



# Annual Report

**2011—2012**

# Discovery School Annual Report: August 2011-May 2012

## School Description

### A. Mission Statement

In addition to supporting the mission of the Lancaster County School District, Discovery School of Lancaster County provides services to a diverse population of students in a unique learning environment with special emphasis on academic innovation and flexibility while encouraging students to excel in one or more areas of intelligence and promoting professional development opportunities for educators throughout the district.

## Vision Statement

### We envision students who...

- are engaged in and enthusiastic about the unique learning activities provided;
- know that they are valued;
- make choices, as appropriate, about learning based upon interests;
- have personal goals for the future which are fostered and refined.

### We envision a school where...

- the environment is student-centered;
- there is an inviting, positive atmosphere where students take responsibility for their own behavior;
- students, parents, teachers, and community members take an active role in the learning process;
- students' strengths and interests are discovered and nurtured through a variety of learning and teaching styles with abundant opportunities to develop the multiple intelligences;
- teamwork among students and teachers is evident and applied;
- visual and performing arts inspire complex understanding of difficult concepts;
- an atmosphere of innovation, creativity, and flexibility allows teachers to take responsible risks;

- appropriate and sufficient resources will be available;
- the curriculum is realistic and challenging and expectations are high;
- flexible teaching stimulates student participation in multiple areas of intelligence;
- dedicated and well-trained personnel assist students and fellow teachers in developing their talents;
- the benefits and experience gained from past, current, and future program implementation is exported to other district schools through training services and development seminars.

## **B. School Program**

### **1. Grade and age levels served: Kindergarten through fifth grade (2011-12)**

### **2. Brief summary of curriculum design and instructional approach:**

Discovery School provides services to students based upon Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. This theory, premised on the belief that there is more than one form of cognition, provides a substructure for a unique learning environment where practical application of Multiple Intelligences Theory is teamed with the most up-to-date education research, providing optimal learning experiences for all children.

Specific instructional modules have been developed that blend the South Carolina Curriculum Standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies with the rigorous Core Knowledge Standards, providing students with challenging activities and opportunities.

Through the use of problem-based learning, students have the opportunity to apply knowledge in new and different ways as they work to develop solutions to real-world problems through research, reasoning, and critical thinking.

Discovery School students have a variety of expanded learning opportunities that include: regular access to Creation Station (a hands-on Multiple Intelligences Flow Room) where students learn through exploration and discovery; regular access to state-of-the-art computers and other technology; infusion of the arts into every aspect of the curriculum; regular exposure to foreign languages (Spanish and Japanese); and extended day and extended year enrichment opportunities.

### **3. Student/teacher ratio: 18/1**

### **4. School year and hours of operation: August 2011-May 2012 8:15 AM – 3:15 PM**

### **5. Student application and enrollment process:**

- Discovery School is open to all children in the district who are eligible to attend public school in the grades served by the school (subject to space limitations).

- As required by state law, every effort is made to insure that the racial makeup of the charter school reflects that of the district population within a 20% variance.
- If the level of interest exceeds the capacity, students are accepted by lottery, as prescribed by the S.C. Charter School Law.
- Applications are accepted by mail, in person, and through the Discovery School website.
- The deadline for submitting applications is February 28<sup>th</sup> of each year. The lottery for determining enrollment is held within the last week of March.

### C. School Staff

1. **Number of teachers:** 7 FTE plus 6 part-time teachers

#### 2. Summary of Qualifications / Faculty & Staff (2011-12)

| Name                 | Position                                   | Qualification        | Years Experience |
|----------------------|--|----------------------|------------------|
| Mary Beth Williamson | Kindergarten                               | Bachelor's Degree    | 2                |
| Sarah Trapp          | 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade                      | Bachelor's Degree    | 3                |
| Gena Rogers          | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade                      | Bachelor's Degree    | 5                |
| Emilee Vaughn        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade                      | Master's Degree      | 4                |
| Brad McGee           | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade                      | Master's Degree      | 12               |
| Chuck Rivers         | 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade                      | Bachelor's Degree    | 5                |
| Lori Yarborough      | Lead Teacher / Leadership Team             | Master's Degree Plus | 24               |
| Robin Helm           | Music                                      | Bachelor's Degree    | 26               |
| Liz Bell             | Art  | Bachelor's Degree    | 2                |
| Vicki Robinson       | Spanish                                    | Bachelor's Degree    | 33               |
| Vicki Robinson       | Bodily-Kinesthetic / Flow Room             | Bachelor's Degree    | 33               |
| Ramona Pate          | Flow Room                                  | Bachelor's Degree    | 5                |
| Tina Morgan          | Receptionist                               | Associate's Degree   | 13               |
| Amy Stuart           | Administrative Assistant                   | n/a                  | 6                |
| Tom McDuffie         | Leadership Team / Instructional Specialist | Master's Degree Plus | 35               |

#### 3. Staff attrition rate:

One teacher vacancy occurred between school years 2010-11 and 2011-12. This included: kindergarten due to a retirement and transfer.

## D. Student Characteristics

### 1. Number of students enrolled, by grade level:

Kindergarten: 18  
First grade: 18  
Second grade: 18  
Third grade: 18  
Fourth grade: 18  
Fifth grade: 18

2. **Student attrition rate during the year reported:** less than 1% (Four students transferred to other schools. Three students moved out of district. Each student was replaced by a student from waiting lists drawn at the time of the lottery.)

### 3. Demographics: by race and gender

31% minority and 69% Caucasian  
54% male and 46% female

4. **Percentage of limited and non-English proficient students:** less than 1%

5. **Percentage of students with special education IEPs:** 12%

6. **Percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price school lunch program:** 14%

7. **Average daily attendance:** 97% (based on 135-Day Membership and Attendance Report)

## E. Governance

### 1. *Discovery School Executive Board:*

- April Mathis—parent
- Louis Prete – business & community
- Laurin Mullins—parent
- Shirnetha Stinson – educator / school administrator
- Tracey Mobley – higher education / USCL
- Kimberly Waldo—parent
- Tonya Rape– business & community

### 2. *Advisory Board (member names and affiliations):*

- Bridge Francis - educator
- Shannon Berry—parent
- Crystal Fields – educator
- Danny Deese—business & community
- Tisha Simmons – educator
- John Immel– parent
- Shirnetha Stinson – educator / school administrator
- Lynne Lingle—parent
- Eleanor Mack – business & community

- Tonya Rape—business and community
- Laurin Mullins—business & community
- Tracey Mobley – higher education
- Kimberly Waldo—educator
- Mandy Powers-Norrell – parent
- Stacey Baker—parent
- April Mathis—business and community
- Heather Holben—parent
- Tonya Speaks - parent
- Louis Prete—business & community

**F. Finance**

**1. Statement of Revenues and Expenditures**

**School Year 2011-12**

| <b>Fund</b>                           | <b>Revenue</b> | <b>Carryover<br/>(from 10-11)</b> | <b>Expenditures</b> | <b>Balance<br/>(as of 6/30/11)</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>801 / Per-pupil<br/>Allocation</b> | \$593,871.     | \$ 15,857.                        | \$ 609,728.         | \$ 2,940.                          |

**School Year 2012-13**

| <b>Fund</b>                           | <b>Revenue</b> | <b>Carryover<br/>(from 11-12)</b> | <b>Anticipated<br/>Expenditures</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>801 / Per-pupil<br/>Allocation</b> | \$632,529      | -0-                               | \$632,529                           |

1. **The per-pupil allocation (state & local):** \$5498.00 (2011-12)
2. **The per-pupil allocation (state & local):** \$5857.00 (2012-13)

## G. School Performance

### a. Educational Goals

*[The overall effectiveness of the curriculum and individual student progress will be determined by the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standard on PASS.]*

- The Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) was administered to all 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Discovery School in the spring of 2012. Results are listed below:

| Grade Level (2011-12) | % meeting standard or exemplary (PASS) English/Language Arts | % meeting standard or exemplary (PASS) Writing | % meeting standard or exemplary (PASS) Math | % meeting standard or exemplary (PASS) Science | % meeting standard or exemplary (PASS) Social Studies |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| Grade 3               | 89   | n/a  | 67  | 89   | 89  |
| Grade 4               | 89   | n/a  | 78  | 83   | 94  |
| Grade 5               | 100  | 94   | 94  | 94   | 94  |

*[Should nationally normed tests be administered, at least 50% of the students will be expected to score at or above the national average.]*

- The NWEA Measure of Academic Progress, a nationally normed standardized achievement test, was administered to all 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Discovery School during the fall semester of 2010 and again during the spring semester of 2011. Results of the MAP testing are shown below:

| % at or above national average | Reading (fall) | Reading (spring) | Mathematics (fall) | Mathematics (spring) |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade          | 44             | 61               | 61                 | 72                   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade          | 67             | 50               | 50                 | 61                   |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade          | 61             | 67               | 61                 | 72                   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade          | 83             | 83               | 83                 | 83                   |

- **The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), a nationally normed aptitude test, was administered to all Discovery School 2<sup>nd</sup> graders during the fall semester. Results of the CogAT are shown below:**

|   |        |              |            |           |
|---|--------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| Disc. School<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Graders | Verbal | Quantitative | Non-Verbal | Composite |
| % scoring in the top two quartiles      | 56     | 61           | 84         | 67        |

*[Teachers will assess students in a variety of ways and report progress utilizing a narrative report card and student-led conferences. Students will complete a yearly portfolio using Multiple Intelligences to demonstrate their ability to meet state or district curriculum standards. Additionally, the curriculum and methodology will be evaluated on a periodic basis through student, parent, and teacher surveys to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum.]*

- The progress of each student at Discovery School was carefully monitored through the school year through a multiple assessment approach. See attached copies of Discovery School’s Comprehensive Assessment Approach, Multiple Intelligences Progress Report, MI Observational Checklist, and Personal Education Plan. Teachers participated in surveys conducted through the SC Department of Education. Regular opportunities were provided for teacher input and reflection throughout the year as well.

## **H. Survey Results / Students-Teachers-Families**

Students at grade levels K-5 were surveyed. Survey results indicate a number of positives. For example, in general, students like their teachers and are learning and enjoy the learning process. Students indicate that their teachers do a good job in relating the content to real world experiences. Analysis of survey results indicates a need for greater emphasis on positive discipline as well as student responsibility for classroom and school cleanliness.

### **Student survey items are listed below:**

1. I learn things that make me think hard and understand a lot.
2. My teacher makes learning fun and interesting.
3. I like my teacher.
4. I learn about how people feel, how to get along with other people, and how people are unique.
5. I can talk to my teacher about how I feel, about how I get along or don’t get along with other students, and about what I need in order to learn better.
6. My teacher helps me understand how what I learn matters in the real world.
7. My school is clean.
8. When things break or get dirty at my school, they get fixed or cleaned quickly.
9. I like Discovery School.
10. I think my friends from other schools would like Discovery School.

### **Teacher Survey Items**

#### **Curriculum**

1. Discovery School curriculum challenges ALL students on a regular basis.
2. Discovery School faculty members consistently display best practices in classroom instruction.



3. Discovery School offers a variety of age-appropriate activities to develop each student's social, emotional, and cultural identities.
4. I integrate real-world experiences in the classroom.
5. Local businesses provide real-world experiences at Discovery School.
6. Community members are active in the school.

### **Communication**

7. I know the purpose of curriculum maps.
8. Discovery School maintains, publishes and updates curriculum maps.
9. I communicate to parents to let them know what my students are learning in my class.
10. I know where and how to publish information regarding what I teach in class.

### **Relationships**

11. In general, I have been successful in developing relationships with students.
12. In general, I have been successful in developing relationships with parents.
13. I have sufficient opportunities to develop relationships with parents.
14. Discovery offers parent workshops that focus on students' social, emotional, and cultural needs.
15. There is an opportunity to discuss the social, emotional, and cultural needs of my students.

### **Professional Development**

16. I receive sufficient professional development opportunities.
17. I regularly attend the professional development opportunities offered.
18. I have opportunities to lead professional development.
19. The Leadership Team regularly reviews my lesson plans.
20. The Leadership Team regularly observes my classroom instruction.
21. Professional development opportunities emphasize standards-based teaching and learning.
22. Professional development opportunities emphasize core knowledge teaching and learning.
23. Professional development opportunities emphasize Multiple Intelligences teaching and learning.
24. One or more professional development opportunities have focused on social, emotional and/or cultural needs of the students.

### **Facilities**

25. The school is clean.
26. The school is properly maintained, and needed repairs are completed in a timely manner.
27. I am asked each semester to suggest capital improvements that might increase academic results.
28. The Governing Board and Leadership Team give fair consideration to my suggestions.
29. I am informed of capital improvements and understand any barriers preventing progress.

### **Over All**

30. I am happy with Discovery School.
31. I would recommend Discovery School to others.

## **Teacher Survey Summary**

### **Strengths**

- *Curriculum (T1, T2, T3) Nearly 100% in agreement across all questions.*
- *Communication (T7, T8, T10) Teachers are familiar with multiple methods of communicating with parents.*
- *Relationships (T11, T14, T15) Teachers are developing appropriate relationships with parents and students.*
- *Curriculum (T5, T6) Community Involvement: Through the Junior Achievement program and in-house Founders Credit Union, businesses are providing real-world experiences at Discovery School.*

### **Areas to Strengthen**

- *Professional Development (T16, T18, T21, T24) Due in large part to budget restrictions, off-site professional development has been limited.*
- *Classroom Instruction (T19, T20) The percentages of teachers who answered "Neither agree nor*

- disagree" was very high. We would like to see an effort to push those numbers into one of the Agr
- *Facilities (T27, T29)* Responses indicate a need for greater communication in this area.
  - *Governing Board (T28)* Transparency - Responses indicate a need for improved communication.

## **Family Survey Items**

### **Curriculum**

1. Discovery School curriculum challenges ALL students on a regular basis.
2. Discovery School teachers and faculty consistently display best practices in classroom instruction.
3. Discovery School offers a variety of age-appropriate activities to develop each student's social, emotional, and cultural identities.
4. My child's teacher integrates real-world experiences in the classroom.
5. Local businesses provide real-world experiences at Discovery School.
6. Community members are active in the school.

### **Communication**

7. I know what curriculum maps are.
8. Discovery School maintains, publishes and updates curriculum maps.
9. I know what my student is learning about in school.
10. I know where to find information regarding what is taught in my child's classroom.

### **Relationships**

11. I am happy with the relationship my child has with his/her teacher.
12. I am happy with the relationship I have with my child's teacher.
13. I am happy with the opportunities I have had to develop my relationship with my child's teacher.
14. Discovery School offers parent workshops that focus on the social, emotional, and cultural needs of students.
15. There is an open invitation to discuss the social, emotional, and cultural needs of my child.

### **Facilities**

16. The school is clean.
17. The school is properly maintained, and needed repairs are completed in a timely manner.

### **Over All**

18. I am happy with Discovery School
19. I would recommend Discovery School to others.

## **Family Survey Summary**

### **Strengths**

- *Ninety-five percent of the parents were "Happy with Discovery School" and 96% "Would recommend Discovery School to others".*

### **Areas to Strengthen**

- *Curriculum (T1)* Survey results indicate that this is an area that can be strengthened.
- *Communication (T8)* Curriculum Maps, *(T9)* Responses indicate a need for better communication.

## **I. Required Data**

### **Students With Individual Educational Plans:**

- Discovery School faculty and staff members worked closely with the staff of the District's Student Services Department to ensure that components of student IEPs were met and that appropriate services were delivered.

### **Grade Advancement Summary:**

- 100% of students at Discovery School were recommended for promotion.

### **Compliance with the Charter:**

- Discovery School is in compliance with all aspects of its charter as well as with all aspects of the S.C. Charter School Law.

## **J. Unique Accomplishments During School Year 2011-12**

- One hundred percent of the Discovery School families contributed 30 hours or more of volunteer service to the school during the 2011-12 school year.
- One hundred percent of Discovery School's students participated in regular instruction in Spanish.
- Discovery School received an absolute rating of "Excellent" on the school report card for school year 2010-11.
- Discovery School received a growth rating of "Excellent" on the school report card for school year 2010-11.
- Students at our school enjoyed a wide range of enrichment classes such as creative movement, music, theater, Spanish, and visual arts.
- Discovery School students participated in a number of arts-integration opportunities during the school year. A highlight of the year was the March, 2012 Discover Lancaster Festival, a culminating project featuring the combined talents of all kindergarten through fifth grade students from our school.
- Discovery School took part in the internship program with Nihon University in Japan, which provided our students the opportunity to learn the Japanese language and culture from a teacher intern who worked with students during the months of February, March and April.
- One hundred percent of our students participated in the Junior Achievement Program.
- One hundred percent of our students participated in the Brain Boosters Program sponsored by the District's Gifted and Talented Program.
- Thirty-one percent of our third, fourth and fifth graders qualified for services through the District's EAGLE Program for academically gifted and talented

students.

- Discovery School's third grade, fourth grade and fifth grade classes had 100% attendance on the days the PASS was administered.
- Discovery School students created video portfolios, focusing on the Multiple Intelligences, which will be passed from grade level to grade level as a chronicle of student growth and progress.
- Discovery School made Adequate Yearly Progress, based on the federal No Child Left Behind legislative criteria.
- One hundred percent of Discovery School's teachers regularly participated in Professional Learning Team activities during the past school year.

#### **K. Lessons Learned and Actions Taken Based on Accountability Information**

1. The Discovery School faculty and staff met for four days this past summer to examine current curriculum as it aligns to the Common Core Standards. Teachers developed a school wide plan to inform stakeholders of the CCSS components.
2. Minor revisions have been made to assessment instruments used at Discovery School as a result of teacher input.
3. Continued implementation of the Core Knowledge Curriculum along with S.C. content standards will be emphasized.
4. The Discovery School Leadership Team will meet on a regular basis to discuss increased communication with Discovery School's parents.
5. A comprehensive series of parent workshops are scheduled for school year 2012-13 with topics that include: Common Core State Standards

#### **L. Reporting Accountability Information to Students, Teachers, Parents, and the Public**

S.C. charter schools are required to submit an annual report to their chartering agency (the local school district Board of Trustees). A copy of this annual report must also be submitted to the S.C. Department of Education. The annual report becomes a matter of public record available upon request to anyone who requests it. Copies of the Discovery School annual report will be sent to all Discovery School parents, Executive Committee Members, and Advisory Board Members. In addition, school newsletters are distributed on a regular basis to parents and others interested in our school. The Executive Committee (our governing board, which also serves as our School Improvement Council) holds a public meeting at least once every month. The Discovery School

Advisory Board meets on a quarterly basis. The press is notified of meeting dates and times. Results of all standardized tests are promptly distributed to parents. Also, PTO meetings are held on a regular basis.

#### **M. Improving the School's Accountability Plan**

Improved communication is an on-going priority at Discovery School. It is our goal to provide important information to parents and the public in a timely manner utilizing appropriate hannels which may include the following: personal correspondence, announcements through print and electronic media, public meetings, and publications available to the public.

Realistic increases in standardized assessments are also an on-going goal for Discovery School. Teachers will work diligently during school year 2012-13 to diagnose areas of weakness and differentiate instruction appropriately in order to maximize our students' opportunities for academic success.