

U.S. Department of Education
2015 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Elizabeth R. Hill

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

Official School Name Bear Exploration Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2525 Churchill Drive

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

City Montgomery State AL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 36111-2899

County Montgomery County State School Code Number* 510030

Telephone 334-284-8010 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.bear.mps-al.org E-mail elizabeth.hill@mps.k12.al.us

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Ms. Margaret Allen

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr.,

E-mail: margaret.allen@mps.k12.al.us

Other)

District Name Montgomery County Public Schools Tel. 334-223-6700

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

Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Ms. Mellissa Snowden

(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 that it is accurate.

Date

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

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. 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.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2014-2015 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2009 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2014.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
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

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 34 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 9 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 53 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 with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 16 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	46	42	88
1	39	50	89
2	44	42	86
3	54	38	92
4	49	46	95
5	52	58	110
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	0	0	0
Total Students	284	276	560

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 27 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 66 % White
 - 2 % 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2013 - 2014 year: 0%

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, 2013 until the end of the school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2013 until the end of the school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	1
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	538
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.002
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	0

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
4 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 2
 Specify non-English languages: Arabic, Vietnamese
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18 %
 Total number students who qualify: 97

Information for Public Schools Only - Data Provided by the State

The state has reported that 18 % of the students enrolled in this school are from low income or disadvantaged families based on the following subgroup(s): Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals

9. Students receiving special education services: 2 %
12 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 categories.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

10. Use Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	24
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 23:1

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

Required Information	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2014

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. Please summarize your school mission in 25 words or less:

PART III – SUMMARY

Bear Exploration Center opened its doors in August 1996 as Montgomery County's premier elementary magnet school for mathematics, science, and technology. It is housed in a mid-twentieth century red brick building in the heart of Alabama's capital and is named for Minnie Compton Bear, the wife of T. L. Bear, who served as president of the Montgomery County Board of Education from 1947-1956. (The addition of a wing with ten classrooms and a media center was erected four years after we opened as a magnet school to accommodate more students.) The community surrounding the school has an ethnically mixed and diverse population, which is reflected in the students. The yearly enrollment in grades K-5 is about 550 students. The majority of the students live within the city limits, with others coming from rural parts of the county. Our multifarious population includes sixty-six percent non-minority students and thirty-four percent minority students from across the county. Fifty-one percent of the students are male and forty-nine percent are female. Less than three percent are English Language Learners (ELL) and four percent are enrolled in special education programs. The socioeconomic level of the student population ranges from lower class to upper class and is best summarized by the varied occupations of the parents and guardians, which include professionals, skilled and unskilled laborers, active military, self-employed entrepreneurs, and the unemployed.

We begin each day with announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance over WBEC, our in-school TV Station. Students incorporate our annual theme into their delivery which provides an exciting platform for our faculty, students, and families. Each Friday we also sing our school song, which was written by a sixth grade class in the 1960s when the school was known as Bear Elementary and housed grades one through six. We are proud of the many individual awards our students have received throughout the years, including Law Day posters, Water Festival T-shirt designs, a Red Ribbon (drug awareness) T-shirt design, writing contests through the Humane Society and the Civil Air Patrol/Air Force Association, and of their overall growth, leadership, and achievements as students. We are honored to have been named a Renaissance Master School for ten consecutive years, a C.L.A.S. Banner School in 2014, and a Magnet School of Distinction in 2009. We are also very appreciative of our outdoor environmental center/classroom that was built, furnished, and sustained by parents, community volunteers, grant monies, and in-kind donations. Our outdoor classroom is an integral component of our students' success. Important life-long values such as hard work, conservation, compassion, sharing, responsibility, dependability, and cooperation are but a few of the lessons students learn while working in our garden.

Bear is a public magnet school, so parents or guardians must complete an application process for their children to be considered for admission. In addition to the application, GPA (2.5) and conduct (3.0) requirements must be met, and proposed incoming kindergarten and first grade students take a readiness assessment. All students who meet the criteria to attend Bear then have their names entered into a system of random selection for all open slots.

Instruction is child-centered, data driven, and promotes active student engagement, collaborative learning, creative and innovative teaching methods, and the use of interactive technology. An integral part of the curriculum includes group and individual projects, project-based learning, multi-sensory and alternative teaching/learning strategies, and hands-on activities. It is our goal to nurture and develop the whole child to be successful now and in college, career, and life. This development involves academics, career exploration, character education, community service, and physical education to prepare for a healthy, drug-free life.

Students experience success in a safe and nurturing environment that includes a strong emphasis on a positive learning atmosphere, reinforcement of appropriate behavior, a structured daily schedule, and minimal distractions. Bear provides a variety of opportunities that allow for individual needs and interests, in addition to appropriate learning activities and challenging expectations that increase performance, attendance, creative and critical thinking skills, and community involvement. All students participate in a grade-level musical production on stage each year, students create and publish books annually, and are actively engaged in a technology-infused curriculum. Students are encouraged to participate in additional learning opportunities such as the Honor Chorus, the Bear Feet Jump Rope Team, as technicians and anchors for WBEC, the National Elementary Honor Society, the Junior Safety Patrol, and as supply cart

workers. Additionally, students and their families are encouraged to participate in math and science nights, the annual art show, Technology Week, after-school Discovery Clubs, and at a week long science camp and language camps throughout the summer.

Bear has a high-performance learning environment with children achieving at high levels. The faculty and staff of Bear Exploration Center are committed to the mission that all students will learn and be successful.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Bear teachers strive to develop lessons in which students are engaged in learning, are inspired to achieve to their fullest potential, and meet or exceed Alabama's College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). Different styles of learning are addressed throughout the curriculum during whole and small group instruction. The inclusion of technology in every classroom through the use of interactive whiteboards, iPads, computers, student response systems (aka clickers), and document cameras, furthers learning opportunities for every student. Hands-on activities, project-based learning, and enrichment opportunities are created to enhance learning for all students.

In the areas of reading and language arts, CCRS standards are met and exceeded using trade books, basal readers, projects, and interest based activities. Strategies centered on grammar, spelling, punctuation, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, speaking, listening, comprehension, and writing are developed when teachers prepare lessons that reach all students.

Teachers provide effective, research based activities which build on CCRS standards to encourage a life-long love of reading. Scott Foreman's Reading Street is one tool for teaching language arts. Leveled readers provide the students with a variety of genre that encompasses the curriculum. Accelerated Reader is also utilized and encouraged from kindergarten through fifth grade. Students are given the STAR test several times during the year to determine reading levels and set goals. Progress and successes are rewarded with school-wide and classroom celebrations.

Trade books provide a unique way of introducing and reinforcing skills and are incorporated in grades three through five to teach skills and strategies. Small group instruction involving creative activities, projects, writing assignments, and the use of technology encourage and reach students who perform above and below grade level. Students are grouped to focus on needs and interests of individuals. Students work in pairs, individually, with the teacher, or as a group during this time to provide enrichment and/or intervention.

Weekly tests are used to monitor progress and determine which skills need re-teaching and or reinforcing. Quarterly post tests and writing assessments, developed by MPS, along with the STAR test, provide teachers additional ways to measure student achievement. Using this information, teachers are able to determine and target the needs of individual students. Compass Learning provides alternative reinforcement and is accessible from school and home computers, with lessons tailored to individual needs by the classroom teacher.

Mathematical instruction includes research-based strategies that involve real-world problem solving, active engagement, and a concentrated use of manipulatives in the lower grades. Teachers encourage students to discover solutions through inquiry, investigation, and higher level thinking, and are given frequent opportunities to solve real life problems. Teachers use small and large groups to approach new learning skills, and use a variety of formative assessments to assess learning and drive instruction. Teachers work with the math department chair and other math teachers to learn instructional strategies that will increase student achievement.

Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies with interactive whiteboards, iPads, and computer based games to enhance student learning. Programs such as Math Facts in a Flash, Compass Learning, Mobi Max, Edmodo, Reflex Math, and Think Central are also used to promote interactive participation. Students receive immediate feedback with these programs and can quickly identify their areas of strength and need. Parents and students have access to some of these online resources to utilize at home.

Science, math, and English standards are embedded in the science curriculum where students are encouraged to make discoveries using an investigative, inquiry-based, hands-on approach. Lessons are developed to include non-fiction text integrated across the curriculum. Concepts and strategies taught are further developed by students attending a fully equipped science lab.

Social Studies lessons are developed to promote a sense of community, country, and world. These goals are achieved through the incorporation of projects, current events, virtual field-trips, speakers from the community, and numerous off campus field trips. Speakers include George Wallace Jr. and a former Air Force member who worked closely with the Apollo Space Program. Virtual field trips include NASA's Humans in Space. Off campus studies include trips to the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, the U.S. Space and Rocket Center, and Sloss Furnaces.

Our learning environment is strong because teachers differentiate instruction and provide enrichment for all learners, which leads to well-rounded students who are confident, lifelong learners.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our ultimate goal is to develop the whole child to succeed in college, career, and life. This begins with giving students opportunities to participate in enrichment programs including the science lab, technology, counseling, Spanish, the library, and art classes weekly, and music and physical education (P.E.) classes daily. Teachers meet with specialists to correlate lessons based on common core state standards.

Our P.E. program promotes the importance of being active and teaches students how to participate in a wide variety of physical activities. Thirty minutes of daily structured skill is necessary to achieve a healthy lifestyle, so students are encouraged to incorporate additional time for physical activity outside the school setting. Students learn how to be good sports while communicating, cooperating, and working together as a team.

The Jump Rope for Heart Program, an extension of P.E., stresses the importance of physical fitness and helping others through community service. Students on the Bear Feet Jump Rope team also display and promote physical fitness and good character. For the second year in a row, over 25% of our students and faculty have participated in the Mayor's Marathon Challenge. All classes participate in Random Acts of Kindness Week, for which we choose various charities and show our support by collecting needed items.

The P.E. department instituted a health fair program last year for parents to receive valuable resources on proper nutrition, safety in the home, and wellness screenings. The P.E. teacher also worked with the cafeteria manager to incorporate a yogurt bar to emphasize healthy choices.

Our visual arts program supports student acquisition of essential skills and knowledge by aligning its objectives with those in the classroom while enhancing student creativity and excitement in the learning process. Students draw, paint, make prints, and sculpt; are exposed to art and artists from different cultures and historical periods; and compare and contrast art and artistic styles. Art lessons are integrated across the curriculum. For example, when fifth graders are studying the Revolutionary War, they sculpt a medallion based on the ones worn by the Sons of Liberty. During a thematic unit on the life cycle of the butterfly, second graders sketch butterflies focusing on the insect's symmetry, while fourth graders create tessellations to support math lessons on patterns and symmetry. Members of Bear's National Elementary Honor Society annually participate in the Empty Bowls service project to support a local food bank, discussing the problem of hunger in our community and then sculpting ceramic bowls which are donated to this event.

Bear's guidance program is designed to assist students in acquiring skills knowledge and attitude needed to become productive workers, responsible citizens and lifelong learners. Lessons are composed of a sequential program that goes throughout the elementary years and includes drug-free awareness, career choices, character education, and test taking skills, as well as opportunities for individual and small group counseling.

Spanish lessons encourage students to learn a second language. Lessons include word repetition to develop good pronunciation, mini videos for visual learners, and active engagement using games and dialogue.

In addition to classroom and science lab lessons, all students participate in the Aerospace Connections in Education (ACE) program in which aerospace and STEM subjects and careers are explored. Activities include making model aircraft, robotics, rocketry, and flight simulation. Teachers are members of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), the backbone of ACE.

Technology classes focus on preparing our students for the 21st century. Students create projects to present at a yearly competition. Fifth graders produce the morning closed-caption television broadcast through WBEC. Anchors and technicians run the audio board, visual graphics, teleprompter, and camera. Students are responsible for taking pictures for the school's yearbook.

Music instruction follows a general music curriculum and integrates lessons across the curriculum through on-stage musical performances each year. All students play the Yamaha Music-In-Education keyboards and third, fourth, and fifth graders play the soprano recorder, which gives them pre-band experience. The Bear Honor Chorus is open to all fourth and fifth grade students and holds performances at school and in the community, focusing on assisted-living homes and senior adult church groups.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Bear uses a wide variety of instructional methods with its diverse student population. Teachers and specialists meet weekly to collaborate and correlate lessons and thematic units based on College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), core programs, and additional programs such as ACE. With on-going training and embedded professional development, teachers and specialists analyze data with the goal of improving student performance. The strategic teaching component of that training has been a major part of the school's focus to ensure high levels of student learning and achievement.

Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies during whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction to engage the child in investigating, talking, speaking, listening, and writing. Strategic teaching emphasizes addressing the needs of all learners through active engagement. Before a lesson, students may turn and talk to a partner to answer a question posed by the teacher. During the lesson, students may use graphic organizers to map their thinking while working in collaborative groups to share, clarify, or explain reasoning. At the close of the lesson, students may engage in an activity that satisfies the outcome of the lesson. Teachers use explicit instruction modeling: I do – we do – you do.

Interactive whiteboards are utilized in all classrooms. The boards are a part of math and reading centers with students applying standards in a highly motivating manner, and are also used very frequently in science, social studies, English, Spanish, music, technology, art, and library lessons. Kindergarten teachers have created units for reading with songs, video clips, and interactive phonological games for hands-on learning experiences. Document cameras magnify read-a-loud books to more effectively engage students. Manipulatives, such as Lego Bricks, are used in many subjects for collaborative learning. Lego Bricks help students create three-dimensional shapes or problem solve geo-economic concerns such as water and solar usage.

Students struggling in academics are identified through the Response to Instruction (RtI) component of the school's Problem Solving Team (PST). The team analyzes data and then brainstorms possible interventions. Interventions include re-teaching using other strategies. In partnership with Read-to-the-Paws, Winston, a Basset Hound, sits weekly listening to children read from their favorite books. This safe and non-judgmental environment improves students' automaticity and accuracy.

English Language Learners (ELL) receive weekly lessons with an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor. Our ESL resource teacher helps with our writing assessment and has shared strategies that have benefited all students.

PART V – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results Narrative Summary:

The Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) was been administered to grades 3-5 for the past six years prior to the 2013-2014 school term. The ARMT was a criterion-referenced test that consisted of selected items correlated to the Alabama State Content Standards in reading and mathematics. In 2014, the Alabama Department of Education replaced the ARMT with the ACT Aspire, which was given as a baseline test that year. The ACT Aspire assessment had selected items that correlated with the College and Career Readiness Standards for Alabama.

A comprehensive analysis of Bear's ARMT data tables for third, fourth, and fifth grades show consistency every year in every grade level from 2009-2013. Our students exceeded the state and system average on the ARMT assessments each year and ranked as a top performer when compared to other schools in Alabama. Bear's data has continually indicated a positive trend. Third and fourth graders scored at least 96% between the years 2009-2013 on the ARMT, while fifth graders scored at least 99% during the same years.

Bear administered a new statewide formal assessment in 2014, the ACT Aspire. Students in grades 3-5 continued to score above the national average in math and reading with all baseline stanine percentages between 70 and 91. The average math stanine percentage was 75 and reading was 82. However, there is no comparison, so a trend cannot be determined. We have utilized these results and are identifying and emphasizing academic language to improve student comprehension of questions. Due to our concerns on the limited time on these tests, teachers are administering more timed formal assessments to better prepare students for the ACT Aspire. We are also utilizing this data and data from formal and informal assessments to differentiate instruction and form flexible groups.

2. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Using assessment results as the driving force for planning corrective instruction and evaluating previous instruction is the barometer of daily planning for teachers at Bear Exploration Center. Our school is also very sensitive to involve all stakeholders of student academic progress. This includes the faculty, parents, district leaders, and community at large. Bear uses many different measures to track and evaluate student progress. These assessment measures are both summative and formative with the added element of observation. Formative assessments include content tests, quarterly tests, and daily observations. They also incorporate Global Scholar, Compass Learning, and STAR testing from Renaissance Place.

The instructional leadership of Bear Exploration Center uses this data to guide professional development, guiding teachers to effectively evaluate data, collaborate on improving instruction, and discuss strategic teaching strategies in order to improve student achievement. Collaboration to examine differences and propose improvements occurs during grade level and school-wide data meetings. For example, teachers seeing a dip in scores involving fractions in math or critical analysis in reading comprehension would implement scaffolding of the particular skills needed in the classroom, thus determining the needs for small groups, intervention groups, or one-on-one instruction.

Bear teachers also use a variety of ways to inform all stakeholders of student academic achievement. Each class sends a bi-weekly progress report home with graded work samples for reviewing and evaluation. Parents can access their child's grades through the INOW information system. The faculty and staff use emails, phone calls, notes, Remind, web pages, and parent/teacher conferences to keep the parents fully involved and informed. The annual state mandated test scores of each school are published on the school system's website. Informing the community stakeholders with data results is a priority with MPS, and links are provided to the Alabama Department of Education's website for more information.

Part VI School Support

1. School Climate/Culture

Bear engages and motivates students and offers a unique learning environment with opportunities for success for all children. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process, provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations, and give students feedback to improve their performance. One way we accomplish this goal is through the unique learning environment in our outdoor, environmental classroom. It is a source of school pride that gives our students a strong sense of accomplishment and ownership. Children enjoy numerous hands-on activities that involve all of the five senses. For example, they feel the texture of dirt and plants, see the beautiful pumpkins and butterflies, and hear the buzz of bees and chirping birds. We integrate literature, math, history, science, art, social studies, technology, and Spanish into our theme with each subject directly applied during our outdoor classroom time. For instance, classes measure, graph, and predict the growing cycle of cabbages while experimenting with light on lettuce plants and analyzing the effects of the sun. It accommodates every learning style and each student experiences success. Another way we motivate students is by providing extracurricular activities. Students are encouraged to participate in additional learning opportunities through Bear's monthly, after-school Discovery Clubs, which include cooking, technology, robotics, gardening, art, knitting, and detective and veterinarian skills. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the Honor Chorus, Bear Feet Jump Rope team, WBEC broadcasting, the National Elementary Honor Society, Safety Patrol, and manage the supply cart. We have annual math and science nights and a technology week where students rotate through various educational activities with their parents. Lastly, we hold an annual Art Show for parents to see their children's work and for students to feel a sense of pride and accomplishment. All of these activities provide hands-on enrichment opportunities in a variety of academic areas that engage students in a positive environment. Bear works to sustain our high-performance learning culture and investigates opportunities to improve upon it. We examine our mission and vision statements, revising them as needed. We stress what we expect our students to know and be able to do when they exit this school. We would not be able to target areas of needed improvement without the help from parents and the community, and a strong, supportive administration.

2. Engaging Families and Community

Bear maintains an environment of caring, responsible, and informed professionals. It establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of the students and the effectiveness of the school. Expectations for student learning, our chief priority, are clearly defined. We communicate our mission to stakeholders, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Since there is a clear understanding of the mission and of the expectations of student learning, stakeholders and various community businesses are willing to contribute to Bear's success. The most successful strategy in working with family and community members to ensure student success and school improvement is creating an environment of open communication. When faculty and students express needs or concerns, stakeholders listen and determine how to meet those needs and concerns. This support enables us to maintain high achievement levels from our students. The dedicated staff works as a team, problem solving when necessary, in order to ensure that each student achieves his/her maximum potential. We take pride in what we do and truly desire to make a difference in the life of each child. We would be unable to attain our goals without support from the community. The school fosters effective communication and relationships with and among its stakeholders. Strong parent involvement is encouraged. Emphasis is placed on the success of the student and parents/guardians are encouraged to contribute towards this success. Most of our parents are extremely committed to the school, and they volunteer to support our teachers in a variety of ways and roles. Parents appreciate our teachers and show their appreciation by making copies, providing lunches and treats for workshops, and treating us to duty free luncheons. They take pride in our highly qualified staff and our safe, clean learning environment. The parents' collaboration with teachers enhances our commitment in achieving our mission at Bear. We are school partners with Huntingdon College, with practicum students and interns being placed at Bear, and they support our school-wide events such as math and science nights. The YMCA sponsors before and after school care programs onsite to assist parents who

are working. We partner with Maxwell Air Force Base and Air University to complete a Starbase program with our fifth graders. Various companies make donations throughout the year such as Stivers Ford. Alabama Power Company has volunteers that come every year to help clean up our garden and campus.

3. Professional Development

The teachers and staff at Bear Exploration Center are lifelong learners. We have ongoing professional development, participating in a wide variety of professional development opportunities on our own campus as well as other venues. Our focus is on improving student learning and achievement. The entire faculty meets monthly, and we meet in smaller groups on a weekly basis to work collaboratively. We meet across grade levels to insure that gaps are filled, so our students are able to move from one grade level to the next in a cohesive, fluid manner. We work collaboratively on a variety of topics including technology integration, assessment, writing, differentiation, and strategic teaching. We participate in team-building activities which have proven to increase our strength as a faculty and to create an atmosphere of trust and support. The development of the school culture to build one another up has been a crucial part in the enhancement of our unique program. Due to the fact that we are a math, science, and technology magnet school, much of our focus is on these areas. We incorporate these areas with cross-curriculum instruction. Teachers attend workshops and training locally, and also travel to magnet school conferences, iPad workshops, and Civil Air Patrol trainings where we have the unique opportunity to fly with Civil Air Patrol pilots and receive additional training to better equip us to teach our students. Teachers utilize PD360 to acquire current, research-based instructional videos, and are able to reflect after implementing the concepts learned in this program. We have the first and one of the few certified outdoor classrooms in the state of Alabama, and have engaged in training to help students maximize this part of our campus. We participate in the Eat South program, the Master Gardener program at the arboretum, and have completed the ropes course at the Alabama Nature Center. Out of our faculty of 36, there are currently 25 individuals who have a Master's or Education Specialist degree, with one teacher working on her Master's degree. Our goal at Bear Exploration Center is to create students who will be lifelong learners. We believe that it is important to set that example before our students. The level of parental support and involvement, along with student achievement and teacher collaboration, provides a platform from which our school excels.

4. School Leadership

Bear's culture creates an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. Each individual on our staff recognizes that we are stronger when we work together. The extensive collaboration that is present at our school plays a critical role in maintaining and building upon this strength. Our principal is a supportive leader who gives teachers the freedom and flexibility to make decisions about teaching and learning in their own classrooms. She encourages us to work together in collaborative units to plan, problem solve, and positively impact student learning. Our assistant principal works part-time at Bear, as we share her with another elementary school, and provides support to our principal and all members of our faculty. Our school counselor is a compassionate man who meets with classes to encourage good character traits, and also meets individually and with small groups to assist students who are facing adversity. He focuses on character building, test preparation, and the importance of making good choices. He is a strong encourager and motivator for the faculty. Our instructional coach works with individual teachers, individual students, and small groups of students to provide assistance and intervention when students are struggling academically. She also assists teachers with testing that is done to monitor student achievement. Our media specialist provides support for teachers and students by hosting book fairs, scheduling and hosting speakers and virtual field trips, and assisting with instructional resources. She has proven to be an effective source when teaching students writing skills and how to conduct research. We have an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which provides assistance through volunteers who make copies, work with individual students or small groups of students, assist in the science lab, work at the book fairs, and help with our Fall Festival and field day activities. Our PTA provides grant money to teachers yearly and also assists with the purchase of technology and playground equipment. They host events throughout the year to encourage families to be involved at school. We have an organized group of grandparents, the Golden Bears, who provide support to teachers and students. We have received support from our community through Partners in Education, grants and donations from local businesses, financial support for school events that are sponsored by our PTA, and receive substantial support from the families that are a part of our school.

PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>NCS Pearson, Inc. (aka Harcourt Assessment and Harcourt-Pearson Assessment)</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Level III and above	98	97	97	96	100
Level IV	82	80	80	81	84
Number of students tested	84	99	93	100	83
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Level III and above	96	100	92	94	100
Level IV	69	69	63	75	78
Number of students tested	26	26	24	32	23
6. Asian Students					
Level III and above					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Level III and above	98	96	99	97	100
Level IV	87	83	85	83	86
Number of students tested	54	71	67	65	57
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Non-Poverty					
Level III and above	97	96	98	97	100
Level IV	80	84	80	85	83
Number of students tested	74	82	80	87	72
12. Other 2: Poverty					
Level III and above	100	100	92	92	100
Level IV	100	59	77	54	91
Number of students tested	10	17	13	13	11
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>4</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>NCS Pearson, Inc. (aka Harcourt Assessment and Harcourt-Pearson Assessment)</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Level III and above	96	97	100	100	100
Level IV	75	74	85	97	97
Number of students tested	102	98	108	89	96
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Level III and above	100	92	100	100	100
Level IV	65	58	78	91	92
Number of students tested	31	26	34	23	24
6. Asian Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Level III and above	94	99	100	100	100
Level IV	79	80	88	100	99
Number of students tested	68	69	69	59	67
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Non-Poverty					
Level III and above	96	96	100	100	100
Level IV	79	74	87	96	98
Number of students tested	84	81	94	78	83
12. Other 2: Poverty					
Level III and above	94	100	100	100	100
Level IV	61	76	71	100	92
Number of students tested	18	17	14	11	13
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>5</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>NCS Pearson, Inc. (aka Harcourt Assessment and Harcourt-Pearson Assessment)</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Level III and above	100	100	99	100	100
Level IV	95	84	96	95	93
Number of students tested	91	109	95	104	95
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Level III and above	100	100	96	100	100
Level IV	85	72	89	96	89
Number of students tested	27	36	27	26	35
6. Asian Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Level III and above	100	100	100	100	100
Level IV	98	90	98	96	95
Number of students tested	62	71	62	73	57
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Non-Poverty					
Level III and above	100	100	99	100	100
Level IV	95	85	95	94	93
Number of students tested	75	94	81	88	80
12. Other 2: Poverty					
Level III and above	100	100	100	100	100
Level IV	94	80	100	100	93
Number of students tested	16	15	14	16	15
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>NCS Pearson, Inc. (aka Harcourt Assessment and Harcourt-Pearson Assessment)</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Level III and above	99	99	100	99	96
Level IV	77	76	80	89	82
Number of students tested	84	99	93	100	83
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Level III and above	100	96	100	97	100
Level IV	65	62	71	91	87
Number of students tested	26	26	24	32	23
6. Asian Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Level III and above	98	100	100	100	100
Level IV	81	82	82	89	93
Number of students tested	54	71	67	65	57
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Non-Poverty					
Level III and above	99	99	100	99	100
Level IV	78	82	83	90	92
Number of students tested	74	82	80	87	72
12. Other 2: Poverty					
Level III and above	100	100	100	100	100
Level IV	70	47	62	85	91
Number of students tested	10	17	13	13	11
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>4</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>NCS Pearson, Inc. (aka Harcourt Assessment and Harcourt-Pearson Assessment)</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Level III and above	100	99	100	100	100
Level IV	95	88	87	92	89
Number of students tested	102	98	108	89	96
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Level III and above	100	96	100	100	100
Level IV	90	81	86	91	67
Number of students tested	31	26	34	23	24
6. Asian Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Level III and above	100	100	100	100	100
Level IV	97	90	88	92	97
Number of students tested	68	69	69	59	67
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Non-Poverty					
Level III and above	100	99	100	100	100
Level IV	96	88	91	91	88
Number of students tested	84	81	94	78	83
12. Other 2: Poverty					
Level III and above	100	100	100	100	100
Level IV	89	88	57	100	92
Number of students tested	18	17	14	11	13
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>5</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>NCS Pearson, Inc. (aka Harcourt Assessment and Harcourt-Pearson Assessment)</u>	

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Level III and above	100	100	99	100	100
Level IV	93	97	89	87	94
Number of students tested	91	109	95	104	95
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Level III and above	100	100	96	100	100
Level IV	85	94	78	81	97
Number of students tested	27	36	27	26	35
6. Asian Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Level III and above	100	100	100	100	100
Level IV	97	99	94	89	93
Number of students tested	62	71	62	73	57
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Non-Poverty					
Level III and above	100	100	99	100	100
Level IV	95	97	90	86	95
Number of students tested	75	94	81	88	80
12. Other 2: Poverty					
Level III and above	100	100	100	100	100
Level IV	88	100	86	88	87
Number of students tested	16	15	14	16	15
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Level III and above					
Level IV					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: