

Elementary Education

Reports to **Superintendent**

Our demographics

Director: Linda Blackwell **Began position:** 2014 **In district:** 1996 **In education:** 1996

Staff: Miranda Tillman, Elementary Instruction Administrative Assistant

LaVilla Brevard, HeadStart Project Coordinator

Tom McDuffie, Instructional Specialist for Social Studies and Gifted/Talented Programs/Discovery School Site Coordinator

Angela Vaughn, Literacy Specialist and Title I

Location: 300 South Catawba Street, Lancaster, SC

Our focus

Our department supports continued implementation of state academic standards and course competencies in areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment in order to impact student achievement in Lancaster County School District. Our work is guided by our district strategic plan.

Our functions

Our department is directly involved in supporting research-based key practices related to increased academic achievement (Southern Regional Education Board's research on systemic change).

- Setting high expectations and encouraging students to complete a challenging program of study
 - Working with teachers to develop curricula and supporting documents such as pacing guides, lesson plans, and assessments that support high levels of academic achievement
 - Working with curriculum development in pre-advanced placement, dual credit and Advanced Placement courses
 - Supporting specific school-wide reform processes such as High Schools that Work, Making Middle Grades Work, the Middle Years International Baccalaureate Program, Professional Development School partnerships and the arts focus program.
 - Supporting gifted/talented programs
 - Encouraging further study after high school through the Individual Graduation Planning process and a career clusters approach to scheduling
 - Middle school benchmarking process
 - District focus on literacy in the content areas
 - Support of Title 1 school improvement plans
 - Focus on adequate yearly progress
- Increasing access to challenging, rigorous studies/providing choices
 - Support of increased enrollment in pre-advanced placement, dual credit, and Advanced Placement courses
 - Expansion of dual credit/AP course offerings and career/technology offerings (culinary arts, Project Lead the Way, Fire Management Services)
 - Use of the distance education classroom as a means of increasing access to course offerings

- Annual development of district course guide for high school students to use during the registration process
- Providing a structured system of extra help
 - EAA summer school for grades 6-8
 - Summer immersion program for English language learners in grades 3-8
 - High school summer school/credit recovery/Nova Net labs grades 9-12
 - Classworks labs grades K-8
 - 100 Book Challenge in ? elementary schools
 - Reading Recovery
 - Americorps
 - Middle school and high school alternative program
 - Coordination of supplemental services
 - Ninth grade academy
 - Implementation of the Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle to analyze student work
- Using data to make decisions
 - Kuder career interest inventories
 - Powerschool support
 - District test coordination
 - Review/Utilization of data from the Office of Planning and Accountability (MAP, PACT, HSAP, ELDA, AP, SAT, End-of-Course, and other district, state or national testing programs)
 - Needs assessment to determine Professional Growth Institute offerings
- Expecting students to be engaged in their work
 - Integration of technology as an engagement strategy
 - Classroom visits/observations
 - Support of district/state contests and other opportunities to showcase student work
 - Adoption of textbooks and instructional materials that provide engaging standards-based activities for students (*Open Court, Everyday Math*, science kits)
- Providing the opportunity for select staff/instructional services department to work together and providing the opportunity for them to grow professionally
 - Professional Growth Institute
 - Courses/training offered during the school year
 - Attendance at content-specific state-level professional development
 - Leadership for certain school-based professional development (*Open Court, Everyday Math*, arts integration)
 - Instructional facilitators' meetings
 - START instruction and teacher support
- Connecting with a larger community to support the educational development of our students
 - Serving as district contacts for various state department offices—members of our department serve as contacts for ESL, Instructional Leaders Roundtable, state textbook adoptions, ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, health/physical education, modern language, G/T, Early Childhood, National Board, Career and Technology Education, AmeriCorps
 - Serving as committee representatives on Winthrop University's NetSCOPE project and the state's Catawba Regional Education Center committees
 - Working with the public in various ways (phone calls from/meetings with parents, Comprehensive Health Committee, Celebrate Great Teaching committees)
- Supporting financial needs of educating our students by managing budgets, writing grants, and securing appropriate funding for initiatives

- Serving as fund custodians for over 25 special revenue budgets including Title I, II, III and state academic assistance funds and K-5 lottery funds
- Writing grants, managing grants, completing project reports for state revenue, or networking with other departments to secure funding for initiatives such as Americorps volunteers, Sims swimming grant and arts integration/enhanced instruction

Our department strengths

- We are a staff of specialists who share a wealth of experience and expertise regarding content knowledge, pedagogy, student needs, people skills and leadership.
- We work together as a team within our department, among other departments, and with the superintendent and school leadership.
- We are readily accessible to teachers as we work in the schools, in addition to being responsive to phone calls and e-mail messages.
- We are service-oriented as we provide support for instruction in our district.

Our honors & awards

- Advanced degrees appropriate for our instructional areas
- Two National Board certified teachers on our staff
- Officers and board members of organizations related to education:
 - Past President of the South Carolina Consortium for Gifted Education and current member of its Board of Directors
 - Lancaster County Council of the Arts Board Member
 - Adjunct faculty at Converse College
 - Multicultural Information Center Board Member
 - Lancaster Area Literacy Council Board Member
 - Communities in Schools Board Member