

Discovery School

Detectives

Our demographics

Site Manager: Tom McDuffie **Began at school:** 2000 **In district:** 1977 **In education:** 1977
Grades served: K – 5 **Enrollment:** 108 **Economic status:** 18% free & reduced 41% Hanover Figure
Diversity: 66% White, 21% African-American, 7% Hispanic, 6% Other
Number of teachers: 13 **Classified:** 3 **Administrators:** 2 **Counselor:** 1 **Media specialist:** 1
Other: EAGLE Program Staff (Gifted & Talented 3rd – 5th Grades)
Teachers with advanced degrees: 33.3% **Teacher attendance:** 97.7% **Student attendance:** 97.2%

Our mission

In addition to supporting the mission of the Lancaster County School District, Discovery School of Lancaster County provides services to a diverse population of students in a unique learning environment with special emphasis on academic innovation and flexibility while encouraging students to excel in one or more areas of intelligence and promoting professional development opportunities for educators throughout the district.

Our facilities

Date main building was built: 1957 **Date of renovations:** 2007
Square feet: 28,420 **Number of computers:** 189 **Number of classrooms:** 20
Specialty areas: Houses Discovery School, EAGLE Program and Student Services

Our school programs

- **Charter School** – Discovery School is the district’s public charter school. We enjoy a very close working relationship with our sponsor, the Lancaster County School District.
- **Brain Boosters** – Created through the Spartanburg 7 gifted and talented program, Brain Boosters exposes students to critical and creative thinking skills in a systematic manner.
- **Core Knowledge Curriculum** – Based on the work of Dr. E. D. Hirsch and the Core Knowledge Foundation, this rigorous curriculum exposes students to advanced content and concepts while linking academics and the fine arts.
- **Spanish** – All students in grades K-5 have the opportunity to listen, speak and write as they study the basics of this foreign language.
- **Japanese** – Through an internship program with Nihon University in Tokyo, each year our students have the opportunity to learn about the culture and language of the Japanese people.



- **Parents-as-Partners Agreement** – Parents are viewed as full partners in their child’s education at Discovery School. Our contract specifies roles and responsibilities and includes a 30-hour per family annual volunteer commitment.

Our co-curriculum, clubs, athletics

- **Service Learning** – A regular time slot is provided each week in conjunction with our character education program.
- **Junior Achievement** – All students at all grade levels participate each year.
- **Student Council** – Open to students in grades three through five.
- **Homework Center** – Available to all students, our homework center operates four days per week for the majority of the school year.

Our parents/parent support programs

- **Parents-as-Partners Agreement** – Parents are viewed as full partners in their child’s education at Discovery School. Our contract specifies roles and responsibilities and includes a 30-hour per family annual volunteer commitment.
- **Advisory Board** – Composed of parents, educators, and business and community leaders, this twenty-member board meets quarterly to plan and implement school-wide initiatives.
- **Executive Committee** – Elected by parents and employees of the school, this seven-member panel is the governing board for the school. The Executive Committee meets on a monthly basis.
- **PTO** – Our parent-teacher organization is responsible for disseminating information to parents, organizing fundraisers, suggesting school purchases, and many other tasks. Officers meet on a monthly basis. There are four school-wide PTO meetings each year.
- **Specialty Taskforces** – These taskforces are chaired by members of the school’s advisory board and include the following: public relations, recruitment, and facilities.
- **Parent Workshops** – These are offered each twelve weeks on a variety of topics including Positive Discipline, Multiple Intelligences, and Brain Research and Learning.
- **Parent Workdays** – Twice each year parents and other family members are invited to take part in clean-up, fix-up days at the school.
- **Annual Culminating Festival** – All students and parents, at all grade levels focus on a specialty area (International Festival, Core Knowledge Festival, Discover Lancaster Festival, STEM Festival, etc.) each year that celebrates the multiple intelligences.

- **Student Parent Teacher Conferences** – Held three times annually, all parties have input into the creation, refinement, and implementation of Personal Education Plans for each child served at Discovery School.

Our school strengths

- **Parent Support** – Each year, over 3,000 volunteer hours are logged by our parents and other family members.
- **Academics** – Blending state content standards with Core Knowledge standards results in high academic achievement.
- **Personal Education Plans (PEP)** – Each student at Discovery School has a PEP that is tailored to the unique intelligences of the student. These are created through a collaborative effort with the student, parents and teachers.
- **Multiple Intelligences Theory Implementation** – Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences is applied in every content area every week. Students have access to our Multiple Intelligences Flow Room on a regular basis.
- **G/T Strategies** – Programs such as Problem-Based Learning and Brain Boosters are used with all students to increase academic proficiency and creative fluency.
- **Multi-Cultural Focus** – Spanish, Japanese, world history and geography are taught at each grade level.
- **Positive Discipline** – Used consistently throughout the school year in all classes this program focuses on development of self-discipline, problem-solving and cooperation.

Our honors & awards

- Excellent rating on school report card (nine of the past twelve years)
- Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards (ten in the last twelve years)
- Over \$844,000 in grants awarded since 1999
- 2007 National Charter School of the Year (Center for Education Reform)