
At or Above Proficient	74.8	68.9	59.3	61
At Advanced	17.1	17.6	13.8	9.6
Number of Students Tested	123	193	189	177
Percent of total students tested	100%	99.00%	96.60%	96%
Number of Students Excluded	0	1	6	8
Percent of Students Excluded	0%	1.00%	3.40%	4.00%
SUBGROUP SCORES				
1. Free/Reduced	310.3	311	307	304
Number of Students Tested	40	62	74	55
At or Above Basic	95	87.2	81	72
At or Above Proficient	55	54.9	43.2	34
At Advanced	7.5	9.7	5.4	2
2. No Free/Reduced Lunch	322.6	318	316	317
Number of Students Tested	83	131	115	122
At or Above Basic	100	95.4	94.7	92.7
At or Above Proficient	84.2	75.6	69.5	73.8
At Advanced	22	21.4	19.1	13.1
3. African American	305.5	306.7	309	303
Number of Students Tested	13	25	20	22
At or Above Basic	100	88	75	72.8
At or Above Proficient	23.1	28	50	27.3
At Advanced	7.7	4	10	0
4. White	321.3	317.4	313	315
Number of Students Tested	96	157	154	150
At or Above Basic	100	93.6	91.5	89.9
At or Above Proficient	84.4	75.8	61	66.6
At Advanced	18.8	19.7	13.6	11.3
STATE SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORE	305	308	305.6	304.7
At or Above Basic	81.1	79.9	78.7	74.4
At or Above Proficient	43.8	41.6	41.1	40
At Advanced	5.4	4	3.4	4

GRADE 4
Test: Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test – English Language Arts

Edition/Publication Year 1999-2003

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed?

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PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Four performance levels have been established for PACT – Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic. These levels indicate how an individual student is performing based on the curriculum standards assessed by the PACT.

ADVANCED

A student who performs at the ADVANCED level on the PACT has exceeded expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is very well prepared for work at the next grade.

PROFICIENT

A student who performs at the PROFICIENT level on the PACT has met expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is well prepared for work at the next grade. The PROFICIENT level represents the long-term goal for student performance in South Carolina under the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

BASIC

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BELOW BASIC

A student who performs at the BELOW BASIC level on the PACT has not met minimum expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is not prepared for work at the next grade.

**ASSESSMENT DATA
CAROLINA FOREST ELEMENTARY
PALMETTO ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE TEST
GRADE 4 – ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Testing Month	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES				
TOTAL MEANS SCORES	410.4	409.3	409	408
At or Above Basic	88.5	91.2	89.7	84.5
At or Above Proficient	56	46.4	47.3	44.7
At Advanced	4.8	3.1	4.9	2.5
Number of Students Tested	166	177	184	164
Percent of total students tested	100%	99.00%	97.30%	98.20%
Number of Students Excluded	0	1	5	3
Percent of Students Excluded	0%	1.00%	2.70%	1.80%
SUBGROUP SCORES				
1. Free/Reduced	403.4	405	403	403
Number of Students Tested	52	71	55	53
At or Above Basic	75	85.9	81.8	77.4
At or Above Proficient	34.6	29.6	27.3	28.3
At Advanced	1.9	0	1.8	0
2. No Free/Reduced Lunch	413.7	412	411	410
Number of Students Tested	114	106	129	111
At or Above Basic	94.7	94.3	93	88
At or Above Proficient	66.4	56.1	55.8	52.8
At Advanced	6.2	4.9	6.2	3.7
3. African American	402.2	403.5	403	400
Number of Students Tested	23	22	26	17
At or Above Basic	69.5	72.8	80.7	70.5
At or Above Proficient	30.4	36.4	19.2	17.6
At Advanced	4.3	0	0	0
4. White	412	410.4	410	409
Number of Students Tested	129	148	154	140
At or Above Basic	92.3	93.9	92.2	87.9
At or Above Proficient	60.5	51.3	53.2	48.6
At Advanced	3.9	2.7	5.8	2.9
STATE SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORE	401	405	404.9	403.2
At or Above Basic	75.5	79.6	80	72
At or Above Proficient	31.4	33.5	37.3	36.9
At Advanced	2.2	2.2	2.1	3.9

GRADE 5
Test: Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test – English Language Arts

Edition/Publication Year 1999-2003

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

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PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Four performance levels have been established for PACT – Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic. These levels indicate how an individual student is performing based on the curriculum standards assessed by the PACT.

ADVANCED

A student who performs at the ADVANCED level on the PACT has exceeded expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is very well prepared for work at the next grade.

PROFICIENT

A student who performs at the PROFICIENT level on the PACT has met expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is well prepared for work at the next grade. The PROFICIENT level represents the long-term goal for student performance in South Carolina under the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

BASIC

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BELOW BASIC

A student who performs at the BELOW BASIC level on the PACT has not met minimum expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is not prepared for work at the next grade.

**ASSESSMENT DATA
CAROLINA FOREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PALMETTO CHALLENGE ACHIEVEMENT TEST
GRADE 5 – ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Testing Month	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORES	507.4	506.5	508	507
At or Above Basic	87.1	82.9	90.2	80.2
At or Above Proficient	38.2	36.9	43.2	41.3
At Advanced	3.8	5.9	3	4.3
Number of Students Tested	131	165	164	162
Percent of total students tested	100%	97.60%	94%	97.60%
Number of Students Excluded	0	3	11	4
Percent of Students Excluded	0%	2.40%	6.00%	2.40%
SUBGROUP SCORES				
1. Free/Reduced	501.9	500	504	500
Number of Students Tested	44	62	51	47
At or Above Basic	79.5	69.3	82.4	65.9
At or Above Proficient	25	17.7	25.5	25.5
At Advanced	0	1.6	0	0
2. No Free/Reduced Lunch	510.3	510	510	510
Number of Students Tested	87	103	113	115
At or Above Basic	90.6	89.6	93.8	85.9
At or Above Proficient	45.9	46.4	51.3	47.8
At Advanced	5.9	8	4.4	6.2
3. African American	502.4	496.3	502	493
Number of Students Tested	17	25	18	15
At or Above Basic	76.4	64	72.2	46.7
At or Above Proficient	23.5	0	22.2	6.7
At Advanced	0	0	0	0
4. White	509.1	508.6	510	509
Number of Students Tested	98	140	143	142
At or Above Basic	91.9	86.8	93.8	84.4
At or Above Proficient	42.9	44.7	46.9	45
At Advanced	3.1	7.2	3.5	4.9
STATE SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORE	500	502	502.5	501.7
At or Above Basic	67.4	74.2	73.2	71.1
At or Above Proficient	19.7	24.9	27.4	27.2
At Advanced	1	1.4	2	2.2

GRADE 3
Test: Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test – Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year 1999-2003

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

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PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Four performance levels have been established for PACT – Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic. These levels indicate how an individual student is performing based on the curriculum standards assessed by the PACT.

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BELOW BASIC

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**ASSESSMENT DATA
CAROLINA FOREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PALMETTO ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE TEST
GRADE 3 - MATHEMATICS**

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Testing Month	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORES	323.3	321.9	316	313
At or Above Basic	93.7	91.7	86.1	84.2
At or Above Proficient	78.6	67.2	52.6	46.2
At Advanced	49.2	44.8	35.1	21.7
Number of Students Tested	126	173	194	160
Percent of total students tested	100%	96.00%	99%	95%
Number of Students Excluded	0	6	1	8
Percent of Students Excluded	0%	4.00%	1.00%	5%
SUBGROUP SCORES				
1. Free/Reduced	317	316	310	302
Number of Students Tested	42	62	76	54
At or Above Basic	85.7	87.1	80.3	66.7
At or Above Proficient	64.3	48.4	35.6	13
At Advanced	26.2	24.2	21.1	3.7
2. No Free/Reduced Lunch	326.5	325	319	318
Number of Students Tested	84	111	118	106
At or Above Basic	97.5	93.8	89.9	92
At or Above Proficient	85.5	76.1	63.6	60
At Advanced	60.2	54.6	44.1	30.4
3. African American	308.9	314.5	312	300
Number of Students Tested	13	24	20	23
At or Above Basic	69.3	95.9	75	56.4
At or Above Proficient	23.1	41.7	50	8.6
At Advanced	7.7	16.7	20	4.3
4. White	325.5	323.3	316	315
Number of Students Tested	99	147	157	136
At or Above Basic	98	91.1	88.5	88.5
At or Above Proficient	85.9	72	52.8	51.3
At Advanced	55.6	50.3	36.9	24.4
STATE SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORE	310	308	307.1	304.7
At or Above Basic	70	73.6	72.1	69
At or Above Proficient	28.3	31.5	33.3	25.5
At Advanced	11.1	12	16.4	9.4

GRADE 4
Test: Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test – Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year 1999-2003

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

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PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Four performance levels have been established for PACT – Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic. These levels indicate how an individual student is performing based on the curriculum standards assessed by the PACT.

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**ASSESSMENT DATA
CAROLINA FOREST ELEMENTARY
PALMETTO ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE TEST
GRADE 4 - MATHEMATICS**

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Testing Month	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORES	417.4	417.2	414	410
At or Above Basic	93	90.2	82	76.6
At or Above Proficient	52.9	52.2	43.9	36.5
At Advanced	25.6	31.2	23.3	9.6
Number of Students Tested	172	205	177	160
Percent of total students tested	100%	100.00%	94%	95%
Number of Students Excluded	0	0	12	8
Percent of Students Excluded	0%	0.00%	6.00%	5%
SUBGROUP SCORES				
1. Free/Reduced	409	413	406	406
Number of Students Tested	56	75	57	54
At or Above Basic	82.1	89.3	70.1	68.5
At or Above Proficient	33.9	40	24.5	27.8
At Advanced	14.3	18.7	7	3.7
2. No Free/Reduced Lunch	421.7	419	418	412
Number of Students Tested	116	130	120	106
At or Above Basic	98.3	90.8	87.1	80.5
At or Above Proficient	63.2	59.3	52.3	40.7
At Advanced	31.6	38.5	30.3	12.4
3. African American	408.7	407.6	404	404
Number of Students Tested	24	23	28	18
At or Above Basic	91.7	78.2	67.9	61.1
At or Above Proficient	25	21.7	28.6	16.7
At Advanced	8.3	8.7	3.6	11.1
4. White	419.8	419	416	411
Number of Students Tested	132	158	145	142
At or Above Basic	94.7	94.3	85.3	79.4
At or Above Proficient	59.1	57.6	47.1	39.4
At Advanced	30.3	34.8	27.4	9.7
STATE SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORE	409	409	405.9	403.6
At or Above Basic	74.3	74.3	67.1	61.6
At or Above Proficient	35.6	36	26	23.6
At Advanced	15.3	15.3	9.6	8

GRADE 5
Test: Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test – Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year 1999-2003

Publisher: South Carolina Department of Education

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**ASSESSMENT DATA
CAROLINA FOREST ELEMENTARY
PALMETTO ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE TEST
GRADE 5 - MATHEMATICS**

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Testing Month	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORES	516.8	517.5	518	511
At or Above Basic	88.6	87.2	87.2	76.3
At or Above Proficient	48.9	55.1	57.3	37.5
At Advanced	26.2	25	29.9	17.5
Number of Students Tested	141	164	164	160
Percent of total students tested	100%	97.00%	94%	95%
Number of Students Excluded	0	3	11	8
Percent of Students Excluded	0%	3.00%	6.00%	5%
SUBGROUP SCORES				
1. Free/Reduced	510	512	512	505
Number of Students Tested	47	64	52	45
At or Above Basic	76.5	82.8	73.1	60.1
At or Above Proficient	36.1	42.2	42.3	24.5
At Advanced	10.6	6.3	23.1	8.9
2. No Free/Reduced Lunch	520.5	520	521	514
Number of Students Tested	94	100	112	115
At or Above Basic	94.6	89.4	93.8	83.1
At or Above Proficient	57.2	61.4	64.3	42.4
At Advanced	35.2	34.1	33	21.2
3. African American	507.2	504.7	505	494
Number of Students Tested	17	27	18	15
At or Above Basic	64.7	66.6	61.1	33.3
At or Above Proficient	23.5	22.2	27.8	0
At Advanced	5.9	3.7	16.7	0
4. White	518.2	520.2	520	513
Number of Students Tested	109	134	135	137
At or Above Basic	93.6	92.3	91.6	81.5
At or Above Proficient	52.3	62.2	62	41.5
At Advanced	28.4	29.5	31.7	18.6
STATE SCORES				
TOTAL MEAN SCORE	507	508	504.8	502.2
At or Above Basic	73.6	70	62.1	58.7
At or Above Proficient	31.1	28.7	27.1	19.9
At Advanced	12	11.1	10.9	7.7