

# Elementary Education

Reports to **Superintendent**

## Our demographics

**Director:** Linda Blackwell      **Began position:** 2014      **In district:** 1996      **In education:** 1990

**Staff:** Lisa Lucas, Elementary Instruction Administrative Assistant

Kathy Richardson, Interim Preschool Programs Director/HeadStart & Early HeadStart Coordinator

Tom McDuffie, Instructional Specialist for Gifted/Talented Programs

Chucky Rivers, Discovery School Site Coordinator & Social Studies

Staci White, Literacy Specialist and Title I

Elizabeth Bryant, Math & Library Specialist

Lisa Knox, Arts & Science Specialist

Traci Shigley, Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)

**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 the 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
  - Supporting specific school-wide reform processes such as Reading Workshop (K-12), Writing Workshop (K-12), Phonics Workshop (K-2), STEAM, Project-Based Learning, Professional Development School partnerships, and Arts Integration for all schools
  - Supporting gifted/talented programs, talent development programs, and inquiry-based learning
  - Encouraging further study after high school through the Individual Graduation Planning process and a career clusters approach to scheduling
  - District focus on literacy in the content areas
  - District focus on student-centered coaching
  - District focus on Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)
  - Support of Title 1 school improvement plans
- 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
  - Study Island K-5
  - Summer Reading Camp

- Reading Recovery
- Coordination of supplemental services
- Implementation of the Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle to analyze student work
- Using data to make decisions
  - Powerschool support
  - CASE/Mastery Connect Benchmark & Progress Monitoring
  - District test coordination
  - Review/Utilization of data from the Office of Planning and Accountability (MAP, MAP Reading Fluency, SCReady, SCPass, WIDA, WorkKeys, ACT, ASVAB, AP, SAT, End-of-Course, and other district, state or national testing programs)
  - Identification of students for gifted programs (academic & artistic)
- Expecting students to be engaged in their work
  - Integration of technology as an engagement strategy
  - Classroom visits/observations (both in person and virtual)
  - 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 (*EnVision Math*, science kits, *Units of Study*, HMH Into Reading, STEMscopes)
- Providing the opportunity for select staff/instructional services department to work together and providing the opportunity for them to grow professionally
  - Courses/training offered during the school year
  - Attendance at content-specific state-level professional development (PLO)
  - Leadership for certain school-based professional development (*Lucy Calkins Writing*, HMH Into Reading, STEAM, Project-Based Learning, *EnVision Math*, arts integration)
  - Instructional facilitators' meetings
  - START instruction and teacher support
  - G/T endorsement courses
- 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, and Career and Technology Education
  - Serving as committee representatives on Winthrop University's NetSCOPE project and the state's Catawba Regional Education Center committees (SCASA, OEC)
  - Working with the public in various ways (phone calls from/meetings with parents, Comprehensive Health Committee, Arts Council, City of Lancaster)
- 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, IV and state academic assistance funds and K-5 lottery funds, Arts Grants (SCDE & Arts Commission)
  - Writing grants, managing grants, completing project reports for state revenue, or networking with other departments to secure funding for initiatives such as Arras 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
- Three 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
  - Kennedy Center Partnership
  - Multicultural Information Center Board Member
  - Lancaster Area Literacy Council Board Member
  - Communities in Schools Board Member
  - Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce Board Member & Executive Board Member
  - United Way Board Member
  - United Way – Lancaster Area Coalition for the Homeless Committee Member
  - South Carolina HeadStart Association Member
  - National HeadStart Association Member