

# Kershaw Elementary

**BULLDOGS**

## Our demographics

**School principal:** Kelli Overcash    **Began at school:** 2017    **In district:** 2017    **In education:** 2003  
**Grades served:** 4K – 5    **Enrollment:** 520    **Economic status:** 79.8% free & reduced lunch  
**Diversity:** 66.2% White, 22.8% African-American, 10.6% -Two or more races, 0.4% -Other  
**Number of teachers:** 32    **Classified:** 14    **Administrators:** 2    **Counselor:** 1    **Media specialist:** 1  
**Other:** Literacy Coach, Parent Coordinator/LLI Instructor, Math/Technology Coach, School Psychologist  
**Teachers with advanced degrees:** 65.6%    **Teacher attendance:** 95.4%    **Student attendance:** 92.7%

## Our mission

Mission Statement of Kershaw:  
**B**uilding  
**U**pstanding  
**L**ifelong  
**L**earners  
**D**eveloping  
**O**ptimistic  
**G**raduates

## Our facilities

**Date main building was built:** 1961    **Date of renovations:** 1993, 1998, 2001, 2019  
**Square feet:** 64,897    **Number of computers:** over 532 (1:1 device implementation grades 4K-5)  
**Number of classrooms:** 28    **Specialty areas:** 1 computer labs, science lab/STEAM room, Literacy room, Math enrichment room, professional development loft for staff

## Our school programs

- **Literacy** – Emphasis is on the five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through a balanced literacy framework in order to strengthen reading and writing through the workshop model. Literacy is emphasized across all content areas.
- **Mathematics** – Emphasis is on inquiry-based, hands-on learning through the workshop model and collaborative groupings. All classrooms have student math manipulative kits, Ozobots, and access to the Lu Interactive Playground.
- **Teacher Cadets** – Students from Andrew Jackson High interested in becoming future educators complete internships in our classrooms on a regular basis.
- **Technology** – KES has one computer flex lab as well as a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) inquiry lab. We also have a SMARTboard in all classrooms. All students in grades 4K-5 have a personal chromebook or other device for classroom instruction and engagement. KES has a Google Expedition cart with virtual reality capabilities. We have added 32 Osmos, 10 iPads, and 30 iPad Minis. KES was the FIRST school in the state to purchase the Lu Interactive Playground (to incorporate technology, PE, and the content areas together).
- **Music Instruction** – Classes participate in keyboard and steel drum instruction on a monthly basis.
- **Title I Inclusion** – Through school-wide Title I funds, we provide leveled literacy opportunities, lower class sizes in grades 1 and 2, and a parent coordinator to facilitate family-involvement opportunities. We

also have a math enrichment teacher and professional development opportunities for teachers through these funds.

- **Elementary School Partnerships** – KES and Heath Springs elementary schools have partnered together to collaborate on the state STEAM continuum, arts integration and the implementation of project-based learning. Additionally, KES, Heath Springs, Clinton and Buford collaborated on our math enrichment program and a new computer class curriculum. KES and McDonald Green Elementary are currently collaborating on our math/science inquiry labs.
- **Career Education** – KES provides career education to all students through Career Day, Vehicle Day, Lunch-N-Learns, community speakers and readers, guidance sessions and Junior Achievement.
- **Goal-Setting** – KES focuses on weekly WIGS (Wildly Important Goals) in math fluency and reading engagement. Each grade level's progress is charted, displayed, monitored and celebrated on a quarterly basis.

### Our co-curriculum, clubs, athletics

- **KES Chorus** – Fifth graders audition and perform as a small group at school and as part of the Lancaster County Elementary Honor Chorus in the spring.
- **Junior Beta Club** – Membership recognizes fifth graders with outstanding academic achievement, community service and character.
- **Swimming** – Fourth graders complete swimming lessons as well as a water safety course, which is grant-funded. This program takes place at the outdoor Kershaw community pool.
- **Safety Patrol** – Third through fifth graders apply to provide the service of walking kindergarten students to class each morning and/or greeting car riders each morning and afternoon.
- **Bulldog Bulletin Morning News Program** – This show highlights morning announcements and daily school announcements and celebrations. Students are involved in on- and off-camera responsibilities.
- **EAGLE Gifted and Talented Program** – Grades three through five participate in weekly GT enrichment classes onsite.
- **Math Enrichment Program** – Students in grades two through five that score in the top 15% on the Measures of Academic Progress receive PBL-based math enrichment for 45 minutes daily.
- **Junior Achievement** – Community business leaders volunteer and teach lessons regarding work-readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy skills to grades two and three as well as the afterschool program.
- **21st Century Learning Center** – This grant-funded program offers free academic assistance and enrichment activities to students in grades 3-5 Monday through Friday. Bus transportation is provided.

- **Field Studies** – KES students enjoy learning on trips to various locations. Examples include historic Charleston, walking tour of historic Kershaw, pumpkin patch, strawberry farm, Riverbanks Zoo, Historic Brattonsville, the state museum and area theatrical performances.
- **Robotics Club**-KES 2nd-5th grade students apply for our robotics club. Thirty students are selected, and in this club, students learn about coding, engineering, team-building, and inquiry-based skills.

### Our parents/parent support and community programs

- **School Improvement Council (SIC) Family Nights** – Family nights for all grade levels provide activities and ideas for academic enrichment at home. These nights focus on strengthening students’ literacy and math skills and teaching parents how to effectively assist their children with these strategies.
- **PTO** – The KES Parent Teacher Organization actively supports our school through volunteers, celebrations, academic assistance and funding for instructional supplies.
- **Family Food Days** – KES hosts Donuts for Dudes, Grits for Grandparents, Muffins for Moms, and Open Lunch Days where family members can enjoy time with their student(s) during school hours.
- **Share the Table** – Our students collect unopened non-perishable food items from their peer students during the school breakfast hour. These items are packed by students and sent to KES classrooms in need of snacks and to KARE of Kershaw for families in need in our own community.
- **Literacy Night** – All KES families are invited to participate in a literacy night that integrates reading and writing into fun family-focused activities.
- **Student Needs Drives** – Our families and community members donate coats, books, book-bags, canned items and school supplies throughout the year, hosting our largest drive during the Clemson/USC football rivalry week.
- **STEAM Days** – Students and families collaborated to design and engineer various projects such as Escape rooms or “Hide the Turkey” kindergarten Thanksgiving barn creations. Students introduced the STEAM concepts to parents and were then able to integrate the steps into the grade level curriculum with assistance of the families. Other STEAM day themes included Johnny Appleseed Day, Christmas Around the World, and Earth Day.
- **Bulldog Beautification Day** – Our families and community members work on an annual basis during the summer to complete projects that improve the aesthetics of our school building and school yard.
- **Backpack Blessings** – KES partners with area churches to provide weekly food bags to our students.

- **Service Learning Projects**-Our KES students participate in projects to support KARE of Kershaw and Paws in the Panhandle Animal Shelter.

### Our school strengths

Kershaw Elementary is helping all students develop the world-class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate through the collaborative efforts of teachers, support staff, students, families and community members. All stakeholders are committed to creating a student-centered, nurturing learning environment that recognizes the varying learning styles of our diverse population. As the Bulldogs, Kershaw Elementary strives to instill a future-focus as evidenced by our mission statement – “**Building Upstanding Life-long Learners. Developing Optimistic Graduates.**”

*Building World Class Knowledge* is an on-going effort for both the adults and students of KES. Teachers continued to participate in targeted professional development focused on balanced literacy, math inquiry, comprehension and processes through the workshop model, the authentic integration of technology into the classroom, and the creation of student-centered engaging strategies. For our students, we have incorporated 1:1 technology in grades 4K through five, with all grades having access to our computer lab and wi-fi in all classrooms as well as our Interactive Lu Playground, expanding their learning experiences to escape rooms, virtual reality, virtual tours, technological pen pals, differentiated learning, mystery hangouts with classrooms across the nation and family/community-oriented engineering projects.

*Honing World Class Skills* is fundamental to the teamwork, communication and creativity promoted at KES. The literacy leadership team, common planning times, FLEX schedule days, professional learning community collaboration and schoolwide procedures, coupled with consistent high expectations, have reinforced our commitment to working together effectively. This expectation is now extending to our students through small-group instruction, student individual accountability data notebooks, the integration of technology and the arts, and a move towards becoming a STEAM school. KES continues a partnership with Heath Springs Elementary and the Town of Kershaw in this endeavor.

*Enhancing Life and Career Characteristics* is vital to fostering well-rounded citizens. KES has hosted Parenting Partners, a monthly opportunity for families to engage in positive dialogue with and about their children. KES created a community mentoring program for struggling students through local churches and KARE of Kershaw. Our students participated in the community’s “Share the Table,” a food conservation program that prevented waste at meals. KES has two afterschool programs that focus on interpersonal, intrapersonal, and problem solving skills. Additionally, we partner with our local Lions Club for vision screenings. Finally, we host Breakfast with the Principal on a monthly basis in order to gather stakeholder feedback.

Kershaw Elementary is committed to a culture of excellence that engages students in rigorous, real-world experiences and provides challenging opportunities that allow our children to make choices that motivate and enhance their learning. Kershaw Elementary is on the move!

### Our honors & awards

- **Essay and Poster Contests** – KES students are recognized through award-winning participation in essay and poster contests sponsored by local groups and Lancaster County.
- **Quarterly Pinning Ceremonies** – Student achievement is celebrated each reporting period along with perfect attendance, character education awards and other student incentives. All students are celebrated for their growth and achievement.
- **Grant Winners** – KES has received arts, technology and miscellaneous grants through ABC, Donors Choose, Partners in Youth and various other foundations in order to provide the highest quality of education for our students.
- **Teacher/Staff Quality** – KES has five national boards certified teachers and multiple district teacher-of-the-year finalists on staff. Our school nurse has been recognized by the state for her excellence in service.
- **Community Service Pilot** – KES was chosen to serve as the district’s pilot school for the student-centered and student-led “Share the Table” community service project.
- **Junior Beta Club** – The KES Jr. Beta Club was chosen as a National School of Distinction for the 2015-16 school year. This club continues to grow and promote academics and character for our students.