

At Merriwether Elementary School (MES) we recognized the affect Covid-19 has had on education and communities all over the world. Our staff noticed that even in the midst of a pandemic lies opportunities to become better instructional leaders. Our staff moved forward with educating students to the best of our ability while sharpening our technology skills to support face to face and remote learning.

We realize education evolves as society changes, and for that reason we monitor and adjust instructional strategies to ensure teachers are modeling best practices within the classroom for our students. We embrace our diverse student population as we prepare them to be college and career ready.

Our school continues to make advances in the area of technology. Our school is 100% Wi-Fi accessible. Each student has their own device and this has been very helpful due to the onset of Covid-19 and remote learning. Through the use of technology we are encouraging 21st century skills of communication and collaboration for our students.

Professional development for teachers during the 2020-2021 school year focused on technology. Remote learning expedited training for all teachers in Google classroom, flipped learning, and screencastify. All teachers created and maintained active Google classrooms during the year. The pandemic allowed teachers to concentrate on being proficient in assisting and instructing our students remotely.

Teachers at MES are ready to teach face to face or remotely at any given moment. The extensive training received in Google classroom has prepared teachers to provide instruction for students if school is ever cancelled due to threatening inclement weather. Our teachers are equipped and ready to teach students even if they are not physically in the building

Professional development for teachers also focused on current student and teacher data. Our data revealed literacy was an area of concern and we used that data to help differentiate classroom instruction.

Our school goals are tied with our district goals and initiatives which include improving literacy levels and increasing rigor and engagement levels to maximize student learning. Our leadership team at MES along with the Edgefield County School District has narrowed the focus to strengthening Tier 1 instruction through an in-depth analysis of standards and rigor in alignment with the district's MTSS and Reading Plans (R2S).

During the 2020-2021 school year, our STEM lab challenged students to be creative and to think critically. Every assignment required students to interpret a problem, analyze various solutions, take initiative to come up with new ideas, designs, and reflect using team and self-evaluation.

Some of the activities in our STEM lab included programming robots through the use of an ipad. Students created their own video games through coding. Our STEM class is a non-threatening environment that encourages our students to be creative and to feel comfortable taking risks.

Nine MES teachers wrote and received grants through the Savannah River Nuclear Mini Program. These teachers received grant amounts of \$500.00, \$750.00, or \$1000.00 dollars. The teachers were responsible for a total of \$5,500.00 dollars' worth of grants.

Students at MES experienced their first virtual fundraiser. Students collected a total of \$11,000.00 dollars for our school fundraiser. This was a huge surprise because we were not planning on having a fundraiser this year.

Our most recent surveys from our students, parents and teachers rated our school 96% or higher in the areas of (1) learning environment (2) social and physical environment and (3) home-school relations. We use this data to help analyze areas of strengths and areas of improvement in our school. These ratings are a good indication of how pleased our stakeholders are with our school.

OLWEUS, a Bullying Program designed to increase the knowledge and impact of bullying among children, academics, mental and physical health has been very effective in our school.

At Merriwether Elementary School our students are provided opportunities that will help them develop World Class Skills of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate to help prepare them to become well-rounded productive citizens.

Bruce Lee – Principal

Sarah Norton – SIC Chair