

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Rene Wyatt Harris

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

Official School Name Beech Hill Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1001 Beech Hill Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Summerville SC 29485-7815
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Dorchester County

Telephone (843) 821-3970

Fax (843) 821-3979

Web site/URL
http://www.edlinesites.net/pages/Beech_Hill_Elementary_School

E-mail rharris@dorchester2.k12.sc.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Joseph Pye

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jpye@dorchester2.k12.sc.us

District Name Dorchester School District Two Tel. (843) 873-2901

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Ms. Tanya Robinson

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 15 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 6 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 24 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	32	24	56
K	67	71	138
1	60	71	131
2	64	61	125
3	84	76	160
4	76	80	156
5	93	86	179
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	476	469	945

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 12 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 76 % White
 - 5 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 13%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	83
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	44
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	127
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	941
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
26 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Romanian, Turkish, and Gujarati

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %
Total number students who qualify: 225

8. Students receiving special education services: 19 %
177 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <u>11</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>21</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>42</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>27</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>70</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	43
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	16
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Beech Hill will lead the way to lifelong learning through excellence, leadership, and empowerment. All students will meet or exceed academic standards as measured by grade level benchmarks.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Beacons SHINE! The beacon is the essential part of the lighthouse. The lighthouse is designed to guide and protect. It is carefully manned by those who know the waters best, but without the beacon, the lighthouse would lose its purpose and meaning. On our campus, a lighthouse beacon shines brightly welcoming all to a safe harbor. Our mission of leading the way to lifelong learning through excellence, leadership, and empowerment navigates our school focus. With children at the heart of our direction and passion, we set sail each year in search of uncharted territories and new adventures.

We cultivate student success through our Lighthouses of Lifelong Learning: CREATE, NURTURE, CONNECT, LIVE, THINK, and DREAM. Our goals are to have students appreciate the arts (CREATE), act responsibly toward the environment and each other (NURTURE), value themselves and their community (CONNECT), make healthy choices and promote fitness (LIVE), develop and apply a “growth mindset” through meta-cognition and motivation (THINK), and apply technological innovations to cultivate 21st century and soft skills (DREAM). Like beacons shining in the darkness, our Lighthouses of Learning guide our students to a lifetime of learning. Established in 1992, our school is one of the largest in the Dorchester District Two School System with families from suburban and rural neighborhoods. With a great portion of undeveloped land in our school zone, planned communities are on the rise. Our school serves 950 preschool through fifth-grade students. Our “bedroom community” attracts a diverse group of residents; most parents work in the Charleston area and make the quiet family-friendly community of Dorchester County their home. Our parents work in a variety of occupations which prove valuable in exposing students to career options and providing technical support for our school as expert presenters or guest lecturers. High school diplomas have been earned by nearly 90% of the county’s residents while about a quarter of the residents have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. The community is predominantly white (70%), 20% of the residents are African-American, 4% are Hispanic/Latino, 2% are Asian, and about 4% are classified as other or identified as more than one racial group. This demographic composition is closely aligned to our school’s demographic configuration.

Our school achieves excellence with an “All Hands on Deck” attitude. Parent and community involvement is high. Approximately 300 parent and grandparent volunteers log about 6,500 hours of service each year. Business partners (24) provide financial support, judge contests, make presentations, and provide technical support. College and high school student volunteers (100) serve as tutors and mentors. These partnerships are symbiotic with hours of service to our school and authentic relationships for our students. In this House, Beacons SHINE because of the invested energy of faculty, parents, volunteers, and community stakeholders leading by example. The expectation to SHINE is more than an idea. Our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) focus is that Beacons are Safe, Honest, Intelligent, Nurturing, and Empowered (SHINE). The students of Beech Hill enjoy many benefits of a student-centered environment which has been affectionately named the “Beacon Experience.” This compilation of traditions, milestones, and memorable markers is comprehensive and extensive. Our focus on the “whole child” allows us to ensure that every child can find connections, passion, and success in our “whole child” setting. To promote academic achievement, students apply Thinking Maps and Write Traits to develop meta-cognitive skills operating with the notion of a growth mindset to enhance non-cognitive ones. In addition, character development is fostered through lighthouse related activities, annual events such as the Career Carousel, Market Day, Strands on the Beech, and the Shake and Shine Competition (a newly implemented program that promotes soft and interpersonal skills). Leadership skill development is embedded with the Principal’s Advisory Board, Student Leadership Council, and Tech Tamers (student technology leadership team). Traditions such as the Gullah Festival, the Wax Museum, Academic Achievement Bowl, and Milestone Celebrations promote inclusion, excitement, and engagement in the school experience. Beacons can cultivate interests with a variety of after-school clubs and programs: Drumline, Chorus, Juggling Team, Robotics Team, Art Club, and Junior Robotics. The Wednesday Early Release Day Clubs (WERD Clubs) ensure that every child has an opportunity to explore interests and options that promote our lighthouse focuses. To ensure that our staff can deliver varied and student-centered instruction that reflects best practices, teachers are trained in a variety of programs: Acting Right (Focus Five), Write Traits, Thinking Maps, Darkness to Light, Personalized Learning, and Growth Mindset.

While our school has not previously been nominated or named a National Blue Ribbon School, we have much to be proud of and celebrate. In 2012, we were named as a Palmetto's Finest School. Additional accolades include: Best Public School - Lowcountry Parent Magazine (2014), MUSC/Boeing Wellness School Program member (since 2013), Cool School - WCBD Channel 2(2012 & 2017), Ranked 13th Best Elementary School - Schooldigger.com (2018), Innovations Grant Recipients - Dorchester District Two (2016, 2018), and State Champions - First Lego League Robotics State Competition (2015).

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Our core curriculum is directly linked to the South Carolina Academic Standards. Learning experiences reflect best practices in education, including explicit direct instruction, inquiry-based learning, technology infusion, project-based learning, action-based learning, and personalization. Common planning and vertical articulation foster the creation of comprehensive and coherent plans that address the needs of the whole child and support opportunities for meta-cognitive applications. These are framed by our district literacy and numeracy models. The components of the literacy model are: Grade Level Instruction, Fluency, Word Study, Writing, and Differentiated Instruction. Students in Kindergarten and 1st grade use a computer program, Waterford, for additional reading, math, and science support. Students in grades 2-3 use the computer program, Imagine Learning; while, students in grades 4-5 utilize the Compass program for differentiated literacy lessons. For additional language support, teachers prepare core and differentiated folders within the software program. District level interventionists and our curriculum facilitator provide additional resources and support based on teacher requests and needs.

Students in grades 3-5 use Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Journeys Reading Series. Third graders reading below grade level participate in Systems 44. Students in grades 4-5 reading significantly below grade level participate in the READ 180 program. GATE students in grades 3-5 participate in an accelerated and enriched program and use materials from Junior Great Books, Elements of Literature and units from the College of William and Mary. Additional language-arts tools from Voyager, Reading Counts, Big Books, Reading A to Z, novel studies, leveled-text libraries, Storyworks, ThinkCentral, RazKids, Six Traits, and Thompson books are used to build literacy.

McGraw Hill's My Math series (K-5) is one tool used to deliver core curriculum standards to our students. Teachers plan for daily use of manipulatives and other hands-on explorations to solve problems and foster critical thinking. Our district math model calls for 80 minutes of math instruction daily. The model includes four components: Spiral Review, Problem Solving, Grade Level Instruction, and Differentiated Instruction. Teachers use a variety of resources to enhance lessons: Smart Board activities, ThinkCentral, BrainPOP, and FASTT Math. Students in grades 2-5 use the computer program Compass Learning for 80 weekly for additional differentiated math support. Teachers prepare core and differentiated folders for student use during Compass learning. Small group interventions in grades 2-5 utilize teacher-made resources and supplemental materials from the math series. GATE students use the Mentoring Mathematical Minds series along with Connected Mathematics in fifth grade are used to bridge sixth-grade mathematics. Added math tools such as: Voyager, Activities Integrating Math and Science AIMS, Technical Education Research Centers (TERC) Math Investigations, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM's) Navigations and Illuminations, Math for Today, and CORE Bites are used to build numeracy.

The Macmillan McGraw-Hill (K-5) series is our primary text source for teaching of science standards. District level benchmarks are used to guide pacing and check for understanding. Teachers use STC (Science and Technology Concepts) and FOSS (Full Option Science Systems) kits to enhance instruction with standards-based and hands-on experiences. Teachers also use online simulations, field trips, and field experts to further connect science curriculum with the real world. To build schema and authenticate content and concepts, teachers provide on-site field experiences such as a visit from on-site petting zoo experiences, presentations from meteorologists as well as National Science Traveling lab. Other science materials from AIMS, BrainPOP, content libraries, science periodicals, and Global Educational Management Systems (GEMS) are beneficial in building science content and developing process skills.

Pearson's My World (K-2, 4-5) and the Gibbes M. Smith (3rd grade) series are text sources for teaching Social Studies. District level benchmarks are used to guide pacing and check for understanding. Teachers use simulations, novels, read-alouds, United Streaming videos, BrainPOP, USA Studies Weekly, Scholastic News, Time for Kids, field experiences, and research activities to strengthen instruction. K-2 teachers integrate Science and Social Studies curriculum into reading and math instruction. Online conferences connect us to science and social studies experts beyond our classroom walls. Content teachers work in

concert with language arts teachers to deliver an integrated instructional approach for Science and Social Studies.

Monthly teacher-led curriculum meetings are facilitated by our technical support team. In addition to collecting and organizing data, this core of teacher leaders provides instructional support for teachers, facilitates analysis of data trends, and collects/distributes additional resources. Curriculum pacing guides exist for all subjects and match benchmark assessment schedules. These documents are essential in developing long-range goals and plans.

We serve 70 students in our preschool setting with half-day sessions for “at risk” four year-olds along with programs for three and four year-olds who are identified as “developmentally delayed.” Teachers guide students through the components of language development in conjunction with the students’ developmental profile. The core curriculum for 4K students, Pearson’s OWL Literacy Program-Opening the World of Learning, includes components for kindergarten readiness. Students in the developmentally delayed classroom use the curriculum product Building Language for Literacy, Handwriting without Tears and Pre-K Saxon Math. Software such as Waterford and Starfall are used to intervene and enrich literacy while also providing content in math, science and social studies. All curricular content follows the Early Learning Standards developed by Good Start, Grow Smart Collaborative Partners. The common thread throughout the core focus includes essential questions, personalized experiences and reflective learning.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students participate in music, art, physical education, and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) explorations that foster growth and engagement in a non-traditional setting. These courses help students develop higher-level thinking and confidence with soft skills. For visual arts, physical education, and music courses, students attend classes in five-day rotations to foster in-depth studies. Students attend classes for media services each week, participate in software-dependent differentiated instruction four days a week, and explore computer science/STEAM lessons weekly.

For music, students study vocal articulation for one semester and explore instrumentation in the other. Our music program provides opportunities to learn about a myriad of instruments (piano, recorders, guitar, and drums) and offers a variety of performance options. For visual arts, students study the elements of 2D or 3D art (painting and clay structures) for one semester, then explore Art for the 21st Century (animation and screen casting) in the other. In this way, students have a comprehensive perspective, appreciation, and knowledge of fine arts. Physical education focuses on team sports with an emphasis on collaboration and cooperation while individual lessons promote goal-setting and wellness through fitness, nutrition, and self-esteem.

We seek to foster the development of the whole child by devoting time, energy, and resources to our non-core curricular areas. The media, technology and STEAM studies follow a collaborative model where specialists and classroom teachers work together to create plans based on our state standards, assessment results, and student needs or interests. Our media specialist holds literacy sessions each day and encourages students to earn trips to the library’s Makerspace or the Beacon Bistro (a Starbucks-like atmosphere where students can read and enjoy light refreshments). The media specialist sets grade-level and school-wide targets such as The 100 Book Club Luncheon to garner excitement and celebrate reading.

In our Renaissance Room (STEAM Lab), students use 21st Century skills including communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking to build projects. This skills support the state’s Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. Students create mazes, bridges, catapults and anti-cyber bullying posters which apply the six steps of the engineering design process: Ask, Imagine, Plan, Create, Improve, and Reflect. Students use devices daily to incorporate technology into the engineering and design processes, making it a tool for learning.

During the first semester, first graders explored the components of sign language. Through a collaborative partnership, an administrative intern seized the opportunity to work with primary-aged students by teaching them about the deaf culture/community, basic signs, and how to sign phrases to support learning and

positive behavior choices. Students also learned how to communicate “The Beacon Creed” and our school song in sign language. Not only did students learn how to perform in sign language, but teachers now use the strategy for classroom management during lessons and transitions.

Technology is an essential part of instruction in our classrooms. Teachers work with Instructional Coaches to plan and implement technology-based lessons correlated to state standards. The essential skills gained through the use and application of technology are a core resource in our curriculum structure. We use a variety of applications to enhance our students’ experience with technology integration including: Study Island, Gizmos, Raz-Kids, Zearn, FASTT Math, Imagine Learning, Quizlet, BrainPOP, Discovery Education, Compass, and Kahoot.

Students are taught that technology is a tool for learning and should be used to support and acquire the skills needed to enhance and support blended and personalized learning. These tools provide primary sources, concrete examples and interactive audio/visual support to strengthen delivery of instruction. Additionally, technology enables teachers to differentiate and cater instruction to meet the needs of individual students. At our school, technology is not used as a substitute for instruction, but rather as a way to enhance the learning experience.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

We strive to create life-long learners who are critical thinkers. This requires that we use best practices and model a “growth mindset” attitude in pursuing strategies to engage and empower our students to be their best. Classrooms, arranged for collaboration, encourage teamwork but also personalization with flexible seating and fluid configurations to honor and recognize varied learning styles. They are also print-rich with text support, references, and visual guides (agendas, essential questions, and schedules). We strive to create a student-empowered environment where non-cognitive skills and metacognition are natural applications in the learning process. Students record content, concepts, and connections in learning journals, while participating in growth mindset activities and other reflection exercises.

As Beacons embark upon their learning journey, they will inevitably encounter rough waters. We prepare them to expect change and challenges as the seas of success can be turbulent, unpredictable, and exciting. We provide our students with skills to embrace setbacks and push through difficult tasks to realize success. Our faculty instills this resolve by upholding high expectations for all. The supporting structure of this thinking is our Growth Mindset framework. Developing and sustaining a growth mindset allows students to set and commit to personal goals, highlight failure as fuel for learning, and cultivate their metacognitive skills to become advocates of their own education. With this unifying school focus, our teachers purposefully prepare students to persevere and reflect on the process in addition to the product.

One of our most important responsibilities is to ensure that we meet the needs of all students. Our school recognizes the importance of systematic data collection, analysis, and reflection. In the first weeks of school our teachers administer baseline assessments, inventories, and learning surveys in both literacy and math. The purpose of this is to get a comprehensive view of each student's skillset upon entrance. This provides teachers with critical information required to begin differentiation and catered instruction to meet the needs of individual students and identify strengths or deficits of their class. Measurement tools such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2+), the Literacy Skills Assessment, Curriculum-Based Measurements, Reading Inventory, Math Inventory, and district-made benchmarks are used to create initial differentiated groups, to track student growth, and to celebrate accomplishments throughout the year. This information provides us with the opportunity to intervene at the first sign of a struggle and identify barriers to learning.

Data findings are supported by our tiered intervention protocols. Our school follows a Response to Intervention model which is comprised of three tiers of intervention instruction. Tier 1 interventions are the universal instruction that is provided to all students on any given grade level. Tier 2 interventions can be seen through in-class differentiated instructional groups. Students are placed in groups based on skill level or academic level. Professional Learning Communities serve as the vessels for driving our direction and course. Our groups are fluid and flexible based on student need and progress. Tier 3 interventions are

reserved for students who are demonstrating a significant deficit in skill acquisition and require more intensive intervention. This instruction is provided by a certified teacher who has additional training in research-based teaching methods. Charting progress of our students includes Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (Dial-4) and teacher-created assessments in preschool; DRA 2+, AIMSweb and teacher-created assessments in primary grades; and Reading/Math Inventories and district-made benchmark assessments in grades 2-5. These interventions are closely monitored to measure effectiveness and are adjusted regularly to ensure continuous growth.

Another way our staff promotes deeper, more authentic learning experiences is through our Critical Thinking interventions and Renaissance Room (STEAM/STEM lab). Critical Thinking is offered to students in first and second grades providing them with opportunities during this pivotal learning age to broaden their ability to analyze material and develop problem-solving skills. All grade levels engage in science and technology endeavors through our school's STEAM lab. Teachers design lessons that require students to practice 21st Century skills such as collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication.

As we continuously reflect upon and analyze data, we employ the aphorism, "A rising tide lifts all boats." This translates to our students through purposeful rigor that is inserted into every lesson. Our teachers use formative assessments to identify trends and patterns in school-wide data. Trends in our data indicate that behavior could be impeding upon academic growth in certain subgroups. With this discovery, we provide an influx of physical activity and movement opportunities into our classroom settings. Students have flexible seating options that specifically target core muscular development and increase oxygen provided to the brain. An additional way we address gaps in achievement is by providing opportunities for students to experience success in other areas. Our Wednesday Early Release Day (WERD) Clubs allow students who may struggle in traditional classroom settings to participate in unique clubs that allow them to lead the way in their own learning. Students experience success in areas where they are more comfortable; this confidence empowers them to take risks in other cognitive domains. This program also benefits our ESOL, disabled and speech students as they take advantage of choice, interest, and confidence in a non-cognitive setting.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our school is a child-centered place where not only do our students have a voice, but play a key role in the development and structure of our culture. Student ownership and creativity are fundamental components of our way of life since we embraced the precepts of Personalized Learning, Growth Mindset, and Arts Integration. These brain-based, learner-centered programs establish an environment absent of threat with a focus on self-efficacy. Over the years, parents, teachers and students have gained a comprehensive and practical understanding of empowerment. Persuasive letters and stakeholder proposals have prompted the creation of school clubs and events such as Wednesday Early Release Day (WERD) Clubs, the Shake and Shine Leadership Summit, and Cruisin' into Kindergarten Day. Through programs like Camp Invention, Robotics, and Market Day, students are given autonomy to design solutions and dream big. The implementation of the Drumline, Garden Club, and Step Team were initiatives generated from discussions with our student body. Our children relish the BEACON EXPERIENCE which encompasses the whole-child approach to learning and life at “the Beech”.

In this place, students are motivated by the entourage of opportunities to connect, learn, and grow. One student said it best, “Many schools focus on the arts, or STEAM or some special program... but here, there is something for everyone.” Our students are encouraged to be themselves, celebrate academic achievement, honor other talents, and embrace diversity as if it were a gift. When our children use their voices, it is for more than extra recess or snack options in the café. Students engage in deep, powerful discussions that demonstrate their true understanding of empowerment, valid sense of ownership and their genuine belief in advocacy. They question curricular decisions and provide feedback on how they learn best. They use their journals not only to track experiences, but also to identify patterns and trends in their personalized learning journey. They are quick to assist their fellow Beacons, bold in their defense of them, and passionate about their school, the place they call home. Regardless of the age or grade level, our students can clearly articulate the mission, vision, and rationale for learning in our school.

Empowerment and autonomy are not simply reserved for students. In this house, everyone is continuously learning. Teachers use this mindset to generate new and effective ways to connect with our children. Because we have a system in place to attain constant feedback, teachers and staff have many ways to share their concerns, questions, and solutions. Teachers bring ideas to the administrative team frequently and rarely are their ideas or proposals rejected or dismissed. To the contrary, every idea irrespective of its merit, is given serious thought, feedback for revision, or supported in part. Students and parents are frequently encouraged to participate in the review of an idea, especially if it requires support from a specific group for successful implementation.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school benefits from strong parent and community involvement. Our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Board and School Improvement Council (SIC) are supportive of school initiatives and instrumental in developing additional programs based on needs. The SIC provides support for new families with our “Parent Mentoring Program.” The PTA Board and SIC sponsor many programs tailored to support the whole child. PTA's Cultural Arts Series enables students to experience arts and literacy with award-winning authors (Ruby Bridges, Carmen Deedy and Patricia Polacco) and be taught by steel drums or sweet-grass basket artists-in-residences.

Families are key to the academic success of our students. During “Open Days”, parents participate in learning celebrations and extensive projects like the land rush simulation, Gullah Day or Market Day. Teachers rely on parent volunteers, high school and college student teams, and community members to facilitate these learning experiences. Beacons experience service learning through partnerships with several community and civic organizations. Students work in concert with our feeder high school for service learning opportunities such as food collection drives and donations to shelters. An additional partnership involves clothing donations to a neighboring church. To enhance and develop soft skills,

community leaders, business partners and high school students facilitated the "Shake and Shine" competition where students demonstrated their ability to answer impromptu questions, deliver strong handshakes, maintain eye contact, and converse for an extended period of time.

Student-led programs like Veterans Day and the HOUSE Awards foster engagement with community members. The expectation of service is an integral part of our school life. 4K classes collect aluminum tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, while Student Council leads our Caps for Caring initiatives that generate funds for hurricane relief. Recently, we have raised funds for Relay for Life, Jump Rope for Heart and Water Missions International. Such initiatives connect curriculum standards to real world applications. Mountains of food items line our hallways each fall in support of the Low Country Food Bank. Our Beacons connect personally to our community as our Chorus or Juggling Team perform at local daycares or nursing homes. We also build community within our school with Special Olympic Peer Coaches and Reading Buddies. On Career Shadow Day, faculty and staff nurture students' aspirations, welcoming them into our work world.

In the weekly newsletter, the principal invites stakeholders to participate in the school improvement process. Each newsletter includes information on how parents can support learning at home. Council meetings, PTA events, Pastries with the Principal, and monthly Principal's Advisory Council provide platforms for discussion with leaders. Quarterly school surveys, teacher websites, blogs, and other templates are used for two-way communication. In primary grades, progress folders are sent home daily. In grades 3-5, academic progress reports are shared weekly. Remind, Rainedout.com, and Blackboard Connect are used to share current and emergency information. Parents also follow us on Facebook and Twitter. News articles are featured in the local paper and on television. Each day begins with morning announcements and a student-produced morning show. School performance results are communicated in many ways: newsletters, school reports, state report cards, SIC agendas, PTA notes, announcements, website, Blackboard Connect, open houses, and on the school's marquee.

Our PBIS model calls upon students to SHINE: to be Safe, Honest, Intelligent, Nurturing and Empowered. Thanks to a collaborative program with a local chapter of Kiwanis Club, students are recognized as Terrific Kids for targeted behaviors reflective of our mission, vision, and goals. The local franchise of Chick-fil-A provides a quarterly luncheon to recognize and celebrate "shining" student behavior. In addition, a local chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, a fraternity of college-educated men, sponsors Alpha Men Read, modeling the importance and joy of literacy through read-aloud sessions in classrooms.

3. Professional Development:

Our teachers are committed to nurturing our brilliant Beacons with the same love, dedication and tenacity that they would pour onto their own sons and daughters. One way teachers embrace students and their needs includes modeling lifelong learning in their personal lives. With the same precepts used for our students, we structure our staff development to address the needs of our staff. Starting with the end in mind, we survey teachers to determine areas of opportunity for growth. We prioritize our training to focus on achievement, best practices, and school culture. To enhance our toolbox for student achievement, teachers have received training on the elements of Growth Mindset, Personalized Learning, Arts Integration, and Close Reading.

One focus of student achievement includes regular collection, analysis, and response to data. The use of student work provides a relevant and real-world opportunity to explore the continuous improvement process. The manipulation of authentic work helps drive instructional and curricular decisions. Teachers stay current and apply best practices through training sessions such as STEM in the Workplace, Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI), Differentiated Instruction (DI), Jacob's Ladder, Thinking Maps, Personalized Learning, Acting Right, and Project-Based Learning. The constant examination of our school culture provides a natural landscape for the development of norms and strategies for improvement.

School-wide book studies fuel our staff development and passion for learning. Mindset: The New Psychology of Success (Dweck) focuses on continuous growth along with the research and science behind the key points of the book. In keeping with our charge to develop deep critical thinkers, teachers expand

their knowledge on Thinking Maps with “Write from the Beginning and Beyond” training to enhance language-arts instruction. Teachers have attended and presented at local and national conferences and workshops. Our professional development is data driven, which is why nearly 30 teachers have volunteered to participate in a book study with Boaler's Mathematical Mindsets. Throughout the staff development process, the goal is to give teachers the autonomy to craft a personal plan for growth that is relevant, rigorous, and realistic for the teacher. The evaluation process reflects the same mindset of personalized and individualized growth. With the consultation from instructional leaders, teachers are the driving force in designing an evaluative tool for monitoring and measuring success.

Administrators visit classrooms and provide teachers with feedback via EDI-based walk-through forms, instructional rounds and conferences. Last year, over 900 classroom observations were conducted by our instructional leadership team which includes our administrators, curriculum facilitator, media specialist, and instructional technology specialist. Grade-level teams meet monthly with the administrative team to review and revise goals, identify needs and deltas, and celebrate growth.

4. School Leadership:

We hope to create a place where every stakeholder is empowered to make our school its best. Our administrators are passionate about their role as instructional coaches and guide with a resolute light of vision and hope. Because of this, shared decision-making and capacity building are evident throughout our school experience. Lifelong learning is an essential part of achievement and all members of our community are expected to follow their passion, share their talents, pursue new adventures, and continue to grow. We set high expectations and strive to help all stakeholders realize their optimal potential.

We believe children should not be the only ones learning. Staff and students are given many avenues to lead and influence our paths to success. Teachers are encouraged to follow opportunities of interest and present findings to colleagues. Since capacity building is a vital part of the leadership style and a contributing factor in the success of our school, our leadership council is a unique collection of multiple perspectives, experiences, and talents. In addition to grade-level representatives, our leadership council includes teacher leaders and rigor coaches who are selected by their peers. These teachers are charged with modeling, exploring, and sharing next-level ideas and concepts with the faculty to enhance our school's cognitive and non-cognitive concentrations.

Our faculty and staff are also configured for vertical articulation through "Lighthouse" teams. These groups support our mission statement, anchored in the precepts of lifelong learning. Not only do we expect our Beacons to become academically proficient, but also be well-rounded and able to apply metacognitive strategies, personalized learning and growth mindset to enhance and extend their own thinking. Each lighthouse is led by teacher leaders who facilitate the team's mission, vision, and annual goals. The teams are instrumental in developing programs for students, parents and families to enhance and diversify learning approaches. These teams also guide professional and staff development targets to ensure that teachers have meaningful resources and methods to integrate the lighthouse precepts into academic concepts and applications. The lighthouse configuration also affords us the opportunity to examine the continuum of learning and engage in meaningful conversations about the effectiveness of grade-level and/or school programs and practices. Lighthouse leaders meet with the administrative team quarterly to report on the status of the team, exchange ideas, and problem solve.

Administrators maintain an open-door policy which supports the “All Hands on Deck” mentality that the school embodies. Parent and student surveys are conducted throughout the year and suggestions are requested through weekly newsletters. The status of the staff is monitored via the monthly Leadership Council Meetings. The Principal's Advisory Council (an array of students selected each month), Student Council (5th grade representatives and 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade student leaders), PTA Board, and the School Improvement Council (SIC) provide additional vehicles for leadership roles and opportunities. Each organization serves a key function in assuring that multiple perspectives are reflected in decision-making, governance, and ownership. In addition, they regularly collaborate with business partners and community members to provide a synergetic exchange of ideas and resources.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The school-wide implementation of Growth Mindset has become the most instrumental practice to our school's success. People with growth mindsets interpret qualities like intelligence and talents as traits that can be cultivated over time through hard work and determination. Individuals with a growth mindset recognize the lessons that failure can afford and use failures as fuel for learning and from there, welcome and persevere through challenges. Conversely, people with fixed mindsets believe that you are born with set qualities, like intelligence that cannot be altered.

Our educators thoughtfully and deliberately infuse Growth Mindset ideals and language throughout classroom instruction, literature review, journaling activities, communication with parents, and student conferences. Students and teachers freely discuss personal growth, perseverance, focused effort, resiliency, feedback, new strategies, and lessons learned from making mistakes. The shift of responsibility from adult to learner has been a pivotal component in the success of the implementation of Growth Mindset at our school.

Growth Mindset includes the precept that intelligence can be developed, so our students, parents, and educators learn about current research regarding neuroplasticity of the brain. Together, we practice ways to strengthen our own neural networks by taking on more difficult tasks, engaging in deliberate focused practice when learning new skills, embracing the process of working toward goals, and applying new strategies when problem-solving in academic and social-emotional areas. Students understand how these practices influence brain growth and intelligence. They are empowered to take control of their learning and are motivated to persevere through challenges, both academic and personal. Learning is more valuable to our students because they know they have control over reaching their potential and applying new strategies to get there. Their growth mindsets steer them toward academic excellence and social/emotional strength because they are equipped with grit and tenacity to push through difficulty, resiliency to overcome setbacks, confidence to convert feedback into action toward improvement, and perseverance to keep working and trying new strategies.

Strong evidence of Growth Mindset is reflected in classrooms, hallways, and common areas. In every part of the Beacon Experience, you will see signs fostering a Growth Mindset environment: inspirational quotes, bulletin boards proudly proclaiming Growth Mindset principles, Growth Mindset Moments in weekly school newsletters, a Growth Mindset quote during daily morning announcements, and even on our school motto hanging from the ceiling in the main hallways. Teachers proudly add Growth Mindset quotes to their electronic signatures, classroom newsletters, and report card comments. Students fluently discuss Growth Mindset principles and apply them to their learning. One cannot help but feel a sense of empowerment, confidence, and unity throughout our school. Students, parents, and educators are all speaking the same Growth Mindset language, celebrating growth together, and encouraging each other through challenges. Growth Mindset has become our philosophy; it is the way we live, learn, and cope with daily challenges. Beech Hill has enthusiastically embraced Growth Mindset and we proudly proclaim to be a Growth Mindset school. The benefits of this commitment are evident in every thread of our sail. We look forward to continued progress with this motivational wind moving us forward.