

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Jason Lesley

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

Official School Name Spearman Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2001 Easley Highway

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

Piedmont SC 29673-7520  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Anderson County

Telephone (864) 947-9787

Fax (864) 947-1162

Web site/URL  
https://www.anderson1.k12.sc.us/D  
omain/488

E-mail lesleyj@apps.anderson1.org

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. Robbie Binnicker

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail binnickr@apps.anderson1.org

District Name Anderson 01 School District Tel. (864) 847-7344

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 Mrs. Nancy Upton

(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

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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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 14 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	18	20	38
<b>K</b>	50	53	103
<b>1</b>	43	50	93
<b>2</b>	44	56	100
<b>3</b>	56	53	109
<b>4</b>	55	46	101
<b>5</b>	60	53	113
<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 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	326	331	657

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 8 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 80 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 10%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	41
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	22
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	63
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	657
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4%  
23 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Gujarati

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45%  
Total number students who qualify: 297

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
98 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>9</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>18</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>32</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>53</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	30
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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 2018.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Spearman Elementary School is committed to providing each student with world class knowledge, skills, and life characteristics based on the individual needs of each student.

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**

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Spearman Elementary is one of 8 elementary schools within Anderson School District One. We have a total enrollment of 657 students in K4 through 5th grade, including a self-contained Emotionally Disabled class and a self-contained Learning Disabled class. Our school is located in a rural section of upstate South Carolina. The racial composition of the community is predominately white, with smaller populations of African American, Hispanic, and a few other very small percentages of various races. Spearman's student population is 80% white, 8% African American, 5% Hispanic and 7% other. Over the last three years our school has seen enormous growth. Our student population has increased by almost 100 students during this time. Many of the students we serve come from lower income families which qualifies us to be a Title I school. Forty-five percent of our students receive free and reduced lunch. Increasingly, our students come from nontraditional family structures such as single family homes, foster care, and those with grandparents as guardians. Several students are categorized as homeless, either living with extended family or in temporary accommodations. For these reasons, we provide support for families in nourishing their child's education. We host a school-wide Literacy Night, STEAM Night (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), and reading workshops for parents to learn ways to assist their children in becoming lifelong learners. We partner with Clemson University through a federal grant and the YMCA to provide after-school programs for our students.

Spearman Elementary helps all students develop the world class knowledge, skills, and life characteristics of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate by providing a safe, caring and academically challenging learning environment. We provide world class knowledge by adhering to rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness. Spearman promotes high achievement by using the balanced literacy model, hands-on math activities, Guided Math, STEAM activities, and writing across the curriculum. We also place a strong emphasis on high levels of achievement in literacy by implementing the requirements and standards from the South Carolina Read to Succeed Act. Our lowest-achieving second and third grade students have the opportunity to attend a six week summer reading camp to reinforce literacy skills. We continue to promote science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education through our STEM Lab. Students learn to code, work with robotics and problem solve using these disciplines in this new and collaborative setting. Students learn world class skills by continuing to use technology in innovative ways to collaborate, communicate, and create, while thinking critically and problem solving. We are continuing our journey with our Technology Innovation Initiative by providing every child in K-5th grade with iPads.

We teach life and career characteristics such as integrity, work ethic, interpersonal skills, global perspective and perseverance. To be proactive in attaining a positive school climate, we have implemented the schoolwide Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. We have character education through our guidance program, as well as programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (P.B.I.S.) and Mentor Anderson.

We value the importance of providing our students a variety of experiences, especially in the arts. Spearman has an innovative piano lab where students receive piano lessons throughout the year. We offer a Strings program starting in 5th grade where students can receive weekly lessons that can continue through high school. Our art program challenges students to tap into their artistic side and express themselves through painting, pottery and digital art. Spearman students have the opportunity to be a part of our school chorus, performing at venues throughout the year such as the Greenville Hospital System, local nursing homes, and a district-wide concert called Spring Sing. Spearman houses a summer camp for district students who are gifted and talented in music and visual arts.

We want to teach our students how to be leaders and to serve others to make our world better. Our Student Council works weekly on school projects such as recycling and helping to host our after school events. Our students can participate in leadership activities and clubs such as Archery Club, Running Club, Garden Club, Safety Patrol, Morning News Show, Flag Patrol, Drama Club, bucket drumming, Lego Robotics Club, book clubs, and library helpers.

In 2016, Spearman Elementary was awarded the Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School Award. The Blue Ribbon

Lighthouse School Award is a nation-wide recognition program for schools of excellence. Schools are identified and selected for this award based on achievement of excellent performance in all nine major categories of the Blueprint for Excellence Assessment. As evidence of our continued commitment to academic excellence, Spearman has also been recognized by the South Carolina State Department of Education as a Palmetto Gold and Silver winner for excellent ratings in student achievement. The state report card consistently rates our school as "EXCELLENT" in the Absolute rating for overall academic performance. While our school has excelled in many areas, we stay committed to continual improvement.

Together with our students, parents, and community, we strive to make sure every student is successful. We are committed to our mission of being our BEST every day for every student: B - Being effective with instruction, E - Excelling in all we do, S - Supplying students with a safe environment, T - Treating all children with love and respect.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

At Spearman Elementary School, the learning standards guide English language arts (ELA) goals and instruction within our school. At the beginning of every unit of study, teachers study their grade-level standards to be assessed during the unit and consider how our curricular approach of balanced literacy will be used to support the learning of those standards. We use a balanced literacy approach to address all learning standards in reading and writing. Teachers have implemented reading and writing workshops within their daily instruction to meet standards while addressing the unique and diverse needs of students. During reading and writing workshops, various instructional approaches are implemented to differentiate instruction for students. A best practice model used is the gradual release model. This model encourages teachers to strategically transfer responsibility in the learning process to students. In the initial phase of the lesson, the teacher has the greatest amount of responsibility when introducing a new concept. As the lesson progresses, more responsibility is given to the students as they work through their new learning. It follows a pattern of “I do, we do, you do.” Students feel safe in taking risks as the teacher scaffolds their thinking and understanding during the lesson. It is critical to meet the individual needs of students during English language arts instruction. Teachers use data from Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) testing data, and Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessments to identify students reading below grade level in kindergarten through fifth grade. Reading interventionists meet with those students for 40 minutes a day, five days a week. The interventionist provides targeted reading instruction to strengthen the students’ reading abilities. In addition, students receive targeted instruction daily with their classroom teachers. Anecdotal notes and classroom-based assessments are used to create differentiated guided reading groups and strategy groups. Conversations and conferring points are used to meet the instructional needs of students.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

Spearman’s core curriculum in mathematics is aligned to South Carolina College and Career Readiness and Mathematical Process standards. The scope and sequence of instruction is based on a district created curriculum map. Our pre-kindergarten curriculum is aligned to South Carolina Early Learning Standards and is designed to promote a solid foundation of mathematical problem solving and number sense. Teachers at Spearman work collaboratively to build instructional units using a variety of resources that specifically address learning standards while incorporating hands on learning, problem solving, and critical thinking activities into each lesson. Instructional approaches include using manipulatives and visual models, providing multiple representations, and using explicit instruction with an “I Do, We Do, You Do” approach. We also use a guided math approach which allows teachers to scaffold, reteach, and reinforce skills during large and small group instruction and station work. All students have an iPad and receive technology-based support to develop math fluency and problem solving skills. Math intervention is provided before and after school for students who are not meeting expectations in the form of technology-based support. Students may also receive intervention services in a small group pull-out program. Spearman uses multiple forms of assessment to improve student and school performance in math. Measures of Academic Progress is used to help determine if a student is below, at, or above grade level. It also measures student growth and identifies strengths and weaknesses of each child. Teachers give pretests prior to unit instruction and use this data to group students and guide instruction. During unit instruction, teachers use quick quizzes, exit tickets, and informal observational data to monitor student understanding and adjust instruction as needed.

#### **1c. Science:**

Our science curriculum consists of meshing state standards with influences such as Full Option Science System (F.O.S.S.) and Science and Technology Concepts (S.T.C.) kits. After researching science data, we found that one of the best methods to prepare students for the future world of science and technology is to bridge those disciplines through Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Our core science

themes are patterns; cause/effect: mechanism and explanation; scale, proportion, and quantity; systems and system models; energy and matter; flows, cycles, and conservation; structure and function; and stability and change. We have designed our curriculum to address South Carolina state science standards while weaving experiences with technology, math, and engineering. In years past, our standardized test data showed that science was a weakness, which led to the creation of a STEM class. Outside of classroom science instruction, students visit STEM once per week. Because our state values STEM enough to make engineering a focus of science standards at every grade level, we have provided students with opportunities to design and compete in local and state engineering competitions. Students have participated and placed in the It-ology Innovation Challenge (1st place for our state), Cardboard Regatta (1st place for our district), and JET TOY competition (1st place for our district). To assess science, we use formative and summative assessments. Examples include standardized tests, unit assessments, projects, lab work, presentations, Edulastic (web-based,) Google Forms, Google Docs, Nearpod, and Google Classroom just to name a few. Each grade level also designs at least one field trip that focuses on specific science standards.

### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Spearman's social studies program begins in K4 with an introduction to communities. Each year builds upon the last as students gain a broader perspective of their belonging in the world. Early grades focus on exploring roles as citizens within a community and an understanding of American democracy and culture. The upper grades learn history: South Carolina state history in third grade, and in the fourth and fifth grades, the founding of our nation to present day. The learning standards are taught using primary documents, explicit instruction, project-based learning, and a cross-curricular approach when appropriate. Technology serves an important role to allow our learners to interact with history. For example, students use websites and apps to go on virtual field trips where they experience historical reenactments or see important landmarks around our nation. Our school arranges for in-house field trips where history is reenacted and students have hands-on experiences from time periods they study. Learning stations are utilized so that students may take ownership of their own learning. These are designed using data from the previous year and also end of unit data to tailor instruction to individual students. When working through our long range plans for the year, we look at the suggested areas of emphasis based on data from our state's standardized test, classroom assessments, students' writing, and teacher observations. We use these things to drive instruction for each school year. For example, this past year our fifth grade's social studies scores were the highest in Anderson School District One. Although these scores affirm that we are on the right track, we analyze any areas of weakness so that we may make adjustments for the future. Social studies at Spearman Elementary exposes children to their community, nation, and world; the role that America has played within history; and how each of us fits into the larger picture around us. Exploring our past and present is an integral piece of our learning at Spearman and helps our students obtain an empathetic global perspective necessary to be a positive citizen of the world.

### **1e. For secondary schools:**

### **1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

Our four-year-old program addresses the physical, social, linguistic, and cognitive areas of development which align to the South Carolina Early Learning Standards (SC-ELS). We provide children with a play and inquiry-based learning environment. Our instructional day includes a balance of whole group, small group and learning center experiences. Individualized instruction in literacy and math occurs daily with an emphasis on play and social interactions to build oral language abilities. Centers include print-rich materials and resources which students use independently to foster and develop literacy. Reading readiness is supported by using the Balanced Literacy Model. In math, students engage with numbers, shapes, and patterns to promote a solid foundation of mathematical problem solving and understanding. Early learning experiences affect later academic success, and we offer a high quality, well-rounded program so our students can grow and progress in their school readiness skills and social and emotional development.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Spearman educators are believers in whole child education. We support and enhance our classroom curriculum with visual and performing arts, physical education, social and emotional learning, STEM class, an extensive library, and technology and media support. Students in kindergarten through 5th grade attend a different Related Arts each day of the week for 45 minutes per day. Here they learn life skills highlighted in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. These skills include collaboration and teamwork, creativity and innovation, perseverance, self-direction and global perspective.

One such related arts class is STEM, which targets Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics to develop the total learner. Students use these components to complete challenges, design projects, and work collaboratively with groups. Science skills are heavily targeted during this block along with challenges that are designed to enhance problem solving capabilities. The STEM teacher collaborates with homeroom teachers to target grade-specific skills that are covered in their classes during science and math. Because STEAM is also a large focus of our school, the STEM teacher and art teacher often work collaboratively to design and implement projects that incorporate both STEM and Art.

In visual arts, students are encouraged to think creatively while working on an extensive range of projects. From practicing fine motor skills to drawing and painting techniques, to design challenges, students are able to show self-expression and personal choice in each of their art pieces. Our art curriculum supports the standards being taught in the classroom. For example, third graders create projects that tie in with South Carolina history, ELA standards are reinforced with a poetry and pottery lesson in 5th grade, and math standards are explored using pattern and geometric shapes in batik-style projects. Spearman students gain a global perspective as they study art from around the world created by different cultures.

Spearman's students receive music instruction throughout their elementary school experience. In addition, students in grades three through five receive piano instruction in our piano lab. Not only does this reinforce dexterity and concentration, it also enhances their math skills, creativity, and music literacy. Students are also offered a strings class in the fifth grade. Spearman Elementary provides performance opportunities through our chorus club and a school-wide Variety Show. A select auditioned group of students is also chosen each year to participate in CREATE, our district-wide Gifted and Talented summer music and art camp, housed at Spearman.

In Physical Education, kindergarten through 2nd grade students are exposed to many different age-appropriate foundational skills such as locomotor skills, gymnastics, jump roping, cooperative games, parachute, obstacle courses, climbing wall, dance and introduction to specific sport skills. Students learn body space awareness as well as how to take turns and work together. Third through fifth grade students participate in sport units using the Sport Ed. model as well as learning how the body works. Each student in these grades participate in a fitness assessment which encourages them to build healthy goals for themselves. Fourth and fifth grade students participate in a 6-week archery unit, and a team is formed of twenty-four of those students to compete in local, regional and state competitions. All students participate in Kids Heart Challenge community service project to raise awareness and money for the American Heart Association.

Spearman's mission to provide students with life characteristics on top of the knowledge and skills they obtain is supported by the addition of social and emotional learning in the related arts rotation once per week. We have implemented the Second Step curriculum and additional lessons that reiterate our P.B.I.S. (Positive Behavioral Intervention Support) goals. This curriculum gives the school a common language for how to address empathy, learning skills, emotions, and friendships from kindergarten through fifth grade. Through activities, stories, songs, and practice, students grow their social and emotional skills in a rolling curriculum that will enhance their experience at Spearman and launch them into middle school knowing how to treat others well.

South Carolina's new computer science standards are the guideline for the time spent in Spearman's computer lab. Here students focus on typing skills, coding, digital citizenship, and how computers can be a tool for learning, creating, and publishing their work. In addition to the computer lab, Spearman students

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have access to a classroom set of Chromebooks, and we are fortunate to have a 1:1 iPad to student ratio as well. These devices are used to enhanced both the classroom and related arts curriculum. Our district provides support for such technology through a full time instructional technologist and an iPad support technician.

Spearman's media center is the learning hub of the school. It serves all students: K4 through 5th grade. The library is on a flexible schedule to be available for collaboration with teachers and individual student needs. K4-1st grade come in weekly for lessons in addition to the related arts rotation. The library houses over 12,000 books at a ratio of 18.7 books per student including fiction, nonfiction, picture books graphic novels, magazines, eBooks, and online databases. Books are curated based on student interest, teacher need, and also what is new and award-winning. We strive to have culturally diverse books so that our students can see themselves mirrored in the books that they read.

### **3. Special Populations:**

We take pride in knowing each and every child at Spearman and striving to meet their individual needs. We know that children and their families need support in order to grow and reach their potential and meet their physical, social, and emotional needs. Our efforts include the GoalPOST after-school program, family development opportunities, Response to Intervention and Individualized Educational Plan meetings/teams, mental health referrals, weekly feeding program, celebrations of achievement, family nights, guidance referrals, small group intervention, gifted and talented support, and special education services. We implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports using a House system which promotes a motivational school climate and healthy competition and builds bonds among students.

When placing students in classes, the latest spring data (Spring Measures of Achievement Performance, SC Ready, and Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment) are used to group students into reading groups of 4-6. The goal is for each student to achieve at least one year's growth. Students with the lowest overall achievement receive daily reading intervention in addition to guided reading with the classroom teacher. Students reading above grade level are challenged in the regular classroom daily and attend a gifted and talented program weekly which provides rigor on their advanced level. Classroom teachers analyze reading benchmarks every two to three weeks to determine each student's progress and regroup students as needed. Reading Interventionists turn in a Nine Weeks Progress Report to determine passing/failing based on the Leveled Literacy Intervention Benchmark Assessments. Students participating in the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention also participate in Reading Horizons. This program increases student engagement and facilitates student transfer of decoding skills into fluent reading.

Special Education Self-Contained students are mainstreamed into regular education classes when academically appropriate. The Learning Disabled Class and Emotionally Disabled Class combine their students and group them by reading and math levels to better serve individual needs. Math students are given pre- and post-tests for each unit of study to determine strategy groups. Resource students are served using the inclusion model. To close any achievement gaps, we provide math and reading intervention, small group instruction, additional tutoring through the GoalPOST after-school program, teacher-led tutoring, and individualized instruction plans and accommodations.

All students scoring in the Approaching Category on SC Ready in grades 3-5 are invited to attend the GoalPOST after-school program where math and reading skills are reinforced each day. Teachers provide daily math practice enhancing weekly math objectives and individualized Dreambox Lessons are assigned per student. Underachieving students not attending GoalPOST are invited to Math Club once a week for an hour with a grade level teacher to achieve mastery in grade level standards. Students who show mastery on pretests are challenged by advancing to the next grade level's standards using New York Engaged Math, Project Based Learning projects or Dreambox Math. Mentoring Mathematical Minds, advanced curriculum units for talented math students in grades 3-5, is taught during gifted and talented classes. Reflex Math is a technology program designed to increase math fluency based on computation moving students to mastery and above.

educational opportunities to students who have a primary home language other than English. The Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS) assessment is a standardized English language proficiency test that is used to determine English proficiency in listening, reading, writing, and speaking in compliance with requirements. All students in our four-year-old kindergarten through fifth grade who qualify for ESOL receive daily individual services, modifications and accommodations. The ESOL teacher meets with classroom teachers to plan and monitor each student's progress.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Walking through the front doors of Spearman Elementary, it is evident what a positive school culture we have. Our school is exceptionally clean and well-kept, and everyone is friendly and welcoming, giving the school a family feel. Visitors comment on this regularly. Providing students with a positive, warm, and safe learning environment is a priority at our school and helps set the stage for our academics. We have high expectations for our students, but support them within those expectations. We differentiate our instruction to meet the needs of all students and know in our hearts that learning happens across all ability levels.

One way teachers motivate and engage students regularly is through the use of room and hallway transformations. This is often done with the more challenging units as a way to help foster a connection to that topic or unit. For example, earlier this year our fifth grade hall was transformed into Hogwarts to introduce a unit on solutions in science. The students were highly motivated to learn because they fancied themselves making potions.

In order to give our students a feeling of empowerment and ownership for their choices, we use a house system where students can earn points for both themselves and their house by displaying good behavior (responsibility, control, helpfulness, and respectfulness). This helps to foster a sense of belonging within their house, as well as encourage some healthy competition! It helps the students to feel a part of something bigger than themselves by creating a community to which they can belong within the school. All students are encouraged to congratulate and celebrate one another. There are television screens throughout our school which are connected to the app that is used to track our house system. House points and individual student accomplishments are projected on those screens to celebrate students all day.

Socially and emotionally, we support our students through the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, team building activities, monthly character traits, and morning meetings which are a safe place in each classroom where each child has a voice. Character education is provided through the related arts schedule using the Second Step curriculum.

The teachers at Spearman Elementary feel supported and valued as well. There is an open door policy with the administration, and it is known that teachers are heard, their feelings and opinions are respected, and they are supported. Teachers also feel valued through the support of our amazing PTO. They do so much to help our school and step up to the plate in any way that they can to support teachers. Spearman is a true community school with a strong family feel that is obvious to anyone who comes to visit.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Spearman Elementary prides itself on strong family and community engagement. Upon enrolling a child in kindergarten, each family receives a gift bag of resources that they can use to prepare their child to enter school with academic readiness skills. Additionally, we organize a kindergarten parent night every spring to introduce new families to Spearman, provide a brief overview of the curriculum, and solicit direct support for each child's education. Data from the 2018 administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, the first year the gift bags were given out, indicates that forty-nine percent of students scored "demonstrating readiness" upon entering K5 and thirty-eight percent of students scored "approaching readiness." Only fourteen percent of K5 students scored in the "emerging readiness" category. This shows parental buy-in is essential to our success as a school.

Spearman is fortunate to have many active parents who, through the Parent Teacher Organization board, organize numerous events throughout the year to improve our school and community. For example, last year's annual fundraiser was a Fun Run that generated enough proceeds for the purchase of a picnic shelter with tables and additional equipment for our playground. Previous years' fundraising efforts have provided funding for an outdoor classroom space, greenhouse/garden area and walking track. These contributions have significantly increased the amount of time Spearman students can spend outdoors engaged in learning

activities.

Moreover, the PTO and Spearman host numerous annual events for community-building purposes. Breakfast with the Grands (Grandparents), Breakfast with Dad, Breakfast with Mom, Daddy-Daughter Dance, Mother-Son Night Out, and Breakfast with Santa are just some examples of celebrations Spearman organizes annually to give families an opportunity to bond within the school setting. The PTO also plans an annual Fall Festival in October, bringing together family-friendly activities and community vendors for an evening of fun. We believe these events nurture a sense of common purpose: the school and families working together to create a thriving community.

Focusing on the whole child, our events also aim to extend what we do during school hours to the home setting. For example, we celebrate educational Family Literacy Night every March with the purpose of encouraging families to incorporate literary habits in the home. Additionally each spring we host a Real Men Read day inviting male community members – even high school sports teams – to read to our students.

During Mental Health Awareness Month this year, the school counselor hosted a Family Movie Night screening of the film “Inside Out” to raise awareness of mental illnesses in childhood. Spearman also holds an annual Variety Show in the spring to showcase students and families with unique talents. From literacy, to mental health, to the performing arts and just having fun, our events focus on nurturing all aspects of our students’ emotional and educational growth.

Spearman is also fortunate to have a strong relationship with the local YMCA Mentor Program, which brings trained mentor volunteers to our school weekly. The relationships these mentors establish with our students yield positive outcomes in the form of increased student attendance and engagement in school.

These collective efforts to include parents and the community in the education of our students have paid off in the form of high ratings from families on Spearman Elementary’s annual report card. In 2018, ninety-six percent of parents reported satisfaction with the learning environment Spearman offers. This mirrors the ninety-six percent of parents who were also satisfied with the social and physical environment of Spearman.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Spearman Elementary School’s approach to professional development is based on district-wide and school-based initiatives, goals, and testing data. Implementing a balanced literacy approach has been a school initiative and goal for multiple years. Teachers implement best practices for all students. Professional development in this area includes teaching instructional strategies in literacy. To align this professional development with the standards, each grade level meets with the administration and the reading coach to interpret the English Language Arts standards and decide the best way to assess those standards and create common assessments. Thoroughly analyzing testing data such as classroom assessments, anecdotal notes, Northwest Evaluation Assessment (NWEA), Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) scores, and South Carolina Ready scores, provides information which allows us to tie our literacy assessments to South Carolina standards.

Our teachers are trained in guided math to differentiate instruction for our students which encompasses whole group and small group instruction. Professional development includes a book study to learn the structure and approach to teaching guided math. A math specialist from the State Department of Education meets with teachers quarterly to share instructional strategies that align to our state standards and school goals. Teachers also have the opportunity to observe classrooms at other schools where guided math has been adopted. This gives them a better vision of what guided math instruction looks like in a classroom and helps build their confidence as math teachers.

To create 21st-century learners, the district implemented a one-to-one device initiative to allow students to use technology as a learning tool. The district’s instructional technologists provide professional development monthly for all teachers during planning. They explain ways to incorporate technology,

enhance instruction, and they share the latest technology tools in education. Much of this professional development stems from teachers' requests regarding what they would like to learn. Another part of this professional development incorporates the teaching of digital citizenship in classrooms. This aspect is crucial as our students publish both academically and socially in a technology-driven world.

It is important that professional development revolves around our school's initiatives, goals, and data and that professional development extends outside our school and district. Our school invests in national training as well, such as visiting exemplary schools in other states and attending national conferences. Our professional development goal is to meet the needs of all teachers regardless of their years of experience. We equip teachers with best practices and the tools needed to enhance classroom instruction school-wide. Our ultimate goal is to grow students who are confident and successful learners.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

Our administration at Spearman believes in and supports shared leadership, professional learning communities, vertical team planning, and collaboration among all faculty, staff and stakeholders. The vision of our leadership at Spearman has propelled us into a successful, thriving, and student-centered school where the excitement of learning takes place every day. The leadership is a role model for teachers and students as they model kindness and life-long learning every day.

At Spearman Elementary we believe in the philosophy of servant leadership. The leadership here at Spearman strives to support the entire faculty and staff so they can develop and perform as highly as possible. Administration desires to lead in such a way that the faculty and staff acquire personal growth through their growing commitment and engagement. Through serving, supporting, and developing teachers, we believe our students will benefit and will continue to be successful.

Spearman's Elementary School's leadership promotes and supports student performance and system effectiveness. We adhere to the district policies in order to ensure the school's effectiveness in the area of student achievement. Our leadership establishes policies and practices that support our mission statement, "Spearman Elementary School is committed to providing each student with world class knowledge, skills, and life characteristics based on the individual needs of each student." Spearman's goals are aligned with the district's in order to foster a positive and effective school culture that supports the mission and purpose of the school. Students participate in a learning environment where they feel safe, challenged, and acknowledged throughout the school day.

With high expectations, our leadership team consists of administration, guidance, coaches, and teachers. Teachers provide excellent instruction, are well-prepared, and have positive outlooks. Our success continues to climb because of our commitment to reaching every student. Our administration has developed an effective and engaging behavior system that promotes positive behaviors, positive competition, and a sense of community through a schoolwide positive behavior support system. Spearman leadership provides opportunities for individual, grade level, and schoolwide professional development. First-year teachers participate in district induction courses which provide clear expectations, guidance, resources and support. They are also supported by a mentor their first year. The morning announcements continually remind students and staff to be in control, encourage others, show respect, and take responsibility. The leadership encourages and supports our staff and faculty to maintain high standards and hold students to those high standards through academic rigor. All leaders and staff maintain and continuously improve conditions for student learning, from a warm, welcoming environment beginning at the front doors of the school to a positive classroom environment. Leadership provides support and feedback to ensure teachers' success which results in student success as well. Professional development is provided to offer opportunities for growth in planning, instruction, assessment, and professionalism across all content areas.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Spearman administrators and leadership teams collaborate annually to identify and determine the needs of our school. Grade level and schoolwide teams discuss and analyze both academic and behavioral data. In recent years, the data shows a continual increase in the number of students with social and emotional needs, which is known to affect overall academic and social growth. In order to determine the best approach to address this issue, the principal conducted a teacher survey prior to starting the 2009 school year. This survey identified a need for a school-wide behavior plan. A team was formed to create Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports (P.B.I.S.). We established a mission to help students always be their B.E.S.T. (B-Be in Control, E-Encourage Others, S-Show Respect, and T-Take Responsibility). Hand signals were developed to help students remember the expectations which they rehearse each day during morning announcements. The team was also responsible for assessing the school “hot spots” to determine what behaviors were expected in each location. A matrix was created to inform students, staff, and parents of these expected behaviors. The matrix is posted in all classrooms, “hot spot” areas, and is given to parents at the beginning of each school year.

In addition to the matrix, a scaled behavior chart is used in every classroom to help students gauge their behavior throughout the day. This gives students more responsibility over their behavior and offers them opportunities to learn from their mistakes and make better choices. Students begin each day in the middle of the chart labeled “Ready to Learn.” They can then be moved up the chart for making good choices or moved down for making poor choices. Students are given praise, recognition, and positive reinforcements as they move up the chart to “Good” or “Outstanding.” Students may also move down the chart to “Think About It” or “Parent Contact” for making poor decisions, although they still get the opportunity to improve their behavior and move back up the chart. This type of behavioral system helps both students and staff focus on expected behaviors and positive reinforcements rather than spending their time on negative behaviors and punishments.

With the implementation of P.B.I.S., teachers are able to spend more time on classroom instruction and less on discipline. Students have also learned how to regulate their emotions and behaviors in order to stay on task and engaged in their learning. This is evident through a dramatic decrease in office referrals. The overall climate of the school is more positive with a mutual respect between teachers and students as well as between parents and school. This shift in mindset creates a welcoming and positive environment where students excel academically, socially, and emotionally.