

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
**A Public School - 13ARI**

School Type (Public Schools): Charter  Title 1  Magnet  Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. DeLanna Lacy

Official School Name: Ellen Smith Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 1601 S. Donaghey  
Conway, AR 72034-8634

County: FAULKNER State School Code Number\*: 2301003

Telephone: (501) 450-4815 E-mail: lacyd@conwayschools.net

Fax: (501) 450-6621 Web site/URL: http://eses.conwayschools.org/

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. Greg Murry Superintendent e-mail: murryg@conwayschools.net

District Name: Conway School District District Phone: (501) 450-4800

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mrs. Susan McNabb

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

*\*Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
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

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All data are the most recent year available.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district   9   Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
   5   Middle/Junior high schools  
   1   High schools  
   0   K-12 schools  
    15  Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure:  8448

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:  Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school:   3
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	59	40	99
1	70	41	111
2	46	54	100
3	38	58	96
4	41	51	92
5	0	0	0
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	0	0	0
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>			498

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
3 % Asian  
23 % Black or African American  
14 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
60 % White  
0 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 11%

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

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	44
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	14
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	58
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	545
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.11
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	11

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 10%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 48

Number of non-English languages represented: 9

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 43%  
 Total number of students who qualify: 216

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 13%  
 Total number of students served: 42

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

<u>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	<u><b>Full-Time</b></u>	<u><b>Part-Time</b></u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>22</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>43</u>	<u>8</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

23:1

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

	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>
Daily student attendance	98%	91%	91%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university \_\_\_\_\_ %

Enrolled in a community college \_\_\_\_\_ %

Enrolled in vocational training \_\_\_\_\_ %

Found employment \_\_\_\_\_ %

Military service \_\_\_\_\_ %

Other \_\_\_\_\_ %

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_ **0%**

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

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Ellen Smith, the first elementary school in Conway, Arkansas serves a diverse population of students, and lies on the southern border of town, also known as the City of Colleges. With 545 students and 49 instructional and support staff, the tradition of building character along with a strong academic foundation is what makes Ellen Smith stand out among the nine elementary schools in Conway. Our commitment to educating “*every child, every day, whatever it takes*” is evident in the strong teamwork and leadership that has been continuous throughout Ellen Smith’s history. We have seen numerous changes in our demographics throughout the years. However, what has not changed is the ongoing determination of our teachers who continually providing precision teaching to meet the needs of every child. That being said, our mission statement is as follows: "Ellen Smith Elementary School, in a shared responsibility with family and community, is committed to implementing a variety of strategies to meet the individual needs of all students so that they will reach their highest potential and become responsible and productive citizens."

Traditions have been established throughout the years to build community, character, and stability within our school family. To make this happen, everyone works together in a collaborative effort to organize non-traditional learning experiences, taking full advantage of the knowledge and expertise of our community. One important tradition at Ellen Smith is the student-led character education assemblies conducted each month, which focuses on a different character trait that has been introduced in each classroom. For example, the trait for December was generosity. Students exemplified generosity throughout the month by bringing hats, scarves, and gloves to hang on the Ellen Smith generosity tree. These items were then presented to local charities at the December assembly.

Enrichment day is another tradition held annually to expand learning experiences on topics such as health and wellness, cultural diversity, and Arkansas history. Students gain knowledge from experts who represent organizations such as the Arkansas Educational Television Network, Faulkner County Extension Service, Arkansas National Guard, University of Central Arkansas, Central Baptist College and Hendrix College. Our community and school come together immersing students in a day full of fun and academically-rich learning. Ranging from monthly student-led character education assemblies, to a day of enrichment focusing on health and wellness, our students are learning life skills that will enable them to become adults with strong character and healthy lifestyles. This is enhanced by our school wide reading day where, once again, community leaders work hand in hand with teachers exemplifying “Leaders are Readers” to foster the passion of reading for enjoyment and knowledge. Character education assemblies, Enrichment Day, and School-wide Reading Day are only a few of the many traditions carried out by Ellen Smith to enrich the lives of our students.

To support academic success for all students, the implementation of WatchDOGS (Dads of Great Students) has enhanced our learning environment and strengthened our campus security. This national, educational initiative was first implemented by Ellen Smith. For the past nine years this program has not only impacted the safety and security of our campus, but provided academic support to students in need. In a predominately female environment the presence of a male role model is a welcome sight to everyone, especially those students in desperate need of a “father figure”. Another strength includes teacher-student relationships fostered through extra-curricular activities, such as: Art Club, Chess Club, Jump Rope Team, Tiger Tones Choir, and Little Dribblers. In addition, our school cultivates parent rapport through various activities, including an annual Parent Teacher Organization Chili Cook-off, volunteer tea, and home visits prior to the first day of school and throughout the year to nurture a strong home-school connection.

In conclusion, Ellen Smith has received numerous accomplishments that deem us worthy of the highly-esteemed title of a National Blue Ribbon School. Ellen Smith sets a standard of excellence, as a High Achieving “Overall” School in the state of Arkansas. In 2012, Ellen Smith ranked first in literacy, tenth in

mathematics, and fourth overall in the state based on the Arkansas Benchmark Exam. It is also noteworthy that in 2010, ninety-nine percent of our third grade students performed proficient or advanced in mathematics on the aforementioned assessment. Ellen Smith remains a top performing school as our expectations for students remain high regardless of our demographic. Our professional demeanor and passion for teaching is known and respected throughout the community. Knowledge and relationships forged at Ellen Smith do not end at the elementary level but last a lifetime. *“Every child, every day, whatever it takes...”*

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

A. The Arkansas Comprehensive Testing and Accountability Program is a comprehensive system that includes high academic standards, professional development, student assessment and accountability. The QUALS Early Learning Inventory is administered to kindergarten students at the beginning of each school year. It is a diagnostic questionnaire designed to measure six key areas important to academic achievement in early childhood. The Stanford Achievement Test 10 (2008), Metropolitan Achievement Test 8 (2009-2010), and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (2011) are administered to assess student achievement in kindergarten. The Metropolitan Achievement Test 8 assessment measures student success in reading, mathematics, language, and vocabulary. Instruction and intervention for kindergarten students is based on data from the QUALS and Metropolitan Achievement Test 8. The Stanford Achievement Test 10 is a norm-referenced exam assessing student achievement in first and second grades. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is a norm-referenced assessment measuring reading comprehension, vocabulary, language arts, and mathematics.

The state of Arkansas has established cut scores for those grade levels. Academic Improvement Plans and Intensive Reading Interventions are developed for students failing to meet these cut scores. Academic Improvement Plans and Intensive Reading Interventions are academic plans containing a detailed description of remedial instruction used in addressing each student's area(s) of deficiency. All third and fourth grade students are assessed in the areas of literacy and mathematics utilizing the Arkansas Augmented Benchmark Examination that is both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced. Performance levels for student achievement on the Benchmark exam are advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. Students scoring proficient and advanced demonstrate solid academic performance for the grade tested and meet the state standards for academic achievement. Academic Improvement Plans and Intensive Reading Interventions are developed for students scoring basic or below and need support to meet state proficiency levels in either literacy or mathematics.

B. Trends and analysis of disaggregated Benchmark data over the last 5 years shows while academic scores fluctuated minimally, growth is evident by the majority of scores being ninety percent or above.

First and second grade students continued to increase in their level of proficiency from 2009 through 2011. Data shows the most growth for both grades during 2011-2012. Adding a fifth first grade teacher and increasing the aggressiveness of instruction and assessment with collaboration meetings contributed to these gains.

Literacy performance showed the greatest increase of students performing proficient and advanced from 2008 to 2009 with a gain of 17% in third grade. The following two years produced an increase in literacy scores ending in 2012 with 97% of students performing proficient and advanced.

Fourth grade demonstrated the greatest gains in student achievement in the area of Literacy from 2008 (83%) to 2012 (98%) with an increase of 15% over the five year span including a slight dip of 3% in 2010. It is our belief this growth can be attributed to improved reading instruction by utilizing weekly collaboration meetings, implementing SMART boards, Phonetic Connections, and the Read-to-Me book program for a home-school connection.

There was an increase of 3% from 2008 to 2009 in third grade math which can be attributed to before school tutoring with an emphasis in skills relating to open response and measurement. The consistently strong scores were scattered among the top quartile (2009: 97%, 2010: 100%, 2011: 99%, 2012: 97%). From data disaggregation, a weakness in measurement was determined, and a consultant from the learning cooperative joined in a partnership with the faculty that provided a better understanding of math

concepts that enhanced teachers' instruction. In 2010, 100% of third grade students scored proficient or advanced in mathematics.

Analysis of the five years of data in fourth grade math show scores remained in the top 10 percent with the exception of 2010. After analyzing the dip that occurred (2009: 97%, 2010: 89%, 2011: 96%), staff members implemented targeted strategies including the departmentalization of fourth grade.

The significant improvement in both mathematics and literacy scores is a result of Ellen Smith's data-driven decision making and differentiated instruction. Due to the student's high performance, Ellen Smith was named as an all-around Exemplary High Performing School by the National Center for Educational Achievement.

According to the third grade assessment data for the 2011-2012 school year, there was a significant achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students scoring proficient or advanced in math. African American students, in comparison with Caucasian, demonstrated a 10% deficit. We aligned our efforts with City of Hope, a community outreach program, to build personal relationships with these students and their families sharing instructional strategies, methods, and materials for them to use in their tutoring. We began the year on a bus tour of neighborhoods that house our students. This tour helped teachers understand the variety of cultural differences in our students and their families. The teachers prepare students for taking the Augmented Benchmark by offering Benchmark Camp which focuses on test-taking strategies in order to close the achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students.

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

Ellen Smith uses formal and informal assessment data to make appropriate decisions about instruction and student learning. Students engage in statewide testing using the Augmented Benchmark exam, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), QELI, and/or SAT-10. Teachers work collaboratively to disaggregate and analyze each strand of released data in order to identify strengths and areas of need to make strategic decisions regarding student achievement and classroom instruction. Analysis of data allows for reflection and problem solving around targeted areas to accelerate further student performance.

An Annual Report to the Public is conducted at our school, to inform parents, students, and community members of assessment results. Ellen Smith's scores are published in the local newspaper.

Using information from The National Office for Research on Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES), Academic Improvement Plans (AIP) and Intensive Reading Interventions (IRI) are developed and implemented to support students identified as performing below state proficiency levels. Plans address specific literacy and math deficits for each identified student, and intervention and instruction can be tailored to meet individual needs. Classroom teachers meet with parents/guardians of students receiving an AIP and/or IRI to discuss the school plan as well as a plan for additional academic support at home.

The Conway School District is a member of The Learning Institute (TLI). This program provides progress monitoring assessments in mathematics and literacy that are aligned with Benchmark exams and district curricula. Results from the assessments provide immediate feedback that allows teachers to monitor and adjust instruction efficiently. These point-in-time assessments are analyzed and discussed in team collaboration meetings, and decisions are made for future instruction. In addition, district-created rubrics are used systematically to assess student performance. Students and parents are able to view and discuss results of TLI module exams, and questions and concerns can be addressed at any point throughout the year and/or at the two scheduled conference times. District UbD's (Understanding by Design) are used to guide teachers in curriculum and instruction, as well as in assessment pieces, such as weekly quizzes, ongoing skills examinations, and performance-based evaluations. Students are also assessed through pre/post-tests in mathematics and literacy to show growth over time.

Ellen Smith teachers utilize other forms of daily and weekly assessments to monitor understanding of the curriculum. As students work in guided reading groups and/or literature discussion groups, teachers informally assess progress of fluency, strategies, and comprehension through written anecdotal notes to address strengths and weaknesses. Running records are administered periodically to monitor cueing systems being used or neglected when reading. Writer's Workshop provides a plethora of teaching opportunities derived from student evaluation. Through observation and conferences, prompting and scaffolding are given to students based on their individual needs. Teachers use anecdotal notes, writing rubrics, and conferencing to plan future lessons.

In math, students are observed via performance-based tasks, and interventions are provided as deemed necessary. Tasks may include the use of manipulatives, small group re-teaching, and/or remediation to support student learning. Students performing below standards are monitored more frequently to guide Tier I intervention. For students not making sufficient progress with Tier I interventions, a Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) meets using assessment data from the classroom to create an academic plan of action to assist that student. If it is determined that additional support is needed, Tier II interventions will be added. This layered approach ensures that each child receives maximum opportunities for success. The Tier I and Tier II teachers meet monthly or as needed to analyze formal and informal assessments and modify and/or continue the existing prescriptive academic plan. Through assessment, students who are exceeding standards in the classroom are recommended by their teacher to receive enrichment classes provided by the gifted and talented teacher. These students are assessed and evaluated through performance-based tasks.

Using assessment data, Ellen Smith creates and utilizes an Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) that focuses on areas in need of student growth. The plan allows teachers to reflect and act on new information gleaned from various modes of assessment. Data-driven decisions are made in response to individual student needs. Teachers incorporate this vital component into daily curriculum and instruction.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

One of the most vital pieces of teacher training is the sharing of research-based strategies with other educators. This practice develops a community of practitioners who are continually refining their craft and developing a common understanding of new knowledge and skills. Ellen Smith Elementary takes great pride in sharing the knowledge of its staff at the state, district, and national levels. Faculty members have presented a variety of professional development workshops to share strategies regarding instructional methods in content areas, technology as well as parental involvement and technology.

Mary Hart, Interventionist, serves as a professor for the University of Central Arkansas training pre-service teachers in the Masters of Teaching program through a class titled *Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Difficulties*. This class is designed to help educators problem-solve through student difficulties in the reading process using individualized case studies. Erin Stanton, Speech Pathologist, delivered content to speech pathologists and special educators in the Conway School District on incorporating Social Stories™ for Autistic students who struggle with social skills. Nicole Loftis, Instructional Facilitator, has led educators both in district and throughout the state in a variety of professional development. At the district level, she has shared a presentation on integrating technology throughout the curriculum. During this class, she helped educators explore ways to incorporate technology into the Common Core State Standards. Ms. Loftis has also shared a seminar for educators across the state regarding parental involvement techniques and research that confirms how parental involvement directly impacts student achievement. Alisa Paladino, Interventionist, has been featured in many DVDs shared with educators across the nation modeling assisted writing, comprehension focus groups, and small group intervention: linking word study to reading and writing. In these videos, Mrs. Paladino shares literacy techniques and models the appropriate procedures for incorporating these strategies into the classroom. She has also presented these strategies at a variety of conferences including the Arkansas Reading Recovery & K-8 Comprehensive Literacy Conference (2010,2012) and North Central Arkansas Fall Child Care Conference (2012).

Ellen Smith has consistently scored within the top performing schools in both literacy and mathematics. Therefore, we have been an instrumental resource for other districts, who have sought our expertise in the pedagogy and techniques our teachers use within the classroom that have impacted student achievement. Several districts have sent educators to observe the teaching process and participate in panel discussions with administration, interventionists, teachers, and facilitators from Ellen Smith.

#### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

At Ellen Smith we pride ourselves in encouraging and maintaining parental and community involvement to promote student success and overall school improvement. In order for parents and the community to be actively involved in our academic environment, we feel they should have a strong sense of pride and ownership in our school. Ellen Smith uses several avenues to achieve this goal.

Each November, Ellen Smith invites up to seventy community leaders possessing a variety of professional backgrounds to our annual School Wide Reading Day. These guests read to multiple classrooms using grade appropriate texts and engage students in discussions and other activities pertaining to the text.

WatchDOGS is a program for any adult male role models invested in our school to foster student success by working directly with selected students from all grade levels. Each week we have an average of five to six volunteers read with students, help with additional work, and assist in maintaining a secure environment. This program allows opportunities for students to interact positively with male role models in a predominately female environment.

Ellen Smith partners with City of Hope Outreach (COHO), a local non-profit tutoring/mentoring program for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Each week, teachers email newsletters to the COHO liaison regarding the upcoming week's curriculum and events taking place at school. COHO Tutors prepare activities centered on each student's current academic objectives and assist with homework and class work as needed.

In an effort to promote student success and make the first day of school a smooth transition for both students and parents, Ellen Smith seeks community partners to kick off the beginning of each school year. Local agencies and organizations contribute school supplies, back packs, and other essential items, such as shoes, as needed. 2012 was another kick-off success as a result of Sandstone Realty partnering with Ellen Smith in an effort to help us get better acquainted with our new school population. This event includes a school supply give away, activities for students, and a meet and greet with teachers. Sandstone Real Estate Group has several volunteers from the community cook and pass out school supplies. Parents and students are given the opportunity to fellowship with other Ellen Smith parents and students before the school year officially "kicks off".

# PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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## 1. Curriculum:

The curriculum at Ellen Smith Elementary is researched based and aligned with Common Core. Each grade level paces and creates curriculum guided by *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins and McTighe). Our goal is to develop learners with character who meet and exceed in every standard so they will be prepared for college and the ever changing world of technology.

**Language Arts:** Students are instructed using research based methods that emphasize reading, writing, speaking & listening, language, and phonological and phonemic awareness. Teachers utilize strategies from Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas, Effective Literacy, Literacy Lab, and Phonetic Connections. In order to maintain a balanced literacy approach, teachers at Ellen Smith integrate all areas of language arts.

**Math:** Ellen Smith Elementary implements a standards based mathematics curriculum that encourages students to be problem solvers and to justify their thinking by sharing their strategies through math talks. All teachers are trained in Cognitively Guided Instruction and Extending Children's Mathematics. This approach builds a strong mathematical foundation enabling students to apply these skills in their daily life.

**Social Studies:** Our social studies standards are embedded into instruction through thematic literacy units. Students showcase the content through research based products. Extended learning activities are connected to historical texts while providing topics for our informational/explanatory writing and discussion.

**Science:** A variety of resources are used to stimulate students' natural curiosity in the area of science including 20% of hands on experiences. This inquiry based approach encourages students to investigate and problem-solve. Science lessons are embedded within math and language arts curricula.

**Technology:** Teachers differentiate their instruction and enhance student learning by embracing technology. Ellen Smith has a rich technological environment that supports our educational goals. The district and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) are proactive in purchasing technology to keep our school abreast of technological advances. Each classroom is equipped with the latest technology such as SMART Boards with In-focus projectors, document cameras, laptops, iPods, and sound field systems. Using these tools in conjunction with web-based instructional sites accessed in the computer lab students are able to build upon skill knowledge received in the classroom.

**Physical Education/Health/Nutrition:** For students to reach their highest potential, Ellen Smith is committed to helping each individual become responsible and productive citizens. Our physical education program enriches and promotes the health and fitness of our students. In second through fourth grades, tryouts are held for students who choose to participate in the Little Dribblers basketball team and Jump Rope team. These teams travel throughout our community performing at various athletic events. Our school was awarded a grant to enhance physical education, health, and nutrition programs.

**Music, Art, and Gifted & Talented:** Ellen Smith's Fine Art teachers promote the development of the whole child by promoting self-esteem, cultural exposure, creativity, emotional expression, and develop an appreciation of diversity. Musical experiences derived from Common Core curriculum are designed to extend learning by creating a deeper understanding of the elements of music. Through immersing students in art history, art production, and art appreciation students acquire a variety of content rich experiences that elaborate on the Common Core curriculum. The Gifted and Talented program emphasizes creativity, problem solving, and higher level thinking strategies that charge students to be in control of their own learning which enables them to reach their highest potential. All three areas continue the Ellen Smith philosophy "building success by building relationships" by connecting with students through school wide

music programs, Tiger Tones choir, art club, and chess club. These extracurricular activities allow students to interact across grade levels, compete with other students, and showcase talents triggered by dedicated and caring teachers.

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

In order to establish, maintain, and enrich cognition in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, Ellen Smith educators implement a balanced literacy approach. Students engage in rigorous reading and writing experiences throughout the day, such as read-alouds, independent and peer reading, shared reading, small-group guided reading, interactive writing, literature discussion groups, writer's workshop, as well as individual conferencing with the teacher. All classrooms utilize Phonetic Connections to aid in instruction of phonological and phonemic awareness and develop foundational skills for successful reading and writing.

Ellen Smith teachers rely on research-based practices to promote opportunities for success for all students. Through professional development, such as Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas, Effective Literacy, Comprehensive Literacy, and Literacy Lab, teachers gain additional knowledge and strategies in order to further develop skills of strong readers.

Educators enhance and adjust practices through professional book studies to monitor progress of all students, use data to drive instruction, track students approaching or below standards, and use Response to Intervention strategies (Tier I, Tier II, Tier III) to support struggling learners. For high performing students, instruction is differentiated through extensions, such as research performance based projects as well as a reading plan to meet the student's individual needs. Formal and informal assessments, such as running records, anecdotal notes, and module tests, are effective data pieces placed in an assessment notebook. This notebook helps teachers and administrators track progress of students in literacy during weekly collaboration meetings. Data-driven decisions for enrichment and/or gifted and talented opportunities, remediation, or Title I Intervention can be made effectively with this information. Through use of data that identifies various reading deficiencies, Title I Intervention specialists provide tailored literacy instruction for struggling students. Once the students' area(s) of weakness is identified, students are provided with intense small group or one-on-one instruction for 4-6 weeks, or until the identified areas are fully remediated. Throughout this time, parents are informed of student performance. Teachers provide parents with strategies and texts that can be utilized at home to improve the students' literacy skills. Coupled with classroom differentiated instruction, this layered approach accelerates student progress.

Ellen Smith teachers build solid foundations in reading and writing that promote the desire for lifelong learning. Teachers work diligently providing high-quality instruction that endorses a seamless transition to the secondary level of education. In doing so, students are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to compete in a local and global society.

## **3. Mathematics:**

In order to build a strong mathematical foundation, Ellen Smith uses a standards based approach to teach all mathematical strands: counting and cardinality, operations & algebraic thinking, numbers in operations in base ten & fractions, measurement and data, and geometry. Because our dedicated teachers always teach for mastery, the implementation of Common Core Math Standards was a smooth transition for our students. Our standards based curriculum is based on research that incorporates the sophisticated methods known as Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) and Extending Children's Mathematics (ECM). CGI and ECM challenge students to develop their numerical thinking for future studies and for becoming a skilled citizen.

Students acquire foundational mathematical skills by teachers implementing a standards based math curriculum. In order to create problem solvers, students are challenged through various mathematical concepts. Using these concepts, students become better communicators through math talks and by sharing

their strategies with partners, small groups, and the entire class. Students meeting and exceeding standards often present different ways of thinking that enlighten and inspire others. Through this cognitive thinking model, students use their higher order thinking to search for patterns, predict outcomes, record/ analyze data. This type of model allows students to choose the manipulatives that they want to use to solve problems. Their “toolbox” includes, but not limited to the following: unifix cubes, pattern blocks, judy clocks, fractions strips, solid figures, counters, money, rulers, scales, weights, and measuring tools. Technology offers support through calculators, Smart Boards, iPods, and many computer programs. Teachers send web links home to encourage parental involvement.

Students that fall below grade level standards receive Tier 1 intervention in the classroom through individual, small group, and leveled instruction to support their different learning modalities. Teachers modify and scaffold these learners in an effort to develop grade level independence by re-teaching and reassessing students that are below grade level in specific areas.

Our school community, including third and fourth grade teachers, support staff, community volunteers and WatchDOG Dads provide tutoring and individual assistance before and after school. Knowing the value of academic conversation and how it solidifies knowledge and understanding, teachers utilize peer tutoring/math buddies to create an environment of learning.

Realizing high achieving students require challenges, our teachers meet with these students to produce products that reflect higher levels of thinking within the students’ zone of proximal development. This allows teachers to extend learning to the evaluation level.

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

Ellen Smith Elementary School, in a shared responsibility with family and community, is committed to implementing a variety of strategies to meet the individual needs of all students so that they will reach their highest potential and become responsible and productive citizens. To achieve that, goal Ellen Smith’s physical education program provides many opportunities for students to participate actively in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

In 2012, Ellen Smith received a grant for \$21,184 sponsored by the Child Wellness Intervention Project from the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission. Being awarded this grant has presented the opportunity to expand further constructive changes in the school’s physical education environment to meet the individual needs of all students. Ellen Smith has been able to purchase equipment, which gives students knowledge of heart rate, BMI, anatomy, weight, and percent body fat. This builds a foundation for healthy living in order for all students to be able to participate in activities that aid in reducing childhood obesity.

The physical education curriculum at Ellen Smith is taught Kindergarten through fourth grade with emphasis on maintaining a moderate to vigorous intensity level while participating in age appropriate activities, exercises, or games to build cardio respiratory endurance. In order to enrich and promote the overall health and fitness of students, Ellen Smith has implemented additional physical education programs that encourage a home-school connection through participation. Through the Jump Rope team, an Ellen Smith tradition, second through fourth grade students are given the opportunity to try-out. Led by our physical education teacher, a committee of community volunteers chooses potential candidates. Throughout the year, the Jump Rope team practices three days a week on various routines that are performed at locations and events throughout our community. Another enrichment program in which students can participate is the Ellen Smith Little Dribblers. To promote participation of second through fourth grade students in Little Dribblers, the physical education teacher gives instruction to all students regarding the techniques of bouncing, catching, and dribbling the basketball. The knowledge acquired in Little Dribblers helps students sharpen skills necessary to participate in community activities, such as Boys and Girls Club and Upward Sports.

As a result of our physical education and extra activities, our students are motivated to be healthier and perform better academically and behaviorally. Ellen Smith is committed to helping all students acquire essential skills necessary to reach their highest potential.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

Educators at Ellen Smith recognize that all students are different and require varied teaching strategies to be successful in school. Our teachers modify and adapt instruction, materials, content, student projects and products. Assessments are designed to meet the learning needs of our students. Ellen Smith educators consider learning preferences, abilities, styles, and interests when planning classroom instruction.

Our educators use a variety of formative assessments to assess and identify students' strengths and areas of need so they can meet students at their current academic levels. Facilitators adjust ongoing teaching strategies to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. Common ways to diagnose ability may include the following: learning goals with descriptive feedback, self and peer assessments, essential questions, portfolios, rubrics, and performance-based assessments. Information gathered from these various assessments allow our educators, administrators, and support staff to clarify, refine, and deepen our understanding of the child through use of effective teaching methods.

Ellen Smith educators have embraced ways technology can enhance student learning and support educational goals. Every classroom is equipped with Smart Board technology that enables students to respond and manipulate topics while accommodating different learning styles. In addition, students have access to Lexia, a technology-based reading program. Lexia Reading provides explicit, systematic, and personalized learning in the five areas of reading instruction. Lexia is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and provides teachers with data-driven action plans to help differentiate instruction in the classroom through the use of targeted, skill specific mini lessons. In addition, students utilize iPods to reinforce various literacy and math skills with a wide range of skill complexity.

Differentiated instruction stimulates creativity and helps students understand ideas at higher levels of thinking. The arts can be integrated across other disciplines and as another powerful layer to our learning. Our educators utilize multiple strategies to make complex information easier to learn and understand. We elicit evidence of learning through different forms of media and creative expression. Students have demonstrated content knowledge through photography, cartooning, power point presentations, art, responding to classroom blogs, performances, video production, concept mapping, and student choice.

Ellen Smith educators know their students well and provide each one with engaging experiences and Common Core driven tasks that are designed to accelerate learning.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Educators at Ellen Smith Elementary know that professional development is vital to the academic success of all students. Professional development not only builds teacher knowledge but also motivates and encourages, which positively impacts student achievement.

While gaining knowledge that motivates and increases skill base, teachers at Ellen Smith use professional development to influence classroom instruction which results in a positive impact on student achievement. The state of Arkansas requires educators to participate in a minimum of sixty professional development hours yearly. Demonstrating their commitment to continuing education and its effect on students, the teachers and administration at Ellen Smith Elementary average 100 hours of professional development each year. Twenty teachers have advanced degrees. Teachers at Ellen Smith have a combined total of 383 years' experience.

Teachers have participated in Cognitively Guided Instruction; this approach integrates the mathematical thinking of children, classroom instruction that affects student thinking, and teacher knowledge of instructional practices. This professional development has had a significant impact on the delivery of mathematics instruction within our building. Teachers use their judgment and understanding of not only the mathematical processes, but students' thinking of mathematical concepts in order to make informed decisions about extending their students' mathematical thinking.

Teachers have participated in professional development that equipped them with new thinking and new skills using technology to enhance daily instruction. Teachers consistently coach students in their differentiated learning through the use of Smart Boards, iPods, iPads, and web based instructional sites gained in this professional development. This will prepare our students for a global economy and facilitate learning by developing engaging lessons utilizing technology.

To delve into the complex processes involved in reading, Ellen Smith teachers participate in the following professional development: *Catching Readers Before They Fall* (Johnson and Keier), *Nonfiction Reading Power (Gear)*, and *Put Thinking to the Test* (Conrad, Matthews, Zimmerman and Allen). These book studies facilitated a shift in thinking and prompted teachers to analyze student thinking and problem solving strategies while planning instruction.

The Conway School District continues to provide professional development support through *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins and McTighe) under the leadership of both administrators and instructional facilitators. This enables our district to maintain a common, seamless, aligned curriculum.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The philosophy at Ellen Smith is simple: *Build success by building relationships and both will last a lifetime*. Leading by example, the principal sets the stage for collaboration by cultivating relationships with teachers and parents to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century students. This rapport fosters motivation, respect, and knowledge in an effort to work as a team to attain high student performance while growing leaders for the future.

The positive climate at Ellen Smith starts with the administrative team and seamlessly filters down through every teacher, parent, and student. Administrators are in classrooms, on the playground, and attend both parent and teacher led meetings to discuss data, goals, and needs. Because respectful relationships throughout Ellen Smith are established by the principal, teachers desire to work as a team to problem solve around the students' strengths and areas of need.

Principal scheduled Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) meetings ensure that ample time is reserved for collaboration. Being both accountable and transparent is essential in accepting responsibility for precision teaching of Common Core standards. This team works diligently at evaluating data, developing strategic plans of action, and reviewing instructional programs to ensure that academic and non-academic needs of all student are met. This structure is aligned with our school mission statement composed by administrators, instructional specialists, teachers, and parents. The instructional facilitator and assistant principal provide research based learning tools including technology, hands-on manipulatives, and strategies in order to scaffold teachers in gaining knowledge to accelerate the learning of every student. Policies are followed and maintained by high standards of accountability as a staff and school community.

The Ellen Smith Parent Center is the hub for parents who come in daily to assist teachers. Ellen Smith builds relationships with students that extend over to parents and community. It is these individuals that share acquired knowledge from teachers to enrich, mentor, and accelerate student learning. In addition, the PTO publishes a weekly school letter so that parents will be aware of upcoming events such as parent nights, assessment dates, and weekly standards being taught which cultivates the school to home relationship.

Building professional relationships that are contagious and positive have an impact on student achievement. Ellen Smith truly exemplifies, “Every child, every day, whatever it takes”.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: 3      Test: Augmented Benchmark  
 Edition/Publication Year: 2012      Publisher: Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	97	99	100	97	94
Advanced	87	89	89	81	69
Number of students tested	97	99	98	78	90
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	91	100	100	88	85
Advanced	73	77	71	56	49
Number of students tested	25	26	31	18	35
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	89	100	100	91	83
Advanced	63	80	92	67	43
Number of students tested	15	15	12	12	21
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	100	100	100	Masked	Masked
Advanced	75	70	54	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	10	10	13	8	9
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	89	83
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	70	42
Number of students tested	8	9	6	10	12
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	5	5	9	7	4
<b>6. Caucasian</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	99	99	100	98	96
Advanced	93	93	94	85	82
Number of students tested	67	69	70	55	60
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Disclaimer: Subgroup (Limited English) had less than 10 students for years 2008-2012. Subgroup (Students with Disabilities) had less than 10 students for years 2010-2012. Subgroup (Hispanic) had less than 10 students for years 2008 and 2009.					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading                      Grade: 3                      Test: Augmented Benchmark  
 Edition/Publication Year: 2012                      Publisher: Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and  
 Accountability Program

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	97	96	93	92	75
Advanced	83	73	73	66	52
Number of students tested	97	99	97	77	89
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	91	92	80	94	58
Advanced	68	50	47	47	35
Number of students tested	25	26	30	17	34
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	89	80	92	100	61
Advanced	63	40	75	58	33
Number of students tested	15	15	12	12	21
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	100	90	67	Masked	Masked
Advanced	75	50	33	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	10	10	12	7	8
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	67	25
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	47	17
Number of students tested	9	9	6	17	12
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	5	5	8	6	3
<b>6. Caucasian</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	99	100	97	93	84
Advanced	83	73	80	73	62
Number of students tested	67	69	70	55	60
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Disclaimer: Subgroup (Limited English) had less than 10 students for years 2008-2012. Subgroup (Students with Disabilities) had less than 10 students for years 2010-2012. Subgroup (Hispanic) had less than 10 students for years 2008 and 2009.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: 4      Test: Augmented Benchmark  
 Edition/Publication Year: 2012      Publisher: Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	96	96	89	94	91
Advanced	71	72	82	75	63
Number of students tested	97	106	72	79	92
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	92	91	100	79	80
Advanced	50	49	73	56	40
Number of students tested	34	39	11	25	30
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	91	94	Masked	90	83
Advanced	48	45	Masked	60	42
Number of students tested	17	20	9	20	19
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	90	91	Masked	Masked	90
Advanced	50	58	Masked	Masked	40
Number of students tested	11	12	7	5	10
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	30
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	20
Number of students tested	4	6	8	9	10
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	7	7	7	1	5
<b>6. Caucasian</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	99	96	91	96	93
Advanced	82	83	87	81	73
Number of students tested	66	71	53	54	62
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Disclaimer: Subgroup (Limited English) had less than 10 students for years 2008-2012. Subgroup (Students with Disabilities) had less than 10 students for years 2009-2012. Subgroup (Hispanic) had less than 10 students for years 2009 and 2010. Subgroup (African American) had less than 10 students for 2010.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading                      Grade: 4                      Test: Augmented Benchmark  
 Edition/Publication Year: 2012                      Publisher: Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and  
 Accountability Program

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	98	96	91	90	83
Advanced	85	67	68	56	48
Number of students tested	97	106	71	79	92
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	97	91	90	88	76
Advanced	74	36	50	40	27
Number of students tested	34	39	10	25	30
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	96	94	Masked	74	89
Advanced	65	50	Masked	25	32
Number of students tested	17	20	9	20	19
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	100	91	Masked	Masked	40
Advanced	80	33	Masked	Masked	20
Number of students tested	11	12	6	5	10
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	20
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	20
Number of students tested	4	6	8	9	10
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	7	7	6	1	5
<b>6. Caucasian</b>					
Proficient and Advanced	99	97	94	94	86
Advanced	85	79	72	70	58
Number of students tested	66	71	53	54	62
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Disclaimer: Subgroup (Limited English) had less than 10 students for years 2008-2012. Subgroup (Students with Disabilities) had less than 10 students for years 2009-2012. Subgroup (Hispanic) had less than 10 students for years 2009 and 2010. Subgroup (African American) had less than 10 students for 2010.					