

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
**A Public School - 13MS3**

	<b>Charter</b>	<b>Title 1</b>	<b>Magnet</b>	<b>Choice</b>
School Type (Public Schools):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Principal: Dr. Jennifer Pope Ed.D.

Official School Name: Oak Park Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 2230 Government Street  
Ocean Springs, MS 39566-7002

County: Jackson State School Code Number\*: 004

Telephone: (228) 875-5847 E-mail: jpope@osdms.org

Fax: (228) 875-3496 Web site/URL: http://www.osdms.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. Bonita Coleman-Potter PhD Superintendent e-mail: bpotter@osdms.org

District Name: Ocean Springs District Phone: (228) 875-7706

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: Mr. Tim Taranto

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   4   Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
  1   Middle/Junior high schools  
  1   High schools  
  1   K-12 schools  
  7   Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure:  7881

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

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:  Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school:   2
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

<b>Grade</b>	<b># of Males</b>	<b># of Females</b>	<b>Grade Total</b>
<b>PreK</b>	16	13	29
<b>K</b>	61	61	122
<b>1</b>	65	69	134
<b>2</b>	45	48	93
<b>3</b>	62	76	138
<b>4</b>	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>			<b>516</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
5 % Asian  
12 % Black or African American  
3 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
79 % 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: 33%  
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.	99
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	73
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	172
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	516
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.33
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	33

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 3%  
Total number of ELL students in the school: 13  
Number of non-English languages represented: 5  
Specify non-English languages:

Portuguese, Spanish, Lao, Vietnamese, Cantonese

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 50%  
 Total number of students who qualify: 259

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: 22%  
 Total number of students served: 114

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>10</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>7</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>40</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>45</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>23</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>25</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>77</u>	<u>1</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	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

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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The mission of Oak Park Elementary is to recognize the worth of each student, maintain high expectations, and strive to meet the needs of the “whole child” as we instill a lifelong love of learning.

We believe each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs; therefore, instructional practices incorporate a variety of learning strategies to accommodate differences in learning styles. Challenging experiences are provided to ensure individual success. The Oak Park faculty, staff, parents, children, and community share the responsibility for addressing the school mission at home and at school.

We use our vision, mission, and beliefs to improve teaching and learning by incorporating one-on-one tutoring for students that require extra reinforcement in building conceptual knowledge. Current research and best practices show that individualized instruction best meets the needs of all students. This is what Oak Park strives to do through its various individualized programs including fully inclusive classrooms for all special needs students in the general education classroom. We bring our vision, mission, and beliefs to life on a daily basis as we interact with our students and assess their needs.

Oak Park Elementary was built in 1958 and is the oldest school facility in the Ocean Springs School District. Centered in a multicultural, coastal community, our school previously served approximately 662 students in grades IDEA pre-kindergarten through fourth grade before the restructuring of the school district this academic year. We currently serve approximately 516 students from IDEA pre-kindergarten through third grade. Oak Park’s free and reduced meals population is 50.2%, English Language Learners population is 3%, and IDEA population is 22%. Diversity on the campus serves as a stimulus for growth. Oak Park’s population is continuing to grow, resulting in additions to accommodate the needs of our students.

Ocean Springs is a small bedroom community along the Mississippi Gulf Coast that prides itself in cultural arts. It is home of the Walter Anderson Museum and frequently hosts cultural arts and crafts events. This atmosphere creates an environment conducive to expectations of excellence from its schools. The Ocean Springs School District promotes the arts, academics, and athletics. The community’s positive attitude toward our district is evidenced through the Ocean Springs Education Foundation, a community organization that provides curriculum grants to teachers in the district for additional learning opportunities. Oak Park teachers have been the recipients of thousands of dollars’ worth of grant monies to promote meaningful learning experiences for our students.

Oak Park is proud of our academic and extra-curricular traditions. Some of these include a strong Parent Teacher Organization, Renaissance Model and Master School, Curriculum Night, Science Week, Science Fair, Reading Fair, Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, Field Day, YMCA Swim Program, Big Brother-Big Sister Community Service Program, Oak Park Talent Show, and the Annual Family Picnic. We also participate in worthwhile causes such as the American Heart Association’s Jump Rope for Heart, St. Jude’s Math-a-thon, Red Ribbon Week, Chick-fil-A’s Core-Essentials Character Education Program, and The Lord is My Help annual food drive. These activities afford our students opportunities to participate in civic and philanthropic projects to impact their world in a positive way and help them gain awareness and understanding of the needs of the world around them.

Oak Park, a targeted Title I school, consistently performs higher than any other elementary school in the district and is among the top-performing schools in the state. Oak Park has maintained high performing status until this past year when we progressed to **A-Star School Status** based on the Mississippi State Accountability Model. Oak Park was the only elementary among 28 elementary schools in Jackson County to achieve A-Star School status. Student growth and achievement is evident when state test scores

are evaluated each year. Oak Park students succeed in meeting standards for Adequate Yearly Progress. Oak Park was recently chosen as the **Learning Forward Mississippi Elementary Spotlight School**. Our principal sat on a panel discussion with other educational leaders throughout our state sharing professional learning practices. This milestone is directly related to student growth and effective professional learning practices.

Oak Park Elementary is a nurturing school that is committed to championing every child so that he can discover his unique and individual gifts, cultivate them, and share them with the world. Students at Oak Park receive well-rounded curricula experiences which not only consist of academia, but also include music, physical education, art, character education, and technology. The administration strives to hire competent highly effective employees. We have eight National Board Certified teachers, and 55% of the staff holds advanced degrees while eleven teachers are in the process of attaining an advanced degree. Through an early response to intervention, quality professional learning communities, data-driven decision making and collaboration, and empowerment, Oak Park's teachers are highly effective in meeting the varying needs of all students.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

A. The state of Mississippi began using the Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (MCT2) in 2008 to monitor and evaluate student learning throughout the state. This test was developed in order to be in compliance with the requirements of the federal legislation, *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. MCT2 consists of criterion-referenced language arts and mathematics assessments that are aligned with the Mississippi Language Arts and Mathematic Frameworks. These assessments are administered in grades 3-8. The results of these assessments are used in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System, specifically the Achievement, Growth, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Models. The results from these assessments are used to evaluate student, school, and district growth.

Students are evaluated using four performance level descriptors. These performance levels describe the content and processes that a student at a given level is expected to know, demonstrate, or perform. The levels are: advanced- high level of difficulty, proficient- mastery of skills required, basic- low level of difficulty, and minimal- basic level of performance. Mississippi's State Accountability Rating System recognizes schools around the state for their high level of performance and their ability to close the achievement gaps in students. Accountability statuses include Star School, High Performing, Successful, Academic Watch, Low Performing, At- Risk of Failing, and Failing. After receiving a High Performing status for three years in a row, Oak Park Elementary received an A-Star School accountability status based on the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System during the 2011-2012 school year.

B. Oak Park Elementary sets high expectations for all students to perform at the level of proficient or advanced in both language arts and math on the state assessment (MCT2). Since 2008, 70% or more of third and fourth grade students have scored in the proficient or advanced range with the exception of 2009 where 62% of third graders scored at this proficiency level. Along with proficiency levels, Oak Park strives to have all students achieve academic growth measured by the Quality of Distribution Index (QDI). The QDI is part of the formula used in the accountability model by the State of Mississippi when ranking schools. Quite simply, Oak Park believes students should show a year's growth for a year's instruction. Oak Park has exceeded the growth model set forth by the state achieving significant growth in two years gaining 19 QDI points moving from a High Performing school to achieving top certification status of "A" or Star School in 2012.

Oak Park also focuses its attention on the progress of all subgroups: IDEA students, English Language Learners, and the progress of economically disadvantaged students. Although 30 students is a reporting group for the state of Mississippi, Oak Park remains committed to the progress of all students in each subgroup. Over the past five years, Oak Park has proudly moved more IDEA students out of basic to proficient and advanced. The achievement gap between the general education and special education population is minimal. The average scale score for a third grade general education student is less than 5% greater than the average IDEA student score. For fourth grade, the gap is slightly larger. The average scale score for a general education student is less than 6.5% greater than the IDEA student score. Close analysis attributes this increase to the increased rigor of the fourth grade assessment, the increased complexity of the reading text for students with specific learning disabilities in reading, and a first year teacher in need of additional support to work with special needs students. Because data disaggregation throughout the year identified this widening gap, a reading consultant from the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) was hired to train all teachers, kindergarten through fourth grade, on a shared responsibility for literacy. The consultant also worked one-on-one with the first year teacher to provide support and needed training.

Although our district as a whole did not show the required growth for English Language Learners on the WIDA ACCESS test given in April, all ELL students at Oak Park did show the required growth for the

2011-2012 academic year. Both fourth grade ELL students scored proficient in language arts and math on the MCT2. Oak Park has shown consistent growth in moving students with limited English Proficiency as indicated in the ACCESS testing and as monitored weekly by the Imagine Learning program.

When evaluating growth for economically disadvantaged students, fourth grade showed the greatest gains for at-risk students on the MCT2. Third grade at-risk students saw an increase of 2% in language arts and 4% in math from 2008 to 2012. Economically disadvantaged fourth grade students demonstrated a 29% gain in language arts and a 20% gain in math from 2008 to 2012 on the MCT2 in the levels of proficient and advanced. Fourth grade students scoring proficient and advanced rose from 47% to 76% in language arts and 53% to 73% in math from 2008-2012. Increasing the proficiency of all students is a high priority of Oak Park, but the success of raising the bar for our economically disadvantaged students stands out as the greatest strength of our school.

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

In addition to the MCT2, Oak Park evaluates student growth on a consistent basis through the use of classroom assessments (both formative and summative), quarterly district common assessments, and STAR Enterprise Math and Reading. Students who attend Title I are monitored weekly in the areas of fluency and comprehension using the Read Naturally strategy.

The administration and staff at Oak Park collect and disaggregate data continuously to make decisions regarding instruction, curriculum, interventions, support services, and professional development needs. The administrators hold monthly data meetings with grade levels to review assessment data, identify students who are at risk of falling behind, and formulate plans to intervene. A specified data room complete with data walls is the designated place for the data discussions to take place. Data is visible and all data trends are evaluated. Data meetings provide the opportunity for a shared ownership, accountability, and an awareness of progress toward set goals. Assessment data enable teachers to differentiate instruction for each individual student. In addition, the Ocean Springs School District Central Office schedules monthly data meetings where the administrators meet to discuss student achievement and the progress at each individual school.

Data is used to articulate where students are performing and to design specific plans to remediate for struggling students or accelerate for advanced learners. Students who have not scored proficient or advanced on the state MCT2 assessment, as well as students who have not shown growth, are referred to the Teacher Support Team to begin interventions. Oak Park utilizes research-based programs such as *Leveled Literacy*, *Headsprout*, *Read Naturally*, and *Language for Learning* to remediate students. Students who are placed in Tiers II or III of the Mississippi Response to Intervention Three Tier Instructional Model are monitored weekly for progress using STAR Enterprise Progress Monitoring System.

Each district in the state of Mississippi is required to publish a *No Child Left Behind District/School Report Card* detailing performance data. The required information is generalized into specific subgroups, two year achievement trends, and student participation rates. The report card is distributed to each student to inform parents of school and district progress. Parents and community members can also access the report card via the district website. State assessment scores are published in the local newspaper and broadcast by the local television station.

Oak Park uses a systemic approach to maintain and disseminate information to our stakeholders. Through the district website, ConnectEd, Parent Connect, school newsletters and announcements through various media, information regarding Oak Park programs, services, and the performance is available. District as well as school achievements are discussed with parents and the community at School Board meetings, Curriculum Nights, PTO meetings, etc. Information, achievement data, and recognitions are published on the district and school websites as well as in the *Oak Park Times*, Oak Park's bi-monthly newsletter.

Performance assessment results are sent home weekly to the parents in a “Tuesday folder” specifically designed for this purpose. MCT2 score sheets go home in September showing the state assessment results from the previous year. Teachers are encouraged to conference with each and every parent regarding student progress. Teachers are in constant communication with families regarding student progress in the classroom through the use of daily planners provided by the school, email, and classroom newsletters. After each student is assessed quarterly in the areas of math and reading, parents are given a Diagnostic Report which outlines areas of strength and weakness for each child. The Diagnostic reports are included in the STAR Enterprise Math and Reading Benchmark Assessment program. Parents are informed of their child’s performance on the district common assessments as well. Report cards are sent home at the end of each nine week term to inform parents about student progress during the term.

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

The administrators and teachers at Oak Park Elementary are eager and willing to share new ideas with peers within our district, other school districts, and statewide. Teachers use pacing guides and common assessments as guidelines for furthering their own learning through professional developments and workshops. They share their knowledge gained with others in the profession through cross district grade level meetings and school faculty meetings.

Our school received the **Learning Forward Mississippi Elementary Spotlight Award** at a retreat held in our state. The principal participated in a panel discussion with school leaders from lower and upper elementary levels, middle school, and high school learning environments. She shared her knowledge related to our student growth and professional learning practices.

Teachers from neighboring school districts participate in “Learning Walks” through our school to learn best practices and then return to their respective schools and put learned ideas into motion. Days are scheduled via the principals of each respective school and teachers come and tour through classrooms gaining ideas and insight to share with members of their own teams at the schools where they teach.

An administrator and two teachers from Oak Park Elementary will serve on a panel discussion at the Mississippi Association of School Administrators’ Conference. They will share how we are using Renaissance in our school to promote student growth and how we are sharing our knowledge gained, with other educators.

Our school has served as a leader in our district in the Accelerated Math program by using Neos (small handheld individualized responders) to increase our productivity in this skill building math program. Other schools have benefited from our teachers’ training and have implemented this learning tool as another option for increasing math mastery.

The Oak Park Elementary counselor and media specialist meet with others in their career specialty areas once each nine weeks to reflect on their programs. They also converse via email and phone throughout each week of the school year, as needed to share ideas on how to meet the individual needs of students in our school and district.

Our school understands the importance of collaboration among administrators and teachers and how critical it is to learn new practices, implement those techniques learned, model them for others, and reflect on those experiences. It is through sharing lessons learned that we will also continue to grow as a successful school!

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

Families and Community help Oak Park Elementary maintain exemplary school status. We strive to include parents and community in many activities because that partnership is critical to student

success. We host a series of events crucial in setting the pace for successful school years by establishing communication and recognizing our partnership with families and the community.

Curriculum Night is an evening meeting that allows parents to align with teacher expectations, learn current curriculum content, and discuss how to better help their child at home. This inviting and informative gathering takes place in each classroom throughout the school and builds unity and an initial partnership for a productive academic year.

The Ice Cream Social/Open House is an event that celebrates families! Parents and teachers, side by side, scoop up fun and favorite toppings in a lively atmosphere. Teachers mingle with students, past and present, and their parents, to build positive relationships and rapport. Student work is on display throughout the school and showcased in individual classrooms. Familiar and new faces are excited to meet and share student achievement at this family favorite event.

Many other opportunities exist for parents to be involved in student programs. The Parent Teacher Organization supports grade level plays, book fair nights, and they volunteer and participate in *Accelerated Reader* reward parties such as a 50's Sock Hop and bowling.

Oak Park Elementary hosts Science Week. This is a time when parents, relatives, and community members who work in science-related fields come to our school and share their knowledge with our future scientists. Engineers, biologists, and doctors direct experiments, hands-on activities and share the successes attained in their own careers. This program allows for excellent role modeling and career discovery.

Oak Park Elementary also has a professional relationship with the Junior Auxiliary. This community organization works closely with our school to help meet the individual needs of at-risk students. The Big Brother/ Sister mentors and community service volunteers from Ocean Springs High School provide our students with appropriate peer role models.

Each school year culminates with the annual Oak Park Talent Show/ School Wide Picnic. The PTO provides hotdogs for students and their families. Parents, students, and teachers mingle with each other at different activity stations and then lunch is enjoyed together by all. This helps end our school year on a positive note with everyone celebrating a successful school year.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

Oak Park Elementary is currently shifting curriculum to the Common Core Standards adopted by the state of Mississippi. With this transition, Oak Park supports a more rigorous curriculum focusing on real world application that reflects the knowledge and skills students will need to be successful in college and careers. Using the Common Core Standards enables our faculty to teach conceptual understanding in early grades affording students the opportunity to master core concepts and apply them successfully.

Reading and Language Arts take relevance as the key to all subject areas. Instruction in reading begins in Kindergarten. Oak Park utilizes *Reading Street* as a primary reading curriculum. This program is modeled after Grant Wiggins' *Understanding By Design* which focuses on "big ideas" and themes for teaching. *Harcourt Trophies* is another resource program utilized in some classes. In addition to these programs, Oak Park incorporates trade books at each grade level to enhance reading instruction. Teachers also supplement with the Accelerated Reader Program. To foster a love of reading, our school hosts two Book Fairs each year and participates in the local, district and state reading fairs.

Mathematics is taught through the *EnVision Math* Program, a research based, language enriched program. It focuses on differentiation of learning to reach the needs of all students. Teachers provide students with a variety of manipulatives as well as math centers to enhance learning. *EnVision Math* provides interactive concept development through problem-based activities that afford students the best learning opportunities through teacher and student interaction. Oak Park also utilizes the Accelerated Math Program providing differentiation and more rigorous instruction. This program allows teachers to make data-driven decisions to guide each student to success.

Science and Social Studies instruction is integrated into the language arts curriculum in all grade levels based on the Mississippi Frameworks and the Common Core State Standards. In science, the scientific method is used during hands-on science experiments and demonstrations that teach students to reason and communicate scientifically. Students participate in school and regional science fairs. By using nonfiction social studies text in language arts, students research, study, and explore issues that foster the development of global citizens.

Technology is utilized by teachers and students in a variety of ways at Oak Park. Teachers use computers, Mimios, and Neo2s for instructional purposes while students use computers in their classrooms and in the two computer labs to research and create PowerPoints and presentations. Neo2s are utilized for differentiated assignments in Accelerated Math and Reading, *MathFacts in a Flash*, keyboarding, and as responders during class instruction. Students receive standards-driven computer instruction once a week in the computer lab where they practice keyboarding using the *Type to Learn* computer program and practice academic skills in *Compass Odyssey*.

Oak Park has a strong arts program both in art and music classes as well as woven into academic lessons in each classroom. Students attend music and art class weekly. In art, students create pottery, draw and paint works of art that are highlighted throughout the building, and have their work displayed for sale on the *Artsonia* website. Music instruction includes all forms of music, dance, and the incorporation of musical instruments. All first and third grade classes participate in musicals that are presented each year to the community.

Oak Park's physical education program focuses on reducing childhood obesity and promoting physical, social, and emotional well-being of our children. Students attend physical education classes weekly and lessons focus on both the physical and nutritional aspects of maintaining a healthy body. Students participate in additional activities such as *Jump Rope for Heart* and an annual Field Day event.

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

In keeping with Common Core Standards, Oak Park has adopted a student centered approach to teaching reading and language arts. *Reading Street: Common Core Edition*, was selected because of our curricular transition and the program's credibility as a resource to meet the common core standards. It also includes a "Response to Intervention" component for additional support in weekly skills. Literature circles, role playing, expository and non-fictional text, novel units and thematic instruction are some of the tools teachers utilize in the reading curriculum. UNRAAVEL, a reading comprehension strategy designed by Larry Bell, incorporates music and movement to inspire students and reinforce reading comprehension. Students need opportunities to engage in non-fiction as well as fictional selections which is a key component of *Reading Street*. This rigorous program also focuses on informative, argumentative, and narrative writing. Teachers are able to prioritize instruction to support higher levels of reading and writing.

Differentiation of instruction is accomplished by the utilization of instructional methods including, but not limited to explicit phonics instruction, direct reading instruction, guided reading strategies, and phonemic awareness instruction. Mentor text is used to supplement additional reading skills. Small group instruction is utilized as well as whole group instruction. Trade books are introduced to expose students to a variety of literature. We place emphasis on non-fiction text and text features as we transition towards Common Core Standards.

The Ocean Springs School District has adopted STAR Enterprise as its benchmark assessment. The Accelerated Reader Program (AR), a component of the STAR Enterprise program, is used throughout the school. The AR program helps to increase the text complexity demands of Common Core. STAR Enterprise Benchmark assessments are administered three times yearly to obtain student independent reading levels. The data obtained from these assessments drives daily instruction. The AR program has been successful in increasing comprehension and reading levels of students. Reading achievement increases when students are able to choose books that are challenging. The program provides teachers with instant feedback to aid in instruction and intervention. Parents also receive instant feedback through the use of Renaissance Home Connect.

Each grade level spends 120 minutes per day on reading and language arts instruction. Grade levels meet weekly to share lessons and strategies that enhance student learning. This time is also used for planning meaningful lessons for our students.

## **3. Mathematics:**

Oak Park Elementary uses a variety of instructional methods to ensure all students improve their mathematical skills regardless of their current grade level performance. Students are assessed three times a year using Star Math Enterprise. This data is used to make data-driven instructional decisions.

Pearson's *EnVision Math* has been implemented in all grade levels at Oak Park. This program emphasizes daily problem-based math learning followed by visual learning strategies. *EnVision* was selected because of its daily, data-driven differentiation and proven classroom results that ensure every student the opportunity to succeed. It deepens conceptual understanding by making meaningful connections for students and delivering strong visual connections. Small-group center activities are used to enhance daily lessons and skills and promote deeper understanding of concepts taught. These centers also promote group cooperation and problem solving. There are also individualized lessons provided for below-level students. Parents and students have access to online textbook and supplemental activities. One key component of this curriculum is the "interactive learning" which provides for teacher modeling and hands-on learning.

In addition to the *EnVision* program, our faculty routinely utilizes teacher-generated math reinforcement activities. This practice allows opportunity for the connection of the mathematics curriculum to real world application. Teachers connect literature to mathematics through stories and books with mathematical themes. In this respect, the curriculum becomes truly inter-disciplinary, helping students to understand the connections between subjects.

Falling under the Renaissance umbrella, Accelerated Math is another avenue to enhance math instruction. Teachers can personalize math practice, differentiate math instruction, monitor progress, and make data-driven decisions to guide each student to success. Students work independently and at their own pace striving to reach manageable goals. Students use the NEO2 responders to submit work and receive instant feedback. *Math Facts in a Flash* is also used to supplement math curriculum. It differentiates for each student's learning pace, focusing on mastery of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts as well as fractions, decimals and percentages. *Math Facts in a Flash* provides valuable timed practice with immediate, corrective feedback.

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

At Oak Park we believe that the use of a character education program improves students' performance in the areas of academics, socialization, and self-discipline. Our school mission is to strive to meet the needs of the "whole child" while instilling a lifelong love of learning. We strive to provide our students with a character education program that promotes good citizens and productive members of society.

Oak Park has adopted the "Core Essentials" program to teach Character Education in our school. Core Essentials combines the forces of a value and its definition and pairs it with a framework which allows students to not only *learn* about values but to experience them as well. The program consists of lessons that include media and visual resources. Values such as compassion, respect, patience, and individuality are focused on monthly and discussed daily in the classrooms. The school librarian helps assist in this program by supplying teachers with trade books that correlate with the monthly value. Visual resources are displayed throughout the school to remind students of the value being taught each month. In addition, students participate in daily announcements that are shared throughout the school. Students receive certificates during the month when they are "caught" displaying the value. The school counselor presents character education to each classroom monthly. This program reinforces the positive traits that we feel our students need to be successful and caring members of society.

In addition, our Gifted teacher has implemented a character education program based on Dr. Donald Clifton's, *How Full Is Your Bucket?*. This program encourages students to recognize the "positive" attributes in their peers. Throughout the year, they will fill their buckets with a positive value. Each teacher has a bucket and notes for students to write positive compliments and place in the bucket. The students recognize these traits not only in their peers, but in themselves as well. Students can also "dip" from their buckets whenever negative comments are made to peers. The overall goal is to keep the buckets overflowing with positive reinforcement.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

Oak Park Elementary is a full inclusion school which recognizes that children learn in different ways, and teachers strive to create lessons and learning environments in which students are successful. Oak Park uses research-based methods of instruction to achieve academic growth and a variety of technology resources to enhance instruction. These resources include a drop-in computer lab with high quality computer programs, NEO2 processors, and interactive white boards in each classroom. Teachers strive to meet the needs of all students ranging from English language learners and special education to advanced/gifted students. Teachers are trained in differentiated instruction methods and target the individual needs of each student by providing a rigorous curriculum in which all students feel successful. Delivering purposeful lessons and experiences are critical to our learning environment.

Teachers in kindergarten through third grade implement literature and nonfiction units in order to relate learning to real life situations. Students come from a variety of diverse backgrounds. Therefore, Oak Park employs a remediation assistant who conducts appropriate language arts interventions for learners who have not mastered grade appropriate skills. The remediation assistant utilizes a direct instruction approach with the support of *Language for Learning* (a language/literacy solution) and *Leveled Literacy* (a small group instruction program for at-risk students).

Oak Park's Title I program has implemented a variety of other resources to enhance instruction and improve the academic achievement of students who are at risk in reading. *Read Naturally* is a research-based approach used to build reading proficiency with students from grades one to three at Oak Park. For students who need to master phonics elements and syllable patterns for reading, Title I teachers also engage students in *Signs for Sounds*. Oak Park's Title I program strives to reach students who score low on the state required dyslexic screener. This goal is met by using *Orton-Gillingham*, a rigorous phonics program.

Accelerated Math is used to enhance our math program at Oak Park. Teachers in kindergarten through third grade use this program to personalize math practice, differentiate instruction, and monitor progress of students. Teachers are able to make data-driven decisions which leads to increased student achievement.

Gifted teachers at Oak Park expand learning outside of the regular classroom by developing themed units of study that enrich each child's learning. All Oak Park students benefit from our gifted program. Gifted students plan and implement activities/performances that are available for the entire school.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Professional Development opportunities at Oak Park are derived from the professional development needs assessment online survey completed by all faculty members at the end of the previous year. The needs assessment survey indicated a need for Renaissance training to better implement Accelerated Math to aid in differentiated math instruction. We utilized one of our own teachers that has been Renaissance trained and has successfully used Accelerated Math (AM) to increase achievement with his special needs students to provide training to each grade level. He then worked one-on-one with each teacher providing support and guidance to properly implement AM as a means of intervention, acceleration, and practice of critical math skills. After receiving training for STAR Enterprise from Renaissance during the summer, the media specialist and the assistant principal conducted training with each grade level to help teachers use the data reports from the STAR screeners to make data-driven decisions that individualized instruction in math and language arts.

With the move to Common Core State Standards, teachers indicated a need for training in using formative and performance based assessments to make changes in instruction. An outside consultant was contracted to present "A Shared Responsibility for Literacy" in two small groups for lower and upper grade teachers to identify best practices in literacy instruction including the use of formative and performance based assessments. Teachers have also attended Common Core Standards training provided by the Mississippi State Department of Education and traveled out-of-state to attend national conferences on unpacking and implementing the Common Core Standards.

Oak Park is proud to educate a very diverse group of students with 50% of our students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, 22% of our students receive support from special education services, and 3% of our students have limited English proficiency. We are also fortunate to have 55% of our faculty that hold advanced degrees. Because of the diverse needs of our students and faculty we do not use a one-size-fits-all approach to professional development. Teachers are provided opportunities to attend training on ways to effectively instruct students learning difficulties including students with ADHD or those diagnosed on the Autism spectrum and have attended training on the implementation of differentiated instruction strategies to meet the needs of our diverse learners. Teachers and administrators

have also received training in enhancing professional practices with *Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching* to help teachers grow professionally and to promote student achievement.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The growth in academic achievement at Oak Park can be directly attributed to the leadership philosophy of our school administration and leadership team. The administrative team promotes an environment of mutual respect and trust in the professional judgment of teachers. To foster collaborative decision-making, the administrative team, made up of the principal and assistant principal, meets regularly with the leadership team which is made up of grade level chairpersons, a teacher from one of the support classes, a special education teacher, a paraprofessional, and a member of the office staff. These teacher and school leaders work together in a collaborative effort to make decisions, present information to the faculty, and assist other teachers in embracing change.

The administrative team strives to be instructional leaders. Using a collaborative decision-making approach to instruction, data meetings are held monthly to enlist the help and support of teachers when designing interventions and when creating academic challenges. Analysis of test data from screeners and common assessments are used as points of discussion when designing these approaches.

Professional learning communities have been fostered through common planning periods. Teachers meet at least once a week to share best practices and learning strategies to meet the needs of the diverse learners at our school. This allows our teachers to work collectively toward improving instructional strategies and empowers teachers to make critical decisions about delivery of instruction that impacts student achievement. Teachers are encouraged to use the school resources as resources and to teach state objectives, not programs. Empowering these teacher leaders allows us to draw what is best from our school which has generated continued growth in student achievement. This environment of respect and trust for the professionalism of each teacher also creates a culture where teachers have high expectations for themselves and for those in the teaching profession. This has an added benefit of attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers at Oak Park.

The most effective way to evaluate the administrative team at Oak Park is to review the survey data collected by our district superintendent. The online survey that contained forty questions relating to academic performance, collaboration, data driven decision making, professional growth, teacher efficacy, climate, and communication was completed by instructional and support staff. The principal at Oak Park was ranked as meeting and exceeding expectations by ninety-eight percent of the respondents in all areas. This commitment to excellence is evident throughout Oak Park.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Mississippi Curriculum Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Edition/ 2007-2008 Publisher: Pearson Educational

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient and Above	85	80	64	76	80
Advanced	29	13	16	18	20
Number of students tested	119	127	128	129	117
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 Above	76	69	59	48	74
Advanced	14	6	12	6	8
Number of students tested	37	32	34	33	38
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	4	2	7	6	4
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	2	1	2	4	1
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	54	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	9	9	13	6	9
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	0	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Advanced	0	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested		1		2	1
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient and Above					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					
All data was obtained from Mississippi Department of Education Sharepoint and uploaded to the Ocean Springs School District reporting system, EZ Test Tracker.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Mississippi Curriculum Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Edition/ 2007-2008 Publisher: Pearson Educational

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient and Above	78	80	67	61	76
Advanced	36	31	16	19	26
Number of students tested	119	127	128	129	116
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 Above	72	69	50	52	64
Advanced	16	16	9	12	16
Number of students tested	32	32	34	33	38
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	4	2	7	6	4
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	0
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	0
Number of students tested	2	1	2	4	
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	62	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	9	9	13	6	9
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	0	Masked	0	0	Masked
Advanced	0	Masked	0	0	Masked
Number of students tested		1			2
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient and Above					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					
All data was obtained from Mississippi Department of Education Sharepoint and uploaded to the Ocean Springs School District reporting system, EZ Test Tracker.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Mississippi Curriculum Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Edition/ 2007-2008 Publisher: Pearson Educational

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient and Above	85	71	78	82	74
Advanced	24	12	13	26	19
Number of students tested	123	130	134	117	102
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 Above	84	62	62	81	54
Advanced	11	10	3	12	4
Number of students tested	37	39	37	26	26
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	5	5	6	2
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	0
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	0
Number of students tested	1	2	3	1	
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	80	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	10	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	10	7	3	4	7
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	1		1	1
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient and Above					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					
All data was obtained from Mississippi Department of Education Sharepoint and uploaded to the Ocean Springs School District reporting system, EZ Test Tracker.					

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Mississippi Curriculum Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd edition/2007-2008 Publisher: Pearson Educational

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient and Above	80	72	71	74	71
Advanced	24	25	16	27	31
Number of students tested	123	130	134	117	102
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 Above	86	74	68	58	50
Advanced	19	10	14	12	4
Number of students tested	37	39	37	26	26
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	5	5	6	2
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	0
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	0
Number of students tested	1	2	5	1	
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	40	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	10	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	10	7	3	4	7
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient and Above	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	1		1	1
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient and Above					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					
All data was obtained from Mississippi Department of Education Sharepoint and uploaded to the Ocean Springs School District reporting system, EZ Test Tracker.					