

U.S. Department of Education
2022 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 Mrs. Felisa McDavid
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name St. James Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 9711 St James Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Myrtle Beach State SC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 29588-7431

County Horry County

Telephone (843) 650-8220 Fax (843) 650-7909

Web site/URL
https://www.horrycountyschools.net/St_James_Elementary E-mail fmcdavid@horrycountyschools.net

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Rick Maxey E-mail RMaxey@horrycountyschools.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Horry School District 01 Tel. (843) 488-6700

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The 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 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

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

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

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	44	18	62
K	75	74	149
1	72	63	135
2	80	93	173
3	66	80	146
4	72	89	161
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	409	417	826

*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
 - 1.5 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 5.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.5 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78.6 % White
 - 6.7 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 8%

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	38
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	26
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	64
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	816
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Mic Mac, Ukrainian, Gujarati

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
23 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 54 %

Total number students who qualify: 446

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 17 %
140 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>21</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>2</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>19</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>29</u> Developmental Delay | <u>23</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>44</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	35
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	21
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	18
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	95%	95%	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 2021.

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.

The mission of St. James Elementary School, a richly diverse community of learners committed to a tradition of academic and personal excellence, is to ensure that our children are fully prepared to be productive participants in a constantly changing world through personalized, progressive learning which develops self-motivation, high expectations, lifeskills, and the lifelong pursuit of learning.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

St. James Elementary does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, immigrant status, English-speaking status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or S.C. law in its programs or activities.

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

St. James Elementary School (SJE) is located on the south end of Horry County in the Burgess community of Myrtle Beach, SC. We serve students in the rapidly growing St. James attendance cluster along with two other elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, and one high school. Our school was built in 1956 and has experienced growth and transition, but one constant remains - our commitment to supporting the journey to excellence for all students.

St. James Elementary serves 826 students in Child Development (CD) through fourth grade. Throughout the years, SJE has welcomed students from various ethnicities and backgrounds. Our ethnic makeup consists of 17 different countries and nine spoken languages, resulting in 3% of our population identified as ML (multilingual). Seventeen percent of our students receive special education services, 4.6% gifted and talented, and 54% of our students receive subsidized meals. Housing varies from affluent developments to modest homes, apartments, and government subsidized housing. The occupation of our families varies from business owners and professionals to parents who are unemployed and dependent on government assistance.

Supporting the Journey to Excellence is our vision, and that support can be seen through our test scores, parental support, and school rankings. According to the US News & World Report, St. James Elementary is ranked #12 among elementary schools across the state of South Carolina and #1 among elementary schools in Horry County. Although our school has many unique variables, we have consistently received "Excellent" in the areas of academic achievement and preparing for success on our school report card. Compared with schools like ours in the state of South Carolina, SJE consistently ranks in the top 10%.

We strive daily to provide a nurturing, safe environment for children to learn. In addition to meeting the academic needs of our students, the COVID pandemic allowed additional opportunities for our school to meet social and emotional learning (SEL) needs through guidance lessons and social emotional support. Students start each day with an SEL lesson that can be applied throughout their day. The skills students learn through the SEL curriculum can also be extended throughout their lifetimes. Students also have access to rehabilitative behavioral counselors and guidance-based support groups. Numerous churches and businesses support our children through the Backpack Buddies program, Ripley's Aquarium character education program, vision and hearing screenings, dental services, and donations. The community is always generous during holiday seasons, as they provide meals and gifts to our families in need. Our students are also supported through identified mentors within the community and through Coastal Carolina University. Our parents show unwavering support through our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which funds many events and activities. In recent years, our PTA has covered the cost of study trips for all students. Other vital partnerships that consistently support SJE include teacher cadets from our local high school and our School Improvement Council (SIC).

At St. James Elementary, our teachers and leadership team support the journey to excellence by frequently monitoring data and consistently reflecting ways we can continue to grow our students as learners. Teachers meet regularly in PLCs (professional learning communities) to analyze data to identify strengths and opportunities for growth. This allows teachers to plan next steps in instruction and to differentiate the learning for their students. We analyze and reflect on summative and formative assessments including South Carolina College and Career-Ready Assessments (READY) (statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math), DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), IEP (Individualized Education Program) goals, intervention data, digital content data, and progress monitoring reports. We understand the importance of high expectations and analyzing data, but we also know that building strong, positive relationships is paramount to developing lifelong learners. While students are given heterogeneous classroom assignments, we use the above-mentioned assessments to strategically place students in homogeneous small groups to provide differentiated, tailored instruction to meet their individual needs. We also provide enrichment opportunities. Using state identification criteria, students in third and fourth grades are identified for math and English Language Arts gifted and talented programs. Three full-time and two part-time interventionists provide small group instruction to students whose data indicate the need for alternative learning methods and/or pacing.

Before the pandemic, students participated in a variety of clubs and activities. From art clubs to drama productions and archery, there was something for everyone. Some clubs and activities included: drama, Good Morning club, morning reading club, sewing club, archery, steel band club, clay club, technology club, Good News club, Mad Science, Girls on the Run, golf club, mural club, and art club. We look forward to resuming these exciting and engaging activities.

Prior to the pandemic, our school overflowed with families and community members during school-sponsored activities and events. These activities and events included our annual Grandparents Day breakfast, Family Game Night, Literacy Night, Faith and Fellowship breakfast, Fine Arts Day, Field Day, Boosterthon Fun Run, seasonal art nights, talent shows, Veterans Day assemblies, holiday luncheons, and quarterly awards celebrations. We partnered with community members to capture the history of the community for present and future generations. Our students recorded live interviews with residents with established roots in our community. The interviews were transcribed into books that were issued to those who were interviewed during a public event at our school. Teachers received a book for their classroom libraries, and a copy is on display in our library. We welcomed parents to join their children daily for lunch. While the pandemic prevented us from hosting in-person activities, we continued to host events virtually with high rates of participation. Throughout the pandemic, we continued to hold food drives for the Salvation Army to benefit families in need across our region. Our school has reached a level of excellence because the school and community work together to grow our students academically and to build character. We do not rest upon our laurels. We continue to support the journey to excellence every day for each student.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

St. James Elementary is committed to preparing students for success. We work emphatically to prepare students who are both college and career ready. Teachers create personalized learning plans for each student through small group instruction, individualized goal setting, differentiated workstations, and student-centered digital content. To allow for accountability and self-regulation of learning, students in first through fourth grades record and track individual learning goals. Teachers collaborate to enhance instruction and to meet the needs of special populations including gifted and talented, special education, and multilingual learners. To provide a successful transition from high school to the real world, St. James Elementary School's core curriculum utilizes South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and math as well as state-level science and social studies standards. District-level curriculum specialists, in collaboration with county-wide lead teachers and instructional coaches, developed curriculum pacing guides and support documents to provide a framework for learning with high expectations for all students. Teachers use data from DIBELS, MAP, digital content programs, such as Lexia for ELA, DreamBox Math and Freckle for math in primary grades, ALEKS program, MAP Accelerator (math), and Achieve3000 (ELA) for elementary grades in addition to intervention data to make instructional decisions and to differentiate the learning to maximize learning for all students. St. James Elementary remains committed to maintaining a culture where learners are empowered, and optimal learning is maximized for all students.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The purpose of our ELA curriculum is to ensure that all students are equipped to think independently and analytically through learning opportunities that promote high levels of engagement in reading and writing that also strengthen skills of self-expression. In the primary grades, students are introduced to the five essential components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Classroom instruction is driven by grade level standards: inquiry, learning to read, writing, communication, and purposes of reading for enjoyment or information. These standards are the foundation of the South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards.

It is essential for primary learners to work collaboratively and engage in conversation to build language skills, vocabulary, and basic reading skills. The instructional model can include whole group, small group, partner activities, and individual activities. These lessons may be teacher-directed, guided, or collaboratively based in a workstation activity. Workstations include extensions of the literacy skills previously taught by the teacher. When students work collaboratively in workstations, this allows teachers to pull small groups and differentiate instruction based on DIBELS data, classroom observations, and digital content data. Teachers use Lexia, Freckle, and DreamBox digital content data for small group instruction in ELA and math. To provide additional reading instruction and support for reading and comprehension, our school has purchased Reading A-Z (RAZ Kids) and RAZ Plus for all classrooms. Epic is also utilized for reading practice and instruction. Students who require additional support participate in the BURST reading intervention program in addition to their teacher-directed small group lesson. Primary teachers understand the importance of building foundational literacy skills in our students. This foundation allows our students to be proficient readers and writers in the future. We want our students to be engaged and challenged in reading and writing to assist them in becoming independent thinkers and problem solvers.

At the elementary level, our students are reading to learn. We guide them to become more inquisitive and to analyze texts for information. At this age, our students are learning to discern the information which they are reading. Reading fluency and accuracy are essential for their success. At this age, our students are developing a more complex vocabulary and using grammar to write more detailed and organized sentences. Elementary standards include: comprehension, accuracy, fluency, enhancing vocabulary, and writing.

Students learn how to follow the process of writing which includes planning, writing, and editing to become more proficient in descriptive writing and TDA (text-dependent analysis). Students engage in both reading and writing skills in the TDA process. Students are required to read a text and refer to the text to support their responses with evidence from the text. Students deepen their knowledge of what is read. Students work collaboratively during workstation activities to sharpen their world-class skills as outlined in the Profile of a South Carolina Graduate. Teachers deliver instruction through whole-group, small-group, and individual lessons to meet the needs of each student. Small group lessons are derived from data analysis using MAP data, Lexia data, Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) data, formative assessments, and teacher observations. Students who show the need for intervention support are pulled during workstations to receive targeted instruction from the Passport program. Students who are identified as gifted by state criteria or are designated as high fliers by the school are served in an enrichment gifted and talented program. Teachers also access online tools such as Achieve 3000 to differentiate instruction.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

St. James Elementary utilizes the Everyday Math Program (EDM) to develop students into lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and problem solvers. The EDM program is a spiraling program that is rooted in real-world application problems and supports grades K-4. This program heavily uses manipulatives, and it focuses on conceptual understanding. ConnectEd, a technology component to our math program, is used to support our students. Math instruction is guided by South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards. Primary students are developing number sense, an understanding of base ten, algebraic thinking, operations, geometry, measurement, and data analysis. Elementary students are focusing on the same concepts at a more advanced level. Fractions are added to the number sense concept beginning in third grade. At St. James Elementary, we want to help our students to become mathematically literate students who make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason both contextually and conceptually, use critical thinking skills to justify mathematical reasoning and critique the reasoning of others, connect mathematical ideas and real-world situations through modeling, use a variety of mathematical tools effectively and strategically, communicate mathematically, and approach mathematical situations with precision, and identify and utilize structure and patterns. Students are provided daily math instruction through teacher-directed whole-group lessons, workstations, and small-group differentiated lessons. Primary teachers use observations, DreamBox data (digital content), and formative assessments to differentiate small-group instruction.

Elementary students are grouped in math classes by homeroom heterogeneous grouping. They receive this core instruction for sixty minutes each day. An additional thirty minutes for differentiated small group lessons are also provided daily. Teachers use data from MAP, digital content, and formative assessments to design specific lessons to meet the needs of students. Students who are served in our gifted and talented program use the M3 (Mentoring Mathematical Minds) for the duration of the ninety minutes. Students may also qualify for math intervention with an intervention teacher based on the student's data and progress monitoring scores. Students in the third grade who need additional support receive intensive instruction twice weekly from an interventionist. Students also participate in digital content to include Dreambox, ALEKS, MAP Accelerator, and Khan Academy.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In the area of science, St. James Elementary uses the Learning in 3Dimensional Science Classroom that incorporates science and engineering practices (SEPs), Crosscutting Concepts (CCC), and Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs). These dimensions are woven into each grade level's state college and career ready science standards. Each grade level is supplied science kits in a rotation that teach the standards and support the dimensions through a hands-on approach. Kindergarten focuses on exploring weather patterns, exploring organisms and the environment, and exploring properties of objects. First graders explore light and shadows, the sun and moon, earth's natural resources, and plants and their environment. Students in second grade learn about animals and their environment, pushes/pulls, weather, and properties of solids and liquids. Third graders learn about the earth's materials and resources, environments and habitats, electricity, and states of matter. In the fourth grade, students study the solar system, characteristics of growth of organisms, weather and climate, and forms of energy such as light and sound.

Science concepts are taught using an inquiry-based approach with the use of science kits. These kits arrive at the school on a rotating basis. Students collaborate and work together to perform hands-on experiments while collecting and recording data in the process. Science interactive notebooking is another instructional strategy used by teachers to enhance student learning. Students organize their science learning as a collection in a notebook. This collection serves as an anchor and timeline for science learning throughout the year. In-person and virtual study trips in these conceptual areas are encouraged to support science instruction. Elementary aged students are tested periodically using the district benchmark assessments throughout the year. Overall, students are expected to observe, explore, analyze, and experiment to draw conclusions and to solve problems. These essential skills mirror the skills found in the Profile of a South Carolina Graduate. Additionally, our school's Talking Trash Recycling program offers our students opportunities to extend classroom learning and study science and engineering practices in a real-world setting.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The social studies curriculum at St. James Elementary is based on South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards. Teachers are provided a district pacing guide and curriculum documents with units and lessons aligned to the standards. Beginning in kindergarten, students learn about the community around them. This learning expands in the first grade to learning about life in South Carolina. In second grade, the learning is broadened to include learning about life in the United States. Third grade students begin a focus on world geography. Finally, fourth graders extend their knowledge of the United States and South Carolina Studies part 1. Our teachers utilize Social Studies Weekly magazine in grades three and four as supplemental text to engage students in the concepts. These elementary teachers also implement the DBQ (Document Based Question) model which allows our students to apply ELA and writing skills while using social studies content. These skills include, but are not limited to, critical thinking, analyzing text, drawing conclusions, and evidence-based writing. All grade levels use varied instructional strategies such as: videos, field trips, texts, photographs, maps, presentations, websites, graphics, animations, simulations, e-books, digital documents, and primary source documents to facilitate the learning. Student learning is assessed through district-based benchmark assessments. Students also apply their learning about the world around them by participating in service learning projects that involve our community.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

St. James Elementary serves 40 students in our child development program. This program is offered to four year old children who reside in our attendance area. Eligibility is determined by the results of a developmental screening process, family income level, parent questionnaire responses, and other contributing factors that may indicate a need for kindergarten readiness support. South Carolina Early Learning Standards and BIG DAY, a state-approved early childhood curriculum program, guide instruction in our child development classrooms. The principles of the BIG DAY curriculum include social emotional development, integrated learning partnership with families, language development, and responsive instruction. There is also an online family space where families can find information about current lessons and activities as well as resources about child development and kindergarten readiness. Downloadable books and all materials are available in English and Spanish. Our child development curriculum aligns to kindergarten – third grade academic standards. The early learning standards and components of the curriculum help to prepare students for school readiness and success in the primary grades. The curriculum provides opportunities for meaningful conversations that help students build oral language and vocabulary. Students have access to the best literature and nonfiction texts. Innovative technology connects students, teacher, and families to the learning process. Program goals promote the development of social, emotional, and academic skills. Language and vocabulary development are encouraged. Decision-making, problem-solving, and respect for others are promoted. Our data reflect that the overwhelming majority of students who participate in our child development program meet the end of year assessment goals and are ready for

kindergarten. St. James Elementary also serves 21 three year old students in our early childhood special education classroom. Students receive instruction and support through the Read It Over Again curriculum. Most of these students transition to our child development or kindergarten classes. We continue to support these students' journey to excellence throughout the primary and elementary grades.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

St. James Elementary is committed to developing the whole child. To prepare students academically, emotionally, physically, and socially, we offer instruction in fine arts, physical education/health, technology/library media, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). We believe these co-curricular classes encourage students to think, create, problem solve, and collaborate. We further believe these skills are vital to success in our ever-changing, global society.

In art, students study and explore various media that connect to learning in the classroom. Students participate in art class 45-minutes weekly. Students are taught SC College and Career Ready general art standards. From hot air balloons on paper with oil pastel and painted details, to glue and tape cardboard creatures, and three dimensional designs, all of our students work hands-on with multiple materials and new ideas. Our school was recently awarded the Distinguished Art Program Grant from the South Carolina Department of Education to implement the area of mixed media, and especially printmaking techniques into our curriculum. We are proud of our students whose artwork have been selected to be displayed on our Principal's Art Wall as well as in local and regional art shows. Enrichment is offered through our after school art, mural, drama design/set, and clay (pottery) clubs.

In music, students have opportunities to create, perform, respond, and connect to various genres of music. Students participate in music class 45-minutes weekly. Students are taught SC College and Career Ready general music standards. Students in primary grades explore music through singing, movement, instruments such as percussion and recorders, and performance. Students in elementary grades explore music through singing, handbells, keyboards, and performance. Opportunities to learn to read music are also offered to students. Students are given opportunities to sing to parents and community members during quarterly PTA meetings. We are also extremely proud of our students who participate in the All State Choir.

In physical education, opportunities abound for our students to participate in a variety of fun, engaging, and enjoyable activities in a safe, positive learning environment. Students participate in physical education class 45-minutes weekly. The physical education curriculum incorporates the Five Health Related Fitness Components and are assessed through Fitnessgram testing. Physical activity and health/nutrition lessons are taught. Students learn the fundamentals of sports that include soccer, basketball, and bowling as well as the importance of collegiality and sportsmanship. Healthy heart habits are also encouraged through the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge. Students have the opportunity to participate in after-school archery club. Prior to the pandemic, partnerships with community members afforded students opportunities to participate in after-school golf and running clubs. Many of our students participate in after-school gymnastics, martial arts, and other sports through our local recreation department.

Our media center provides another exciting learning environment for our students. Instruction, guided by library/media standards (American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Standards Framework for Learners), support our core content curriculum. Students receive library/media instruction 45-minutes weekly. Students research, read for pleasure, and access information. Digital citizenship and online safety are emphasized. In addition to weekly classes, students are welcome to visit the media center before school, after school, and throughout the day with permission. Special events such as book fairs, book character dress-up days, and Literacy Night are enjoyed by students.

To become further engaged in the discovery process, all students participate in hands-on experiences in engineering and design during STEM classes. Students receive STEM instruction 45-minutes weekly. They are encouraged to create, imagine, and design through collaboration. Students learn to problem-solve and create through a variety of media that includes technology, VEX kits, and Legos. These skills will benefit them in the classroom and real-world. Additionally, special speakers such as local weather forecasters and career fair presenters speak to our students on various aspects of science. Many of our students utilize these

skills and information to create award-winning projects in our district's annual technology fair. STEM helps our students to become deeper thinkers with logical solutions. Our school celebrates Earth Day with various outdoor projects, and the Talking Trash recycling program offers our students opportunities to study science and engineering practices in a real-world setting that extends classroom learning.

Our guidance department plays a vital role in supporting the overall well-being of our students. Forty-five minutes of classroom guidance instruction is provided twice each quarter to each homeroom. Classroom guidance instruction is guided by American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards. Our guidance counselors discuss issues, such as bullying, study skills, careers, and self-esteem. Character education is also emphasized. Our counselors work with students individually and in small groups to address specific needs for students who are experiencing serious emotional issues, such as the death of a loved one, anger regulation, divorce, and other crises. Our guidance department coordinates mentors for our students through Coastal Carolina University, local civic organizations, and volunteers. Special events, such as Red Ribbon Week, Kindness Week, Bullying Prevention Week, Career Days. Individualized Goal Plan (IGP) conferences with parents and students of our 3rd and 4th graders to set career and transitional goals, are also organized by our guidance counselors.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Classroom teachers provide differentiated small group instruction as the first level of intervention for our students. They use results from assessments, such as MAP, DIBELS, and ORF (Oral Reading Fluency), to plan and to create these differentiated small groups. Data analysis and collaboration during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide opportunities for teachers to review and to discuss the needs of all students. Teachers also share high-yielding strategies that promote growth. Through data analysis and teacher observation, teachers identify and refer students who are not making adequate progress to our St. James Elementary data team. This team reviews each identified student's performance and response to classroom interventions to determine next steps. These next steps include, but are not limited to: a reading or math Tier 2 intervention group, an invitation to the morning reading club, or a referral for an evaluation planning meeting with the school psychologist.

Students who perform below average in DIBELS at beginning and middle of the year are grouped for more intensive instruction using BURST intervention program for grades Kindergarten and first. These students are normally grouped across the entire grade to optimize skill targeting strategies. Because the pandemic limited transitions, we were unable to utilize this effective practice. Instead, teachers provided the strategies to differentiated groups within their classrooms. This instructional time is valued and delivered everyday with fidelity. These students are progress monitored every ten days to ensure their individual needs are being met and growth is being shown.

Second grade students who perform below grade level in DIBELS and MAP are served in Passport intervention. These students are progress monitored every five and ten days, and their reports are shared with parents. They are also given an ORF progress monitoring measure every ten days.

Learning stations in both the primary and elementary grades are strategically planned and differentiated according to the needs of our students. Our writing program encourages students to write across the curriculum which has empowered students to share their learning on deeper levels. Our third and fourth grade students have opportunities to participate in For the Love of Reading, a fun and engaging, student-interest inspired reading intervention lesson taught daily by our librarian, physical education coaches, and fine arts teachers. Our school created a reading room where students can go to read lexile books with volunteers in a comfortable, home-like atmosphere.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

While teachers differentiate instruction and extend the learning through enrichment opportunities to accommodate the needs of all students, qualifying third and fourth grade students who perform above grade

level at St. James Elementary have the opportunity to participate in our gifted and talented program. Students are identified through CogAt testing, MAP percentiles, South Carolina READY scores, and the Performance Task Assessment. At SJE, students who exceed grade-level expectations are designated as high fliers and are served in the enrichment gifted and talented classes. Gifted and talented students and high fliers receive 120-minutes of ELA instruction and 90-minutes of math instruction daily. Gifted and talented teachers use the Horry County Schools curriculum pacing guides and support documents to provide a framework for learning with high expectations for their students.

Standards-based math instruction is provided through the M3 math program and varied resources, such as MAP Accelerator and ALEKS (math). Teachers access students' schema through grade level standards and then naturally begin to incorporate above grade level standards into the lesson. These instructional strategies and additional resources challenge our students to think, grow, and develop deeper mathematical skills. In ELA, students receive South Carolina standards instruction through William and Mary units along with supplemental novel studies. Varied reading levels are targeted each day through classroom readings, discussions, and project-based instruction. Various Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels are incorporated into the questioning instructional strategy and ownership of work is encouraged. Rather than merely telling students what to do through worksheets or other prescribed assignments, students are asked to brainstorm and create their own work. Ownership has allowed meaningful conversations, discussion, and learning to organically take place in a deeper manner.

3c. Special education:

St. James Elementary ensures that students with disabilities receive instruction in the least restrictive learning environment that promotes development of necessary skills in the developmental areas of academic, physical, social and emotional success for future success. Students are identified through the Response to Intervention (RtI) process. The RtI team at St. James Elementary consists of the principal, assistant principal, school psychologist, instructional coach, school counselors, lead interventionists, and teachers. The team analyzes data and plans specialized instruction for students who experience academic difficulties. Our special education department at St. James Elementary serves 140 students. This accounts for 17% of our student population. We have three special education teachers who serve students in grades kindergarten through fourth who receive consult, strategic, or core replacement instruction. We have one special education teacher who serves our early childhood special needs population, and one itinerant teacher who serves our child development students. Two full-time speech therapists serve students in child development through fourth grade. These classrooms also have school support staff who provide small-group lessons to support the teacher's lessons, monitor students, collect data, and provide support to specific students.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

Our ML (multilingual) students represent eight different languages. Students are identified for services through a home language survey during the registration process. Home language surveys indicate if a student is a multilingual learner. Screening assessments are used to determine levels for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. ML students are served daily by a certified teacher who groups students by English proficiency and age. These services reflect both the push-in and pull-out models. Our ESOL (English as a second language) teacher develops Individualized Language Plans (ILP) for all ML students with specific accommodations to help each student to reach his/her maximum potential. The ML curriculum is based on the WIDA (Measure of Developing English Language) standards, and they are assessed each spring using the ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) assessment. Newcomers and students with lower English proficiency are taught using the REACH curriculum which is a language-driven curriculum that focuses on the four domains outlined by WIDA standards. Cultural backgrounds are honored and valued to strengthen self-confidence and to encourage a safe, non-threatening learning environment. We currently have 23 multilingual students with eight different languages being served. Our ESOL teacher has created a warm, nurturing environment filled with print rich anchor charts and a classroom library that reflects the diversity of students. Parents of our multilingual students are invited to participate in our annual Intervention Night that highlights our intervention and ELL programs.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At St. James Elementary, we pride ourselves on providing a positive, nurturing, and engaging learning and social emotional environment for our students. Whether we are communicating face-to-face or looking at one another through computer screens, plexiglass, or masks, our students are continuously supported and motivated to learn and grow. Prior to the pandemic, student desks and tables were arranged in collaborative groups with cooperative learning being at the heart of the physical arrangement of the classroom. Teachers implemented Kagan structures to engage all students and to promote collaboration. Students were motivated to freely share and participate through clearly-defined group roles and equitable accountability measures. Students were given countless opportunities to complete group projects based on shared interests and experiences. They also worked together to engage in analytical thinking activities, problem solve, and explore science through experimentation. Teachers further encouraged engagement in a positive environment through motivational SEL instruction and activities. Many of these engagement strategies continued in altered format or delivery modes during the pandemic.

During pre-pandemic days, our school's calendar was filled with engaging activities and events. When parents participated in activities or served as volunteers, a line of eager attendees would wrap around the entrance to our building long before the scheduled time to begin. We held quarterly awards days to celebrate student accomplishments and to motivate all students to maintain or strive to reach higher levels of excellence. We showcased student athletic and creative talents through archery competitions, talent shows, and drama productions. We hosted field days, Veterans Day assemblies, fine arts days, and student-led parades that promoted comradery and engagement. Our summer reading challenge and growth incentive celebrations encourage students to foster a love for reading in a comfortable and positive environment. Every student and staff member enjoy 15-minutes of protected time to read self-selected books in comfortable spaces in their classrooms during our school-wide Reading Rocks event each Friday. Rockin' Dolphin recognition, given weekly to one student in each classroom, motivates students to always choose positive behaviors. Growth incentive celebrations motivate and encourage students to always do their personal best.

While the pandemic did cause us to alter our in-person learning and activities, we did not allow it to break our spirit. Instead, we found ways to collaborate virtually. Teachers began to use digital platforms and Google breakout groups to allow children to work together. During our hybrid and plexiglass days, students adhered to social distancing while completing tasks together from a distance. The school provided individual sets of supplies to allow continued opportunities for students to access manipulatives and to participate in related arts classes. We continued to host the aforementioned events virtually. Social emotional learning was a constant through all learning platforms to ensure our students' social and emotional well-being during this trying time. Working together and supporting each other through this pandemic have made us a more cohesive school family.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school recognizes the benefits that meaningful relationships with our families and community bring. We provide a variety of programs to engage families and the community throughout the year. Our annual primary and elementary career fairs provide stakeholders the opportunity to promote career awareness. Another opportunity to engage and to celebrate our families and community is our annual Kindness Week celebration. For one week in January, kindness is emphasized and on full display. During this week, our students and staff show appreciation to family members and community partners who so graciously show kindness to our school year-round. We provide gift baskets, meals, and other tokens of appreciation to our local first responders, nursing homes, and residents in assisted living facilities.

We partner with Coastal Carolina University and many community members to offer a mentoring program. Local chapters of sororities, fraternities, and other civic organizations positively impact our students through mentoring and various service projects. This program increases motivation, builds self-confidence, and

promotes healthy relationships. Our mentoring program not only has positive effects on our students but on the mentors as well.

Our school, families, and community partners work together to meet the many needs of our students. Many businesses and churches donate school supplies, clothing, and shoes every year. A local church provides bagged food for the weekends. Holiday meals and Christmas gifts are donated by our community partners to families in need. Our local Shriners partner with one of our special education classrooms to provide mentorship and gifts to students throughout the year. Our school supports United Way of Horry County. This organizations provides varied services to families in our community. They also provide volunteer readers who read to our first grade students and engage in activities with them annually. Student athletes from Coastal Carolina University also read to our kindergartners annually through their Caring for Kindergarten program.

Our school uses a variety of communication techniques to keep our stakeholders informed. Electronic phone messages, digital and paper newsletters, our school website, Facebook, and email messages are some of the tools we use to communicate with stakeholders. These methods of communication are used to disseminate information such as school celebrations, events, and important dates.

St. James Elementary has a well-established Parent Teacher Association (PTA), School Improvement Council (comprised of teachers, parents, community members, and administrators), as well as a local Advisory Board. The St. James Advisory Board serves our attendance area and includes district administrators, school administrators, parents, community members, and school board members. These organizations work to ensure that our community has a voice and is well informed to help in making decisions that positively impact our school. Our families enjoy monthly PTA spirit nights at area restaurants and businesses. Portions of profit made during our spirit nights are donated to the school to fund incentives and school activities. Our SIC has created a Bitmoji classroom that houses a variety of holiday-themed video clips of bedtime stories recorded by school and community members. There is also a digital room within the Bitmoji classroom for parents and students to access resources and tips for math and other content areas.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The first step in creating a supportive school environment is to develop authentic relationships among the staff and school family. Our teachers are valued and supported through ongoing professional development, tailored PLCs, accessibility to resources, instructional coach support, and a positive school culture. They are further valued and supported by our principal and leadership team members who are attentive and responsive to personal and professional needs of our staff. This supportive school environment was particularly important and impactful during the pandemic, as we were learning to navigate a new way of teaching and learning that was ever-changing. If anything, the pandemic strengthened our family-like atmosphere and relationships with one another. It took all of us working together to cultivate a sense of success while we chased a seemingly moving target. Our leadership team worked collaboratively with all teachers to create shared Google documents that housed links to live classrooms that could be shared among the staff. Our leadership team and support personnel joined live sessions to support teachers and students. Our special education teachers and related services joined live sessions to support students. Our special area classes (art, physical education, library, music, and STEM) were held virtually, and guidance counselors were also available via live links to provide support to our children and families. Our staff created a virtual video through social media to motivate our school families and one another. School staff continued to participate in PLCs, team planning sessions, and faculty meetings virtually. The Google document was considered a one-stop shop for accessibility by all staff. It was as if our school instantaneously transformed to the virtual setting. Primary teachers utilized the Seesaw digital platform to engage students with distance learning, and our elementary teachers utilized Google Classroom. Once we moved to the hybrid model, teachers were provided with procedures for social distancing within the classroom and school settings. Our school-wide procedures were revised to reflect social distancing protocols. Teachers were provided professional development via distance learning and blended learning digital platforms. At SJE, our students are our most valued asset. Whether we are practicing distance learning, hybrid learning, or in-person learning, we are all working collaboratively to guarantee our school's vision and goal of Supporting the Journey to Excellence for our students.

4. School Leadership:

The goal of St. James Elementary School's leadership team, composed of our principal, assistant principal, and instructional coach, is to support the journey to excellence for all students. We believe all students can learn and be successful if we create a safe, nurturing learning environment where high-quality instruction and support are provided daily for each student. Our principal serves as the instructional leader in our building, while our assistant principal and instructional coach work collaboratively with her to promote a culture of excellence. Together, they establish procedures and set clear expectations for staff and students. Our school leadership meets regularly to ensure that policies, programs, relationships and resources remain focused on student achievement. Prior to the start of school each year, the leadership team meets to reflect on school goals as outlined in our school improvement plan. Data assessments are conducted and analyzed. Needed adjustments are made to ensure continual school improvement. Teacher leaders, counselors, and professional support staff work collaboratively with our leadership team to support academic goals and the social emotional well-being of all students. We believe that a spirit of collaboration enhances a shared vision and positively impacts goal setting. We empower our teachers by helping to build teacher capacity and efficacy. Our academic growth and success are further supported by the strong relationships and enriched learning environment that have been cultivated by all stakeholders (parents, staff, students, and community).

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

St. James Elementary values and celebrates the diversity of our school's students and staff. Gender, race, and ability levels are used to create balanced classrooms with equitable opportunities to grow and learn, to promote cultural awareness, and to foster appreciation for diversity among students and staff. Collections in our school library, hallway displays, text selections, and classroom libraries reflect the diversity of our school community. Mentors, volunteers, and presenters who support our students and share varied experiences are representative of our school and global communities. Our counselors provide a program that advocates for all students in diverse cultural groups. They conduct monthly classroom guidance lessons that teach acceptance, diversity, respect, and empathy. Culturally responsive resources and materials are utilized to teach these lessons. Our SEL curriculum emphasizes an appreciation for cultural diversity and respect. Our principal and teacher leaders participated in the Equity in Education conferences through the Center for the Education and Equity of African American Students at the University of South Carolina. These conferences provided culturally responsive professional development and resources for our teacher leaders. Conference attendees shared the learning with all teachers during subsequent presentations at faculty meetings and PLCs. Our school's media specialist utilizes current events and holidays to integrate cultural diversity using classic and contemporary texts. Our fine arts teachers incorporate multicultural art, music, and dance into their curricula. Teachers integrate current events during classroom discussions to keep learning relevant and to help students make connections to their learning. Our principal implemented a change project to address the disparity of ELA state assessment scores for African American students in third and fourth grade. Culturally diverse professional mentors were assigned to students, and trusted adults within our building were selected to check in daily with their assigned students. Our media specialist organized a book club that featured books with African American characters and historical events. Students met weekly to discuss the books and to connect with peers. Through this mentor based program, we saw significant gains and the achievement gap narrowed. Our art club worked on a hallway display to represent the diversity within our school. The painted mural can be found in the main hallway and serves as a constant reminder of our culturally diverse school community.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

We believe building positive relationships among our students, staff, families, and community is the most instrumental indicator for our school's success. These positive relationships allow our entire school community to further support the journey to excellence. We begin each morning by greeting one another as we enter the building. We greet our parents with waves and smiles as they drop off students. We greet our students by name as they enter the building. Students and staff are expected to return the greeting in a cordial manner. During these exchanges, we can readily assess social emotional statuses and immediately respond to needs. We welcome community members and visitors to our school with warm salutations.

We build positive, lasting relationships with our students by investing in the whole child. We listen to our students and encourage them with positive affirmations and specific feedback. We intrinsically and extrinsically celebrate them. We support them intrinsically by facilitating community circles, goal setting, self-reporting of goals and grades, and student-led conferences.

We interact with students through our SEL curriculum, guidance support, and rehabilitative behavior support services. We also celebrate students extrinsically through incentives that reward them for academic and personal growth. Each classroom participates in our school's positive behavior incentive program. Once marble jars are filled for exhibiting positive behaviors, our principal and assistant principal roll a cart filled with a plethora of prizes into classrooms for marble parties. Academic awards celebrations are held quarterly. A growth celebration is held each spring to celebrate every student in the building. All students look forward to these fun-filled, engaging celebrations that further strengthen and solidify positive relationships.

We build positive relationships with staff in many different ways. We provide meaningful professional development that responds to the needs and interests of teachers. Our Awesome Awards allow staff members to celebrate each other with complimentary notes at the beginning of faculty meetings. We celebrate joyous occasions together and support one another during times of adversity. We honor our teachers of the year, support staff members of the year, and rookie teacher of the year. We enjoy an authentic family atmosphere at SJE.

We engage in activities with our families and community that build strong relationships and offer reciprocal support. We welcome families and community members to attend open house, conferences, game nights, art nights, literacy night, PTA and SIC meetings, appreciation breakfasts, and study trips. We participate in various service projects such as food/book/clothing drives. We create holiday videos and cards to share with residents in local nursing home facilities. We promote and participate in community events. We patronize local businesses. Building positive relationships, in synchrony with all stakeholders, has been instrumental in developing our students into well-rounded, lifelong learners both academically and socially. Thus, these relationships have been most instrumental to our school's success.