

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Kevin Conklin
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Belle Hall Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 385 Egypt Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Mt. Pleasant State SC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 29464-7200

County Charleston County

Telephone (843) 849-2841 Fax (843) 375-3414

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Gerrita Postlewait E-mail gerrita_postlewait@charleston.k12.sc.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Charleston School District 01 Tel. (843) 937-6300

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Rev. Dr. Eric Mack
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The 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.
10. 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.
11. 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

Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 52 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 17 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 15 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 85 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	16	13	29
K	42	49	91
1	48	49	97
2	47	45	92
3	55	58	113
4	56	50	106
5	49	43	92
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	313	307	620

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6 % Asian
 - 9 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 81 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report 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.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 7%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	36
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	51
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	701
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Urdu, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6 %
37 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %
 Total number students who qualify: 48

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

52 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>8</u> Autism | <u>6</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>1</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>12</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 13

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	31
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	95%	92%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

To provide a rich, diverse, and challenging curriculum in developing skilled, respected, independent seekers of knowledge who will contribute to their community and the world.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

During the 2020-21 school year, Belle Hall Elementary (BHE) has operated according to COVID-19 restrictions as dictated by the state of South Carolina and more specifically by our Charleston County School District. The school year opening was delayed by three weeks into September 2020. The first day of school revealed that our enrollment had declined by 80 students to 620 from the expected 700 due to families' pandemic concerns. A lottery was conducted to initially bring back only 25% of the students to in-person learning with at-risk students prioritized. The other 75% were taught via virtual platforms. Just two weeks later, in-school seating was raised to 50% capacity while maintaining health safety guidelines including social distancing, masks, home room bubbles, and plexiglass for each student's desk. Phasing students back into school continued in stages and required teachers to shift from distance learning instruction to in-person, repeatedly. November 11, 2020 saw the in-person enrollment increase to 85% and on February 8, 2011 it increased to 90%. Subsequently, all students have had multiple teachers with some having had as many as four virtual and in-person "home room" teachers. During this 2nd semester, we are teaching 5% of our enrollment virtually in groups of students from two other schools. The remaining 5% are also at-home and participating in the district's Centralized Virtual Academy that has an asynchronous format. Obviously, this school year's instructional settings have been fluid and disjointed.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III - SUMMARY

Belle Hall Elementary School (BHE) was established in 1990 in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina which sits across the harbor from historic Charleston. This suburban setting has seen accelerated growth over the past quarter century making it the 4th largest city in the state. Ours is a traditional school model that draws from the surrounding neighborhoods featuring predominantly professional, two-parent families. The enrollment is stable with only a 7% mobility rate. Staff turnover is low providing programmatic continuity and healthy, generational home-school relationships. In recent years, the student demographics have shifted to about 20% minority representation. This welcomed diversity provides us with increased perspectives, yet disparities have been revealed and require ongoing attention in support of all our students.

For three decades, BHE has consistently maintained an “Excellent” overall school rating as determined annually by the South Carolina Department of Education which has also regularly recognized the school with Palmetto Gold and Silver distinctions. Whereas we are proud of this high-level “proficiency” status, it is the continued “growth” of all our students that focuses our resources and efforts. As a school community of staff, families, and stakeholders, we strive to identify and support individual students with targeted interventions and assistance. In response to our achievement gaps, regular data reviews and student wellness inventories are conducted according to Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) models. Our predominantly veteran staff and very involved PTA work collaboratively to identify, devise, and direct initiatives to assist students across all areas of need. Our school-based governorship includes a faculty senate of grade level teacher representatives, the PTA board, and a proactive School Improvement Council (SIC) consisting of elected and appointed staff, parents, and community members. These advisory groups meet regularly to facilitate school-wide open communication, garner feedback, and monitor the progress of action plans. It is through these participatory forums that we glean perspectives, generate problem-solving, and cultivate leadership from within. This rich demographic of support extends to prolific volunteering coming from the local faith-based institutions, the business sector, retirees, high school mentors, and incredible parental involvement.

BHE has a history of deliberately teaching our students open acceptance regarding inclusivity, collegiality, and awareness of our community diversity in the areas of special education services, disabilities, socioeconomics, and ethnic backgrounds. We are especially proud of our strong reputation of supporting students with special needs. From our Preschool Intervention Class (PIC) to the behavior support program to multiple resource learning labs, students with IEPs are supported from ages 3- to 11-years old. Our student body and community are the beneficiaries as we grow together through open empathy and compassion for all our uniqueness and contributions. Collegiality is exemplified by elementary level classes that “adopt” Early Childhood level classrooms and serve as regular reading buddies. Further, the school-wide Positive Behaviors and Intervention Supports (PBIS) system reinforces our “S.T.A.R” expectations matrix and greatly contributes to the student body’s cooperative spirit as evidenced by a very low rate of discipline incidents. Across the campus and throughout each school day, we promote and demonstrate: S- Staying safe, T- Taking Responsibility, A- Acting Respectfully and R- Reaching for the Stars!

Opportunities common to all Belle Hall students include being provided with their own iPad or Chromebook device in order to access exploratory and remedial software support. The on-site after-school program collaborates with the school day program to offer tutorial support and coordinates with community service providers to offer extracurricular activities like yoga, science clubs, art courses, and numerous field trips. Daily curriculum extensions in the fine arts include playing the recorder, hand bells, strings, and a chorus. Swimming lessons are available to kindergarteners and 1st graders via a partnership with the municipal pool next door. Extra-curricular athletic opportunities include basketball and tennis teams and a girls running club. The student council directs regular charity drives and school improvement campaigns while modeling citizenship for the entire student body. An environmentally focused student Green Team manages an extensive school garden that collaborates with the cafeteria to prepare the grown produce for school snacks and also operates the daily recycling and composting programs.

Our STAR expectations serve to develop students that are “High Flyers” (school nickname) illustrated as a soaring hot air balloon (school logo) who embark on “Learning, A Lifelong Journey” (school motto).

Students keep this noble focus by reciting a school creed every morning with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence out of respect for each individual's personal views and aspirations. These ideals are realized with the citizenship, sportsmanship, and charity that are modeled and practiced through community service projects such as canned food drives, neighborhood clean-ups, and clothing drives. Individual recognitions are highlighted by the popular local Kiwanis Club "Terrific Kids" program and a monthly character trait focus.

The 2020-21 COVID-19 restrictions forced us to modify and sometimes temporarily suspend some of our outreach and connections. Despite what has often felt like educational "triage" for over a year, the power of our collective resolve and mettle was revealed yet again and has proved energizing! Accordingly, Belle Hall Elementary has devoted much time to reflect and plan for August 2021 where we unfortunately expect to confront more school-wide pandemic-induced learning gaps. Steadfast, we believe that these recent challenges have galvanized our school community by producing even greater brotherhood, empathy, creativity, and resolve.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

The cornerstone of the high-quality instruction at BHE is each staff member's belief that every student can be a successful and confident learner. Through daily home-school communication, student conferencing, and progress monitoring, teachers truly "know" their students and tailor their teaching to each individual's instructional level, learning style, and interests. Weekly Professional Learning Community meetings (PLCs) are held among grade level teachers to analyze student progress and collaboratively develop correlating lesson plans and assessments. This constant monitoring and adjustment are supported by the MTSS team and led by the Instructional Coach with direct remediation from the Reading Interventionist. Student growth data points are analyzed at both the classroom formative levels and via summative instruments, such as common benchmark assessments, NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results, and state standardized exams. The diagnostic MAP data also provides Lexile levels and an on-line interactive Learning Continuum which is utilized to identify instructional strategies measured to each individual student's point of progress. BHE strives to develop data-driven, yet personalized relationships that maximize the collective efforts among our students, staff, and families.

Reading/English Language Arts (ELA)

The BHE balanced literacy program has a broad framework based on the reading and writing workshop fundamentals. Concurrently, explicit word study and phonics instruction is blended with a whole language approach. The foundation of our comprehensive literacy instruction is text-leveling that enables teachers to select individualized texts, lesson presentations, and determine effective small groups for each child. Accordingly, all teachers have been trained in Running Record assessment and Fountas and Pinell benchmark assessment. Early Childhood (Kindergarten to 2nd Grade) classes feature daily literacy components such as, phonics, read-alouds, mentor text, and shared reading. The reading workshops consist of mini-lessons, student conferencing, guided reading, sharing, and adaptive digital ELA content. Writing workshop periods employ interactive writing, conferencing, writing folders, and sharing. The Elementary stage (Grades 3-5) expands to word study, Latin stem study, and close reading while the workshops add book clubs, presentations, reading journals, and deeper content-based reading and writing projects integrated across all subject areas. Weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings review data points from a range of summative assessments including the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), FastBridge, and MAP, in addition to formative instruments such as Text Talk exercises, Lucy Calkins Units of Study (Reading and Writing), and daily class work. This year, BHE has begun a phased implementation of the Open Court and LLI programs in Kindergarten to 2nd grade. Our RtI culture of continuous progress monitoring and individualized support ensures that students develop into confident readers and writers.

Mathematics

A balanced numeracy framework drives our math instruction and is aligned with the SC College and Career Readiness standards. Our teachers utilize daily common planning periods to design math instruction that incorporates mathematical processing standards: making sense of problems, contextual and abstract reasoning, critical thinking for justification and critique, making real-life connections, using tools strategically, communicating mathematically, and identifying structures and patterns. The Bridges math curriculum emphasizes hands-on and engaging math lesson presentation. Commonly scheduled daily Number Corner work is fundamental in all K-5th grade classrooms and introduces, reinforces, and extends mathematical skills and concepts. These are engaging activities that emphasize calendar grids, computational fluency, problem strings, and solving problems. This school-wide theme fosters mathematical mindsets. Teachers use a variety of assessments based on questioning, prompts, visuals, group problems, and games that allow them to check for student understanding. Summative math assessments include MAP, FastBridge, and common grade level benchmarks. Adaptive digital math content provides independent work and differentiated assessment results through the Reflex, DreamBox, and ALEKS programs. Planning is underway for the transition to the iReady adaptive software for the upcoming school year which is more standards-aligned and produces norm-referenced results to better support our differentiated math instruction school-wide. BHE consciously strives to foster curious students that relate to their world by "observing,

questioning, formulating, and applying” a mathematical perspective to everyday contexts.

Science

BHE science instruction is aligned to our district’s Principles for Science Excellence which emphasizes science and engineering practices in order to develop students with scientific literacy able to compete for STEM-related careers. Science lessons are inquiry-based emphasizing investigation units, experiment kits, digital literacy, research, field trips, and community service. We teach the 5Es Learning Cycle: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate to prepare students to become self-directed, independent thinkers, and problem solvers. This increases student achievement in science as it engages all students regardless of their aptitude, background, or gender and prepares them for STEM opportunities. Assessments include the state SCPASS exam results, interactive kit investigations, inquiry-based assignments, data interpretations, scientific argumentation, collaborative experiments, and real-world applications. Digital resources include Discovery Education Science Techbook, Pearson Interactive Science, Mackinvia, and Picture Perfect Science Lessons. The entire student body participates in the comprehensive school garden ecosystem experiences, the recycling and composting facility programs, and a collaboration with our feeder middle school which is a STEM-centered magnet program. Our coastal geography supplies a broad array of natural environments for hands-on scientific exploration at all grade levels. Teachers purposefully infuse scientific vocabulary, topics, and methodology throughout the school day to enrich the learning experience and promote critical thinking. BHE seeks to “turn on” students to science by training them to recognize “everyday science”, understand it, and interact with it to make it “real” and impactful in their own lives.

Social Studies/History/Civic Learning

BHE delivers social studies instruction which is meaningful, integrated, values-based, challenging, and active. Foremost in our presentation is cultivating diversity awareness. The differing backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, perspectives, lifestyles, capabilities, and experiences of all people are openly discussed with the goal of fostering understanding and acceptance. All ages of students are exposed to the concerns of equity and access from the past in order to frame their personal situations and views as they respectfully work together and appreciate others and their opinions. The Charleston area allows for numerous field trips and guest speakers thanks to the many historical sites and programs in the area. We are proud and confident that BHE students move on to middle school possessing a firm foundation in historical perspective and a civics-minded responsibility resulting from the social studies knowledge, skills, and dispositions developed here. Kindergarten to 5th grade students begin by studying their own world, then progress to interacting with others, other cultures, governmental study, historical events, and community service. Units of study are celebrated with elaborate culminating activities such as South Carolina Day (3rd grade), Prairie Day (4th), and the school-wide interactive Mini-Society economics bazaar (5th). Fourth and fifth grade students maintain a student council that directs school improvement initiatives throughout the school year. Social studies units in all grades incorporate ELA, math, and science standards, then train students in document-based questioning to develop higher-order critical thinking and argumentative writing skills. Teachers present students with a compelling question leading to supporting questions that frame the inquiry, then generate fact-based content exercises. Rigorous social studies project work imbeds formative and summative assessments from all subject areas. BHE prepares students to become positive participating citizens, locally, nationally, and globally.

Distance Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all educational platforms and instructional strategies from March 2020 to the present April 2021. Multiple “phase-ins” have slowly brought more and more, but not all students are back to in-school learning. This has resulted in a constant shifting of students and teachers from virtual to in-school arrangements. Subsequently, our focus has been on the social emotional learning (SEL) and well-being of the students and families. Visitors, volunteering, and parent involvement have become completely virtual. Despite these unprecedented challenges, the staff vigilantly strive to stay connected with families and foster individual relationships. The fifth grade teachers even went so far as to completely departmentalize in hopes of providing more connections with the older students in preparation for their transition to middle school. Teachers have reinvented themselves into effective remote instructors through

trial, error, and grit. However, the most amazing aspect has been the fortitude and cooperation of our entire school community which has pulled together even tighter in the face of these obstacles. While we expect the 2021-22 school year to reveal significant learning gaps, we plan to counter this with a communal theme of "Reteaching and Recovery!"

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

Belle Hall Elementary is fortunate to have an exceptional needs-based four-year old Child Development (CD) program, as well as, a Preschool Itinerant Class (PIC) available to 3- and 4-year-olds with special education needs. The majority of our CD students stay for kindergarten the following year. Subsequently, a veteran kindergarten faculty prepares students for first grade success. BHE benefits from having all three programs on-site.

The PIC serves students with IEPs and focuses on pre-academic, social/emotional, fine motor, gross motor, and communication/language skills via the Creative Curriculum and Read It Once Again programs. The primary purpose of the PIC is to prepare students for the coming school-aged programs. Skills such as sitting in a chair, remaining with the group during instruction, communicating wants and needs, transitioning throughout the classroom, and following classroom routines/rules are the areas of daily emphasis. Peer students are also chosen for the PIC to provide age-appropriate modeling. PIC uses the Teaching Strategies assessment, Behavior and Emotional Screening System (BESS), and IEP progress reports to assess students' readiness for the next grade level. Adaptations and modifications to the PIC program have met the challenges posed by COVID-19. The use of social stories has supported the students' adjustment to their COVID environment. These scenarios present social situations and the appropriate behaviors and responses. The PIC teachers have redesigned communication and behavior lessons for social distancing greetings, wearing a mask, washing hands, safe spacing in the classroom, and sanitizing. A virtual PIC option is also available.

The CD program serves qualifying 4-year-olds with skills deficiencies and prepares them for kindergarten. We believe that a child's social and emotional readiness at this age outweighs academic readiness. Accordingly, the CD program develops a child's love for learning by providing activities and an environment capturing his/her interest, thus helping them be appropriately engaged, curious, and independent during the following kindergarten year. These pre-kindergartners become accustomed to the demands of a full 7-hour school day and are taught persistence, confidence, and self-care skills. The program also provides academic basics such as knowledge of the alphabet and foundational mathematical concepts like shapes, colors, and sorting.

Our kindergarten balanced literacy instruction includes Open Court Phonics and guided reading and writing workshops. The math curriculum features the hands-on, manipulative-based Bridges curriculum. To meet the challenges posed by COVID 19, students are safely managed in small learning "bubble" groups and virtual classes are offered for families preferring at-home instruction. The entire BHE early childhood staff from PIC to 1st grade engages in regular vertical articulation to address curriculum continuity and monitor student progress over these three years to ensure that all rising 1st graders are well-prepared.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Related arts teachers at BHE view themselves as playing a supportive, yet vital role in students' academic and affective development. These "Special Areas" offered to all students one day a week are: Visual Arts, Library, Music, Technology Lab, and Physical Education. This daily 40-minute period provides time and a variety of opportunities for students to explore their interests and talents while integrating lessons that support classroom content. Whether it is a music unit on the science of sound, a library unit on research skills, or an art lesson on perspective and angles, our related arts faculty works as a team to support the core curriculum.

These teachers have great impact as they serve all of the students and teachers. In response to COVID-19 restrictions, the team has adjusted procedures and protocols to keep students safe but maintained the related arts experience and adventure. During the spring 2020 school closure, daily Zoom videos were disseminated to the students emphasizing engagement and fun activities with emotional well-being taking the forefront. Our librarian/media teacher, thanks to her strong technological skills, played a pivotal role by directing “on the fly” training of staff in virtual platforms. She also produced daily Zoom TV shows that the entire school community came to depend on to keep us connected. The first quarter of the 2020-21 school year mandated that the related-arts teachers “travel” to the home rooms where students stayed for the entire day according to health safety guidelines. Despite these restrictions, the students welcomed these special area times and thrived in the diversion and variety. Plexiglass was then installed throughout the building to include all special area rooms and all computer workstations. This allows for controlled class movement yet requires extra accommodations for hygiene protocols for each class period rotation, such as sanitizing seating areas and hand sanitizing upon arrival. Music class, for example, now relies upon instrumental music rather than singing. Some humming is used in addition to solfege which are hand signals that correlate to different pitches. The library allows students to browse, but returned books are quarantined for a week based upon the recommendations of the ALA. Library collection development has been modified to include more e-books and more copies of popular physical books to prevent hold lists from getting too long. In art, each grade level uses different materials during weekly lessons to minimize any cross-contamination of materials. Physical Education sanitizes equipment between class periods. When the weather allows, our P.E. teachers maximize the outdoor spaces. Sportsmanship, team-accountability, and personal fitness remain fundamental aspects of all physical education lessons.

Despite pandemic restrictions, BHE related arts courses continue to promote a positive environment. Social emotional learning is regularly implemented across all special area lessons. Most importantly, students can explore their interests and thrive in ways that might not typically be emphasized in the traditional curriculum. Our librarian recruits students for the student-produced school news TV show to boost their confidence and school spirit. Beyond standard literacy and library skills lessons, students can participate in coding and computer science activities as the librarian is a member of the district’s Tinker Tub cohort. Further, music and art teachers work with older students outside of class to prepare them to audition for the district’s arts magnet middle school.

When one looks at the Profile of the SC Graduate, the special areas at BHE provide support in students’ development in the many areas necessary to become college-, career-, and life-ready. Our related arts help develop world class skills: creativity and innovation (art and music), collaboration and teamwork (PE), and communication, information, media, and technology (library and computer lab) for all, but especially for students whose strengths may not be in solely the academic areas.

3. Academic Supports:

Continual progress monitoring allows BHE to target instruction and interventions. Support is provided for students performing both above and below grade level. Our MTSS team meets weekly to identify student performance deficits, address concerns, and to design strategies to reach students whose data points do not show individual growth. Specialized teachers provide enriched instruction for gifted and talented students while home room, resource, and intervention teachers provide remediation for struggling students.

The Gifted and Talented (SAIL) program fosters in each qualifying student a desire for excellence, compassion for others, and a sense of individual responsibility to self, the school, the community, and a changing society. The SAIL program challenges and stimulates identified Academically Gifted and Talented (GT) students in grades 3-5 by delivering a teaching approach that enriches and accelerates the learning of the core curriculum. Students have opportunities for intellectual stimulation through group interaction with others of similar academic abilities and a curriculum of experiences and activities outside the limits of the regular classroom. The teaching strategies and assessments strengthen reasoning skills, critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving.

Research-based curriculum units including Mentoring Mathematical Minds, William and Mary, and the Junior Great Books challenge, extend, and enrich GT students' progress.

Five continents and thirteen different languages are represented at BHE. Our English language learners (ELLs) range from complete newcomers to the United States to students who are nearly fluent in English and include families from a variety of socio-economic groups. Students are placed into mainstream classes with their English-speaking peers and work with our dedicated English as a Second Language (ESOL) teacher in a pull-out/small group format. All teachers use initial language proficiency screener data to design appropriate learning tasks and to help differentiate instruction. Our ELLs are taught to create comprehension and meaning by using realia and manipulatives. Vocabulary used in the native language is previewed, wait time is respected, and body language cues are encouraged.

BHE prioritizes support and interventions for students scoring below the 25th percentile on MAP and FastBridge benchmark diagnostic assessments. Accordingly, it is the achievement gaps that receive the majority of our focus. The greatest discrepancies are found in student outcomes for our African-American students relative to the White students. On average, African-American students score 30% or more below their White peers in all academic areas. While they are indeed consistently identified for support by our MTSS data reviews, their over-representation in these remediation groups presents our greatest challenge and demands the predominance of our attention and efforts. Part-time academic interventionists are funded by the PTA to serve these students with intensive small group instruction three days a week. Home room teachers tailor individualized software remediation study programs and conference more regularly with parents of these students. The after-school program extends need-based "scholarships" and operates homework assistance clubs. BHE will continue to increase time and resources in addressing our achievement gaps.

In resource classrooms, teachers support students with IEPs through programs like LetterLand, Reading Mastery, and Corrective Reading. Phonics is taught using a story-based approach where students become more fluent and accurate readers through instruction in the essential elements of early reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. For our special education students, intensive formative progress monitoring determines the IEP goals. FastBridge and MAP data is used to group all students for targeted intervention. These assessments utilize curriculum-based measures and computer-adaptive tests for reading, math, and social emotional behavior while delivering actionable reports so that teachers can adjust timely data-driven support. BHE is also fortunate to have a behavior support teacher to assist all students and the faculty. Our literacy teacher works with small groups of identified students using Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) by Fountas and Pinnell, CCLI (Charleston County Schools Literacy Initiative), Language Live, and Spire. These programs are designed to adapt strategies for small group settings, develop metacognition skills, and produce independent readers.

COVID-19 has challenged our means to provide support services to our students, but the staff have adapted. Supplementary PDFs and audio versions of lessons are made available while modifications are made on quizzes, tests, and classwork. Instructional materials are also now accessible in the Canvas platform to include prioritizing assignments and reducing the amount of work. Due to the pandemic impact, almost all students are now in need of some form of extra academic attention. In response, we revisit, reinforce, and reteach more than ever before, school wide.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Positivity is tangible throughout the school day across the BHE building. It is our relationships that energize our entire school community. However, strong and supportive relationships whether they are student to student, student to staff, or school to home must be fostered and recognized daily. Healthy, thoughtful interactions are explicitly taught, modeled, and cultivated via the core home room relationships, as well as, formal initiatives such as our PBIS system, regular MTSS intervention analysis and the Second Step Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum.

Staff members make a point of sending home “positive” messages to parents about their children to build trust and convey sincerity. We frame learning as a collaboration among the student, the teacher, and the home. Home room learning communities are the foundation of BHE success as teachers proactively communicate and stay connected with parents. Our teachers are invested in their students’ growth and recognize that only through an open, two-way partnership with parents can student progress be attained. Additionally, student confidence is bolstered by many opportunities to participate in the school day like performances, presentations, work displays, and recognitions. These allow individuals to find success and fulfillment even in areas where they may not be at their academic strongest.

Beyond the classroom, the student-run TV program features individual and group efforts that reinforce our PBIS program by promoting and modeling the school-wide S.T.A.R. expectations. These positive behaviors are the established norm throughout the building, at lunch, during recess, at dismissal, and on school buses. Even PTA fundraising events focus on cooperation and participation, not victory or affluence. During this COVID-19 period, the Second Step SEL program’s online resources were expanded and have been invaluable in distance learning settings. Responsible student health safety practices are also reinforced through promotion and recognition. These accolades are heard on the end of the day PA announcements and are highly sought after. This newest “shout out” initiative fits right in with our culture of celebrating effort and awareness across the school day whether it be educational or behavioral. Formally, these behaviors are also recognized during the quarterly Kiwanis "Terrific Kids" program assemblies, as well as, a monthly character trait focus. BHE students excel because of our broad expectation to “engage” actively in the entire school day’s social experience.

Accordingly, BHE students “want” to be at school and be involved. Those struggling to connect are quickly identified for support such as guidance groups, BackPack Buddies, mentors, and the pre-middle school prep club. BHE students strive and grow as a result of our conscious, explicit efforts to build and maintain healthy interpersonal connections. The student day at BHE includes fun, camaraderie, collegiality, friendships, esteem-building, group goals, and high expectations for all. This is evidenced by our school’s SC School Report Card surveys which report greater than 90% of students, parents, and teachers are satisfied with the learning environment, the social and physical environment, and school-home relations.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

BHE recognizes that our parents and community support are essential to student and school success. Students, staff members, and families from all socioeconomic backgrounds depend on this encouragement and these resources more now than ever. We employ a variety of strategies to collaborate with families and community members. The Charleston area is home to many influential businesses and our school benefits significantly from strong relationships with them. Our student success in the areas of academics, social and emotional learning, and physical health are positively impacted by the numerous community programs available.

The Mount Pleasant Fire Department Station 2 next door and our hometown baseball team, the Charleston RiverDogs read aloud to classes regularly and virtually. This encourages a love of reading and is always a great source of excitement for even our reluctant readers. The Rotary Club provides a new dictionary every year to each 3rd grader. Our Gifted and Talented program is fortunate to partner with employees of The

Boeing Company who contribute their knowledge and matching funds to promote classroom STEM projects.

Social and emotional support are offered through the I-Beam literacy program which provides community mentors to students beginning in second grade and continuing throughout the middle school years. These relationships have been a source of continual support throughout the Covid-19 challenges with mentors staying connected with letters of encouragement to students. BHE staff provide personal support to struggling students through our BHE Buddies program where staff pair with students needing encouragement throughout the year. Our Backpack Buddies program provides students experiencing food insecurity with nutritious, kid-friendly, pre-packed meals for the weekends. Our school nurse coordinates this program and many families contribute to ensure its success.

Health and fitness programs are offered on-site thanks to community partners. The Girls on the Run running club teaches nutrition, health, and exercise. Adjacent to the school is our town's recreation department which provides swimming lessons to our kindergarten and first grade students. Our region is surrounded by water and this community partnership proves essential to keeping our students safe and healthy. The recreation department also allows BHE to use the gymnasium and athletic fields daily while seasonal extracurricular basketball and tennis teams are also community sponsored.

Our School Improvement Council (SIC), made up of parents, staff, and community members serves as a monthly advisory committee in all aspects of school improvement. A very involved Parent Teacher Association (PTA) works closely with the SIC and community to identify needs and fund supplemental staffing, equipment, materials, and programs valued at \$100,000 annually. Accordingly, regular school spirit nights are held by local restaurants and businesses to raise money for the PTA which maintains greater than a dozen formal business sponsors annually.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, increased phone callouts, emails, and texts from the principal and teachers have been vital to maintaining current communication. Parents also stay up to date via the school and PTA Facebook pages as well as the teacher managed digital Canvas and Parent Portal platforms. Teachers hold even more parent conferences virtually giving an opportunity for families to gain a comprehensive understanding of their child's accomplishments and how best to provide support in the home. Our non-English speaking parents are reached through the "Talking Points" app which translates important news into the family's home language. The school counselor encourages parents and students to meet with her virtually and utilizes the Second Step SEL program's home-link to disseminate supportive guidance and lessons. A social worker is available for extended personal assistance. These established collaborations between the school and community have been necessarily accelerated and expanded to keep our families engaged.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Educator quality is the most important factor in student achievement. The South Carolina State Department of Education certifies the BHE faculty as "Highly Qualified". This expertise is on display daily in a multitude of ways. The most recent example has been the staff response to the difficult distance learning transition, as well as, the in-person restrictions. Our teachers continue to counter these challenges by assertively seeking training in novel strategies, learning new platforms like Canvas, and accessing new curriculum resources such as Zearn math. During this COVID-19 environment, teachers asked for and depended even more on professional development (PD). Our veteran instructional coach designs and coordinates regular high-quality PD. The leadership team identifies needs and taps in-house resources among the veteran expert staff highlighted by our librarian who was recognized by her peers as our Teacher of the Year. All BHE teachers have been trained in Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments which is a vital tool in providing quality reading instruction. Our kindergarten teaching assistants have also been trained in F & P to conduct intervention. Text Dependent Analysis has been a primary focus of PD for our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers. Several experts have been scheduled to train teachers for this specific part of the SC Ready state writing assessment. BHE was fortunate to have master teachers from Core Curriculum Coaching present several comprehensive trainings on readers and writers workshops. Other trainings have focused on read-alouds with Accountable Talk and how to extend student thinking to a deeper level to

improve comprehension. Our PD expectations invite all consultants to model in classrooms, then debrief so that teachers can ask questions, reflect, and refine their instructional strategies.

Adaptive Digital Content (ADC) has been invaluable during this distance learning period as the at-home components further strengthen our home/school learning connections. As the BHE faculty has become more familiar and effective in employing ADC, it has been necessary to evaluate the multiple programs in search of maximal impact on student outcomes. Intensive ADC training and refresher sessions are continually scheduled throughout the year. For ELA, the Achieve 3000, Smarty Ants, and Lexia programs have been implemented. These literacy-based computer programs provide individualized exercises for our CD students to 5th graders and informative reports for teachers. In Math, the IXL, Dreambox, and ALEKS programs extend our balanced numeracy instruction. The independent practice, differentiated exercises, and analytical reports available with these programs promote individualized student growth. BHE will implement the even more comprehensive iReady program for ELA and Math school-wide next year now that our faculty is astute in ADC utilization.

Belle Hall volunteered to pilot the interactive Bridges math curriculum with its accompanying PD four years ago which improved student achievement results. Recently, we proactively committed to the transformative Ongoing Assessment Project (OGAP) strategies that emphasize how students learn math concepts. Soon, all BHE teachers will have completed the OGAP training. For literacy, the Open Court curriculum implementation began this year for kindergarten to 2nd grade. In person PD has not been possible due to COVID-19, yet we have utilized virtual platforms to assist teachers and scheduled Zoom articulation meetings with faculty at other schools. Overall, we have not allowed the COVID environment to hinder valuable PD in new strategies and materials as we always seek to improve our best instructional practices.

4. School Leadership:

BHE is fortunate to have predominantly veteran staff and leadership personnel. Our greatest daily resource is each other, whether it be our long standing relationships, our stable community, or the expertise of the experienced, expert staff. Accordingly, all BHE stakeholders are encouraged to “lead” and contribute their “voice” proactively on behalf of student development. The principal promotes collaborative leadership throughout the school community in order to elicit contributions from the diverse constituency’s talent base. Monthly, a faculty senate of elected grade level teacher representatives meets to brainstorm ideas, disseminate information, and collect feedback. The Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) team meets weekly to analyze formative and summative performance data with a focus on student achievement and remediation. This team plays a vital role, but never more so than now in this on-going COVID-19 period when daily monitoring remains necessary to support students and families struggling with connectivity, engagement, and welfare issues. Proactive outreach is still needed to give families a personal and educational lifeline and will remain necessary as we deal with the inevitable COVID-19 learning gaps for a few years to come. Distance learning continues to operate at all grade levels and even across multiple schools requiring vigilant efforts in supporting teachers and students operating in these remote learning formats. Now more than ever, we depend on our teachers to act proactively according to each learner’s needs.

Leadership also resides formally with our School Improvement Council (SIC), student council and administrative team. The SIC consists of staff, parents, and community members who meet monthly to discuss and review school programs and opportunities. The 4th & 5th grade student council members model responsibility, pride, and compassion to the entire student body and actively participate in community service. The administrative team including administrators, instructional coach, guidance counselor, school psychologist, and nurse meets weekly to assess program effectiveness, review data-driven progress monitoring, and identify students in need. This combination of distributive leadership and formal managerial systems serves to acknowledge all members of our school community as leaders who are expected to respond decisively in support of student development and well-being. The principal proactively and explicitly fosters collective teacher efficacy, shared decision-making, and high expectations for all students’ achievement. At BHE, we value kindness, responsibility, and open-mindedness as we challenge each other to serve, contribute, and lead in support of the continuous improvement of our students and entire school community.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The BHE faculty has addressed diversity, equity, and inclusion for the past 30 years by acknowledging the school's and community's cultural values and academic needs. By teaching students about the contributions that all cultures bring to society, our teachers encourage the students to show respect for diversity by promoting critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity beyond the school building. We believe that recognizing racial and economic diversity within the classroom produces greater student outcomes, as well. For example, the assistant principal coordinates a diverse pre-middle school prep club to support the students' transition to middle school. These students are offered one-on-one academic tutoring and lessons in social and emotional competency skills. The prep club brings a diverse group of students together and enlists staff and parents in the various social and academic activities of the club.

With the many social justice movements expanding across the nation, the teachers have used children's literature books to introduce the students to the issues of bias, discrimination, and social injustice. The students are able to research topics concerning individuals who are different and those who stood up to injustice. Our teachers emphasize the importance of reading and books as tools in the classroom to address social and cultural events that impact the school, neighborhoods, and community. Social justice platforms are introduced to teach anti-bias lessons and how bullying can be addressed on institutional and individual levels. The morning news show plays a major role in providing a forum for the students to promote diversity. The students introduce news stories on current events, viewpoints, and backgrounds while being encouraged to share examples of individuals who have stood up to injustices and prevailed.

BHE takes pride in the recent community outreach partnership with the Safe Haven after-school program located in the historic African-American Snowden Community across the street. This initiative focused on math and reading tutoring. The school provided the program with supplementary curriculum materials. This local community outreach program worked with the parents and school by sending a representative to parent conferences to advocate for the families. The partnership is an example of how the school bonds with this particular community in recognizing Snowden as one of the oldest Gullah-Geechee communities formed after The Civil War by freed slaves.

BHE strives to ensure access to the entire curriculum, all educational resources, and every enrichment activity for all of our students. We take responsibility for the success and inclusion of all our exceptional children groups from our English Language Learners to our students receiving special services to those of us qualifying for subsidized meals support. We deliberately build understanding and acceptance in the entire student body and celebrate our differences and strengths with school-wide recognitions like Autism Awareness and Downs Syndrome Days. In order for our diversity to remain a collective strength, we must continue conscious efforts to welcome and nurture participation and contributions from all the backgrounds represented in our school, community, and world.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Belle Hall Elementary School's reputation is one of “Rigor and Relationships” and you will hear these two terms mentioned often from staff and parents alike. This renowned intensity has been a point of pride for our school community for over 30 years. Our high expectations are for all students to learn, grow, and succeed. Students are expected to put forth extra effort, work together, and aim for their personal targets. Parents understand that much will be asked of them and their children on the journey to success, so they partner with the school in support of this collective goal. A hidden strength of BHE is the depth of the staff buy-in which is best exemplified by an inspiring statistic. Over two-thirds of our teachers had their personal children attend BHE; meaning chances are that the BHE teacher in front of you is also a prideful BHE parent!

COVID-19 limitations remain to this day and challenge our “Rigor and Relationships” theme. In response, the staff has become quickly proficient in distance education technologies from Canvas to Google Classroom to Zoom. Weekly newsletters to parents, principal’s phone callouts, texts, and wellness checks have increased in regularity to bolster connectivity. For struggling families, our outreach is now daily as teachers, counselors, and administrators make immediate contact with families to offer remedy like social service resources, MiFi routers, electronic device repair, safe home visits, and work packet exchanges.

As the current school year has progressed through several “phase-in” stages admitting limited amounts of students back to in-person school seats, health safety protocols have continued to hinder best practices. Plexi-glass shields constrain cooperative grouping, social distancing limits interactive work, and regular hand sanitizing curtails sharing of materials and manipulatives work. Today in contrast to pre-pandemic demographics, our overall enrollment lost 10% to home-schooling or private school settings, and we continue to serve 10% remotely. Despite all these limitations, BHE’s traditionally high expectations and collaborative foundation will again prove to be our greatest assets; “Rigor and Relationships.” We will depend on and succeed because we are historically “a family-friendly neighborhood school located in a school-friendly community!”

Our established relationships maintain the daily rigor in safety, academics, and healthy behaviors. Staying true to ourselves will be vital in combating the unavoidable learning gaps coming in the 2021-22 school year. We are determined to “catch up” all of our students in less than two years time because our student growth goals will not waver. Unfortunately, we expect that next year will bring the same restrictions on school visitors and require the self-contained homeroom bubbles. However, in collaboration with our community, we will continue to support our students in becoming confident and curious learners who meet their progress targets and advance to middle and high school well-prepared for academic and career success. Our “Learning, A Life-Long Journey” school motto serves to focus our intense and inclusive common efforts that give our students a foundation in becoming fulfilled and contributing citizens.