2008 No Child Left Behind–Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

[X] Public   [ ] Private

Cover Sheet

Type of School (Check all that apply)

[X] Elementary   [ ] MIddle   [ ] High   [ ] K-12
[X] Charte   [ ] Title I   [ ] Magnet   [ ] Choice

Name of Principal   Mrs. Ana Cordal

Official School Name   Renaissance Elementary Charter School

School Mailing Address   8360 N.W. 33 Street

Doral	Florida	33122-1938
City	State	Zip Code+4(9 digits total)

County   Dade - 13   State School Code Number*   0400

Telephone (305) 591-2225   Fax (305) 591-2984

Web site/URL   www.recscharter.org   E-mail   acordal@recscharter.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____   Date _____
Principal's Signature

Name of Superintendent   Dr. Rudolph Crew

District Name   Miami Dade County Public Schools   Tel. (305) 995-1000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____   Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson   Mr. Ken Haiko

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

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

Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

Mail by commercial carrier (FedEx, UPS) or courier original signed cover sheet to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 5E103, Washington DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2007-2008 school year.

3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2002 and has not received the No Child Left Behind–Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years.

5. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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. Throughout the document, round numbers to the nearest whole number to avoid decimals, except for numbers below 1, which should be rounded to the nearest tenth.

DISTRICT   (Question 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1.   Number of schools in the district:

232	Elementary schools
69	Middle schools
0	Junior High Schools
52	High schools
88	Other
441	TOTAL

2.   District Per Pupil Expenditure: 8259

       Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 8424

SCHOOL   (To be completed by all schools)

3.   Category that best describes the area where the school is located
      .
      [ ]   Urban or large central city
      [ ]   Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban are
      [X]   Suburban
      [ ]   Small city or town in a rural are
      [ ]   Rural

4.   5   Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

          0   If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5.   Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
Pre K	0	0	0		**7**	0	0	0
K	43	32	75		**8**	0	0	0
1	61	39	100		**9**	0	0	0
2	37	41	78		**10**	0	0	0
3	51	48	99		**11**	0	0	0
4	46	29	75		**12**	0	0	0
5	41	33	74		**Other**	0	0	0
6	0	0	0					
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL								501

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

        4 % American Indian or Alaska Native

        1 % Asian or Pacific Islander

        4 % Black or African American

      67 % Hispanic or Latino

      24 % White

100 % TOTAL

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past yea   5   %

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1 until the end of the year	13
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1 until the end of the year	12
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	501
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row	0.05
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 16 %

       78   Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented   4

Specify languages: Spanish
Chinese
Portuguese
Romanian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals   18 %

      Total number students who qualify: 89

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low income families, or the school does not participate in the federally supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: ___2___ %

    ___11___ Total Number of Students Serve

    Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

0	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	1	Other Health Impairment
0	Deaf-Blindnes	6	Specific Learning Disabilit
0	Emotional Disturbanc	4	Speech or Language Impairment
0	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities		

11. Indicate number of full time and part time staff members in each of the categories below:

    Number of Staff

	Full-time	**Part-time**
Administrator(s)	2	0
Classroom teachers	20	0
Special resource teachers/specialist	7	0
Paraprofessionals	1	0
Support Staff	7	0
Total number	37	0

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   ___25___ **: 1**

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Please explain a high teacher turnover rate. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy in attendance, dropout or the drop-off rates. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates, and only high schools need to supply drop-off

	2006-2007		2005-2006		2004-2005		2003-2004		2002-2003	
Daily student attendance	96	%	96	%	96	%	96	%	96	%
Daily teacher attendance	98	%	98	%	98	%	98	%	98	%
Teacher turnover rate	8	%	9	%	8	%	10	%	10	%
Student drop out rate (middle/hig	0	%	0	%	0	%	0	%	0	%
Student drop-off rate (high school	0	%	0	%	0	%	0	%	0	%

    Please provide all explanations below

PART III - SUMMARY

Renaissance Elementary Charter School (RECS) was opened in August of 1999 as the Nation's first Charter School in the work place (formerly known as Ryder Elementary Charter School). The school began with 300 students (Kindergarten through Third Grade) and has just completed its ninth year of operation, serving 500 students in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. The RECS school staff is compiled of highly qualified professionals that are motivated and determined to ensure academic achievement for all students. The school serves students from Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.

Although a large percentage of our student population is comprised of Hispanic students from various Nations there has been a continued upward trend in academic achievement. For the last five years we have exceeded State Standards and continue to outperform District Schools with similar populations, celebrating dramatic gains. This is due to the dedication of our staff, students, parents, and our supportive community.

The desire for parents to have their children attend the school is high and demand for student space exceeds availability, due to the high performance trends exhibited over the years. A lottery process is necessary to determine the selection of students. Under this lottery, priority is only given to children whose parents are serving in the military and siblings of attending students. Parents and the community recognize that RECS is committed to provide academic and co-curricular programs which assist all students to be successful in scholastic achievement, personal growth and social awareness. RECS expects all students to acquire skills, knowledge, and values, which will prepare them to be contributing, constructive citizens of our society. Parents highly value our dedication to implementing effective school practices and the partnerships that are fostered between school, parents and the community, to continue to strive for a superior education.

The school is housed in a 30,000-square foot facility located in the City of Doral. The school day starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m., with before and after care provided, extending the hours from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Parental involvement is highly valued, and parents agree to volunteer twenty service hours per family each school year at school-related activities. The school proudly received recognition from the Governor for ranking seventeenth among all schools in the State of Florida, for the 2005-2006 school year.

A School Advisory Committee comprised of parents and community representatives serves as a communication link between parents, students, teachers, and administrators. Meetings of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee are noticed on the school website, giving parents the opportunity to comment on school issues. Charter Schools USA, an educational management organization, provides educational, management and operational support services.

The mission of RECS is to provide a foundation that will enable students to reach their highest potential in academics, citizenship and life skills enabling them to be productive successful members of society. The instruction throughout Renaissance Elementary Charter School focuses on an interdisciplinary approach with particular emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills. Our vision to guarantee high academic achievement is attained through a curriculum rooted in solid educational research and aligned to the Florida Sunshine State Standards (SSS), the Charter Schools USA (CSUSA) Educational Model, continuous assessment of data related to student performance, analysis of student learning gains, and a faculty that facilitates instruction that meets each student's academic needs.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1 **Assessment Results:**

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) began developing the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in May 1996. The FCAT, which measures student achievement and educational progress, is administered in Grades 3-11 in the spring of each year. As the testing pertains to elementary students; Third Grade students are tested in the areas of Reading and Math; Fourth Graders in Reading, Math and Writing; and Fifth Graders in Reading, Math and Science. In accordance with the FDOE's accountability program school grades have been issued since 1999 with the FCAT being the primary criterion in calculating school grades. Schools are graded on a scale from A to F.

FCAT scores are reported in five levels of achievement. If a student's achievement level improves from one year to the next, he or she has clearly made progress. The student would also make progress if he or she were to score in the same achievement level for two years in a row. This is due to the content being assessed at the higher grade, is more difficult. Students who score at Levels 3, 4, or 5 are performing at or above expectations and meet the requirements of the Sunshine State Standards. Students who score at Level 1 and are performing below expectations and need additional instruction in the content assessed at his or her grade. The school and district have guidelines for making decisions about promoting students who score at Level 1. Per state mandate, 3rd grade students scoring at Level 1 on the FCAT-SSS Reading are required to be retained. For more information about Florida's assessment procedures, scoring system and school grade policy, refer to http://fldoe.org.

Renaissance Elementary Charter School (RECS) has received an A rating from the state for the past five years and has shown Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) consistently since it has been measured. AYP is determined each year by the percentage of students scoring at a level 3 or above in Reading, Math and Writing. The required percentage for the 2006-2007 school year, to achieve AYP for Reading was 51% and Math was 56%. For the past five years RECS scores in Reading, Math, Science and Writing have far exceeded the state averages. All subgroups met the criteria for AYP. The performance results for the 2007 FCAT were 30% higher than the State average.

The FCAT performance results for the 2006-2007 school year demonstrated that 92% of the students met high standards in Reading and 91% achieved high standards in Math. Furthermore, 90% of our students attained high standards in Writing. The district scores in Reading were 64%, Math 63%, and Writing 68%. State scores in Reading were 69%, Math 67%, and Writing 64%. A student is considered achieving high standards when they score a level 3 or above on the FCAT for Reading and Math. A student must score 3.5 or above in Writing to meet high standards.

Third grade reading scores on the FCAT showed a spike in 2006. The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) studied the anomaly and identified the cause when they noticed an inconsistency in the placement of 'anchor items'. It was determined that the 2006 Third Grade FCAT reading test was easier than previous tests and easier than the 2007 FCAT. The test itself, the scoring, the technical aspects of the test, and the psychometric properties of the test were all fine. The only issue was the anchor item equation issue and Third Grade was the only grade impacted on the 2006 FCAT.

FDOE recalculated the third grade FCAT scores in reading based on the new equation formula. This decision made the 2006 baseline of student achievement for Third Grade students and elementary schools lower than the original baseline posted when school grades were released. FDOE did not recalculate new school grades for 2006 to ensure that those impacted by the problem were held harmless to the greatest extent possible. However, FDOE did use the newly calculated baseline data to determine gains and school grades for 2007.

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

As soon as the FCAT results are received The RECS Educational Team disaggregates the resultant data, to determine strengths and areas in need of growth. School-wide goals are established to develop and implement successful strategies for the coming school year. This enables the teachers to identify those students that fall within the lowest quartile and develop intervention programs for them in order to leave no child behind. Teachers also identify the high performing students and create academic enrichment programs to continually challenge their academic potential.

In addition to the FCAT assessments provided by the State, RECS teachers incorporate a variety of

assessment methods. These range from weekly informal examinations to formal Charter Schools USA (CSUSA) Benchmark Tests. The CSUSA Benchmark Tests are simulated FCAT-like exams that are meant to provide administrators, teachers and students information on individual student achievement, based on a specific set of criteria (the Sunshine State Standards). These exams are meant to be 'formative' in nature. Utilizing research on feedback, these exams are openly discussed with students in order for them to understand what they have successfully mastered and what they need to continue to improve upon. The first administration of the CSUSA Benchmark Test is used to identify initial student strengths; as well as, areas for student academic improvement. Continual monitoring of student achievement data is provided by administering the CSUSA Benchmark Tests at least three times during the school year.

The CSUSA Benchmark Test is administered as a pre and post-test and again periodically prior to the FCAT, providing teachers with an updated evaluation of student growth. The education team compiles this student assessment data by individual student, by individual skill, class and grade level. This affords a greater understanding of what each student has or has not mastered and provides additional data to assist in driving classroom instruction.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

The RECS Educational Team understands the importance of communication between parents, teachers, and community. Studies have demonstrated that by increasing communication with all stakeholders, students are more successful. Student assessment and performance information is shared with students and parents in multiple ways. Through the use of daily student agendas, biweekly reports, progress reports, CSUSA Narrative Report CardsTM, emails, telephone, teacher websites and parent conferences, there is ongoing communication.

Students at RECS utilize student agendas that not only organize their daily work, but also help parents to keep track of student home learning assignments and upcoming assessments. This provides guidance to the parents on the content of the curriculum being assessed and gives them an opportunity to support the student with mastering their class work.

RECS teachers send home biweekly reports in order to communicate student progress and afford parents the ability to review class work/assessments, in turn enabling parents a clear and precise understanding of assignments, rather than a simple reporting of data. Parents receive a progress report at mid term and the CSUSA Narrative Report CardTM at the end of each 9 week period.

The RECS Educational Team values the importance of returning parent emails and telephone calls within 24 hours. This serves as an effective means of communication in a timely manner.

Each teacher is provided with an individual web page. Teachers update daily information relevant to their classes. The teacher web page includes home learning assignments, calendar of events, educational links, classroom schedules, school wide announcements, frequently asked questions, class photos and other pertinent information to keep parents and students well informed.

Parent conferences are scheduled before school, during teacher planning times, and after school.

Conferences are scheduled so that teachers and parents have a chance to communicate needs and accomplishments of students. Progress Monitoring Plans (PMP's) are collaboratively developed for students who demonstrate a need for additional support in academic and/or behavioral performance.

In addition, we offer the web-based electronic CSUSA Student Information SystemTM (SIS), which allows parents to log on and have immediate access to their child's academic progress. The CSUSA Teacher eGrade BookTM (which is part of the SIS system) provides information related to the FCAT, CSUSA Benchmarks and other assessments.

4. **Sharing Success:**

The RECS Educational Team is committed to educational excellence and readily shares educational best practices and strategies amongst the community. The teachers collaborate with their peers and other CSUSA professionals in an effort to strengthen educational practices. Teachers were instrumental in developing the CSUSA curriculum maps. These maps help guide teachers toward meeting and exceeding the Florida Sunshine State Standards and Grade Level Expectations in the instructional time teachers have available. This ensures that the curriculum is both guaranteed and viable.

Teachers plan lessons together within grade levels and collaborate on interdisciplinary lessons that enable students to understand that concepts and ideas are cross curricular. This fosters a better understanding, and students develop a greater sense and connection to what they are learning.

Teachers at RECS regularly meet and confer across grade levels regarding students' prior academic performance and consequently all continue to remain stakeholders even after students have moved on from their classrooms. This collaboration gives a more complete understanding of student's abilities, strengths, areas of need, including social issues that may contribute to achievement.

Teachers at RECS facilitate workshops for educators from other CSUSA schools, along with their colleagues at the school. They are often called upon to assist with training others regarding educational delivery, classroom management and best practices that have proven successful. An entire teacher in-service day was spent training teachers from across the State in the Four Square writing program. Teachers continually travel to other schools to model and observe instruction giving feedback and encouragement to their colleagues in an effort to have a greater impact on the educational community. Staff development sessions provided by RECS teachers have included, Writing Effective Lesson Plans, Formalization of the Instructional Program, Alignment of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments to the Florida Sunshine State Standards (SSS), Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Math and Science FCAT Strategies.

Last school year, The RECS Educational Team adopted another CSUSA school and included the faculty for all trainings and workshops, in an effort to increase the level of instruction, along with student performance, at an inner city school staffed with many new, inexperienced teachers. Their efforts were well appreciated. Another faculty was transported from the Cape Coral, Florida and spent an entire day observing classroom instruction and school procedures to help improve their performance.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

Renaissance Elementary Charter School's educational team incorporates the CSUSA Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum, which ensures academic excellence in every classroom and encourages steady academic progress as students build their knowledge and skills from one year to the next. Founded on a spiral approach to curriculum design, skills are introduced, practiced, applied, and ultimately mastered at a specific grade level. A spiral curriculum recognizes the need for a skill to be reintroduced at a higher level of learning and mastery on a continual basis.

It is imperative that a balanced academic program emphasize interdisciplinary study, reading, and writing across the curriculum, critical thinking skills, cooperative learning projects, and infusion of technology throughout the curriculum. The goal of the standards-based curriculum is to provide a rigorous and high academic standard, while supporting creativity in the delivery of the standards. The CSUSA Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum provides a solid academic foundation that ensures that no child is left behind. Again, the framework ensures that a year's worth of knowledge and skills are mastered.

RECS administration has developed an educational team in accordance with the Florida Teacher Mentor School Pilot Program. Constant alignment of the curriculum with the school wide goals, mission and vision keeps all stakeholders focused on student achievement. During our weekly subject area cluster group meetings, we evaluate and redesign our lesson plans, ensuring alignment with our school wide goals, based on informal and formal classroom assessments, data from the CSUSA quarterly benchmarks, and FCAT exams.

Our school organizational chart consists of five cluster groups working towards our school wide goals. These cluster groups are K-2 Grade Reading and Language Arts teachers, 3 -5 Grade Reading and Language Arts teachers, K-2 Math and Content teachers, 3-6th grade Math and Content teachers and Special Area Teachers. These cluster groups meet two times a week to discuss proven strategies that work in the classroom. The mentor teachers review quarterly and weekly data to meet our goals. In an effort to utilize teacher expertise to its fullest potential, we have departmentalized Grades 1-5, which continues to prove a successful strategy to leave no child behind.

Renaissance Elementary Charter School has implemented a school reform based on the Florida Mentor Teacher Pilot Training Program, along with Robert J. Marzano's, 'What Works in Schools'. Both programs are supported through research, professional development staff development and teacher performance evaluations.

RECS curriculum, is inclusive of all students, even those with exceptionalities. The Exceptional Student Education program is implemented in accordance with federal, state, and local policies and procedures; and, specifically, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, sections 1000.05 of the Florida Statutes, and Chapter 6A-6 of the Florida Administrative Code. English Language Learners (ELL), students whose home language is not English and are not proficient in the English language, are taught within the school curriculum with an inclusion model. All teachers are in compliance with the Florida Meta Consent Decree and have been certified or are within timeline regarding ELL certification.

Language Arts: The primary goal of the language arts program is to help students build a basic understanding of the mechanics and structure of the English language. Language Arts is integrated into all areas of the curriculum. The curriculum continually builds upon and extends language concepts developed at earlier learning stages. Teachers evaluate students for skill development as they refine their skills while writing in their journals, reviewing current events, studying mathematical word problems, and enjoying literature.

 Mathematics: In addition to the Sadlier Oxford Progress in Math text series, RECS teachers use various manipulative materials and other hands-on inquiry based learning activities to increase mastery of concepts. The Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum related to math focuses students on accuracy of computation, mastery of basic operations, fundamental math concepts and developing the ability to apply their knowledge to practical problem solving. All grades use word problems to promote analytical thinking skills.

Science: The RECS Educational Team views Science as a process, a way of thinking about and investigating the world in which we live. Students build their knowledge of living things, life cycles, and how living things interact with each other and their environment. Students develop awareness about the Earth through experiences in comparing, contrasting, and describing earthly materials. The MacGraw Hill Science Textbook is one tool that teachers use to introduce scientific knowledge. Through guided observations, students learn to notice as much as possible about objects and events, paying close attention to detail. Students are encouraged to use the processes of scientific investigation to design, predict, conduct observation, measure, describe, gather data, and evaluate while communicating and recording their observations. Students start to build knowledge about the properties of the physical world as they explore, examine, classify, and manipulate common objects in their environment and note their similarities and differences.

For the past six years, RECS fifth grade students have been invited to participate in an outdoor educational field experience, which takes place in Florida's Everglades National Park. The students spend three days exploring the variety of natural habitats that make up this extraordinary environment. The goal of the field trip is to provide students with a better understanding of the issues endangering their national park. Over the three days, they learn teamwork, participate in hands-on experiments, and demonstrate their abilities to debate the pressing issues facing the Everglades National Park.

Social Studies: The social studies curriculum uses a sequential approach to unify history and the social sciences and promotes the development of concepts and the mastery of methods of inquiry. The influence of geography, cultural, and economic factors on societies is emphasized in the CSUSA Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum. Students gain an understanding of the major factors that have influenced the structures of society from earliest times to present day.

Teachers seek to educate students to become effective and contributing members of their community, to increase their understanding of privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, and to instill a feeling of patriotism and national identity. Concepts of home and community are reviewed and extended. Students gain a broader understanding of living in communities through the study of both similar and diverse societies.

Within the classroom, we use the Harcourt Brace Social Studies Series. Field trips are an extension of classroom learning that assist students in the application of knowledge about local, state, and national government. Teachers teach geography skills in every grade and classes regularly discuss current events.

The primary goal of the Art program is to provide every student an opportunity to develop his or her creative potential. Our commitment to nurture self expression and exploration of cross curriculum through the visual arts enables our students to conceptualize ideas in many ways. Art education at RECS exposes our students to so many facets of their lives. From historical connections, motor skills and sequencing to confidence building, career and other life experiences, students develop the skills that will enhance and enrich their expertise in all subject areas. Our art studio is designed to be a welcoming environment for all abilities and levels to succeed. Differentiated instruction provides an outlet for Gifted, Special Education and ESOL students to thrive.

Exposure to careers in the arts is an important goal and our art department participates in a series of grants and programs that initiates a partnership with working artists, poets, historians, and museum and university educators.

At RECS our students are also given the opportunity for self promotion through community based exhibitions and contests. We have showcased our student's works of art in the following businesses and institutions: Starbucks Coffee Shops, (four separate locations in the city of Doral) The Ocean Bank, The Eagle Bank, SunTrust Bank, International Bank, The Education Fund and Doral Resort and Spa, Mandarin Hotel, The Miami Children's Hospital, Jackson Memorial Hospital, Winn Dixie, Miami Dade County Youth Fair, and Miami Dade Public Library.

Our students have received awards of merit and commendations in the following contests and exhibitions: The City of Doral Holiday Card Contest, Charter School USA's Holiday Card Contest, the Orange Bowl Poster Contest, The Education Fund's Holiday Card Contest and Exhibitions and The University of Miami's Journey of Dreams Special Education Art Exhibition.

2a. **(Elementary Schools) Reading:**

Over the past decade, educational researchers and educators have been focusing on whether phonics-based programs or whole language programs produce higher academic results. Each side has strong advocates, yet many children are still emerging from schools unable to read. Meanwhile, the programmatic argument continues and educators are still trying to identify the missing puzzle piece of how children learn to read. Ongoing studies strongly suggest that educators must recognize that phonics and whole language should not be viewed as competing methods of instruction but that both are necessary. Developing phonemic awareness in students and presenting literature both orally and independently are both instructional techniques that educators must begin to scaffold into their teaching repertoire.

The primary goal of the RECS reading program is to help students understand what they read, effectively express what they mean, and apply these skills to all areas of the curriculum aligned to the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary comprehension. The SRA Open Court reading program provides a firm foundation of reading skills developed through a strong phonics program in order to provide word attack and word analysis skills and the acquisition of decoding skills. During daily reading periods, teachers include numerous approaches to develop and strengthen skills of comprehension and vocabulary development. A minimum of 90 minutes instructional time-on-task is required. Informal discussions of stories promote inferential skill development and frequent oral reading encourages expressiveness. The use of multi-level tests, computer programs, and a wide variety of literature help each child master the skills needed to achieve early independence in reading. The literature covers a broad scope of interests that encourage personal development through reading. Children learn to appreciate literature and their own creative stories. Students further develop the reading habit at an early age and are required to spend a minimum of 10-30 minutes reading each night (depending on grade level) summarizing and recording their progress in reading logs.

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

The RECS Educational Team recognizes and embraces the important role technology plays in educating children to prepare them for the opportunities of tomorrow. Technology has proven invaluable not only as a skills-based tool for children to learn, but also as an additional instructional tool to assist teachers in providing targeted, effective learning instruction.

We believe the role of technology in the classroom is based on three concepts. First, technology is a core for learning. Second, technology must be readily accessible to teachers and students in the classroom and all areas where learning takes place. Third, educational use of the Internet broadens and deepens students' knowledge and academic achievement. All grades from Kindergarten to Fifth Grade receive technology instruction weekly by a certified technology instructor. Teachers also have access to a portable Apple MacBook lab containing 30 student friendly laptops that is available to check out upon request.

The RECS Educational Team bases technology instruction, on six national standards that support computer literacy. These standards are taught with increasing complexity at appropriate levels (Level I, Grades K-2; Level II, Grades 3-5) as follows. The student:
1. Knows the characteristics and uses of computer hardware and operating systems
2. Knows the characteristics and uses of computer software
3. Understands the relationship among science, technology, society, and the individual
4. Understands the nature of technological design
5. Understands the nature of, and operation of systems
6. Understands the nature and uses of different forms of technology

4. **Instructional Methods:**

Encouraging the use of innovative instructional methods is a vital part of providing an educational program that truly meets the needs of all children. All learners have both areas of strength and areas of weakness or ways of receiving, expressing and applying their knowledge. Effective teachers understand the need to differentiate instruction in order to ensure that all students regardless of their ability levels are making adequate progress. Understanding a student's area of intelligence, learning style, and/or learning preference is another means teachers can positively impact a student's ability to learn.

RECS teachers utilize multiple instructional strategies, providing students an educational environment that

focuses on innovative learning methods with opportunities for application of what they have learned. Instruction begins with whole group and transitions as needed. Flexible grouping is utilized for enrichment and intervention as students practice strategies and skills. Administration and mentor teachers monitor planning and instruction to ensure implementation of the appropriate instructional strategies. Lesson plans are developed with research-based instructional strategies including, identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note taking, reinforcing effort and providing recognition, homework for practice, nonlinguistic representations, cooperative learning, setting objectives and providing feedback, generating and testing hypotheses, advance organizers and Bloom's Taxonomy for questioning.

RECS teachers provide a variety of field trips, community activities, and guest speakers throughout the school year, that formulate a connection between real-world application and what is taught in the classroom. This helps students recognize that learning is not isolated solely to the classroom; knowledge can be attained through many sources and a variety of experiences. This encourages students to become life-long learners.

5. **Professional Development:**

The RECS Educational Team continuously seeks opportunities for professional development that impacts student achievement. Staff training needs and opportunities are identified according to analysis of student performance data, classroom observations, and teacher requests. The educational team designs or selects professional development programs based on the needs of staff and students. The teachers spend two weeks prior to the opening of school in workshops, sharing best practices and mentoring new members. Sessions are designed with a focus on understanding and identifying the CSUSA Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum, aligning instruction with the Florida Sunshine State Standards, data-driven instructional planning, and the use of effective assessment feedback. Administrators collaborate with teachers to develop individual professional goals that correlate with their individual performance growth plans. These plans are developed after in depth analysis of student data, which in turn determine areas for growth and refinement.

Every first Wednesday of the month teachers participate in meetings to discuss teaching methods, operational needs, and areas of concern. Teachers are also provided with opportunities to attend on-site weekly staff development sessions in their cluster groups during planning time, curriculum cadres, as well as, state sponsored workshops offered at the local school district. The RECS Educational Team recognizes the importance of continued education growth. Many of our teachers are in the process of post graduate studies in reading, technology, curriculum and Leadership.

Subject Reading (E)   Grade 3   Test Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT-SSS)

Edition/Publication Year 2003-2007   Publisher Florida Department of Education

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards % Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	93	94	79	82	70
% "Exceeding" State Standards % Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	64	62	40	42	31
Number of students tested	76	77	75	73	85
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard % Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	89	100	88	89	86
% "Exceeding" State Standards % Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	79	80	47	58	54
Number of students tested	19	20	17	19	22
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard % Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	96	90	73	82	57
% "Exceeding" State Standards % Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	57	55	33	35	15
Number of students tested	51	49	49	44	53
3. Free or Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard % Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	83	75	64	71	41
% "Exceeding" State Standards % Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	50	50	27	29	8
Number of students tested	12	12	11	14	12
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject Math   Grade 3   Test Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT-SSS)

Edition/Publication Year 2003-2007   Publisher Florida Department of Education

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Proficent (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	96	82	68	77	79
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	59	46	30	36	39
Number of students tested	76	77	75	73	85
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficent (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	89	85	76	79	77
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	63	45	35	42	54
Number of students tested	19	20	17	19	22
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficent (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	98	84	63	80	76
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	57	45	24	34	29
Number of students tested	51	49	49	44	53
3. Free or Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficent (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	83	58	45	71	67
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	58	42	18	21	17
Number of students tested	12	12	11	14	12
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject Reading (E)   Grade 4   Test Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT-SSS)

Edition/Publication Year 2003-2007   Publisher Florida Department of Education

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	87	84	81	75	64
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	54	36	49	41	33
Number of students tested	75	67	74	73	80
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	91	100	94	89	68
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	54	44	62	61	27
Number of students tested	22	16	16	18	22
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	87	77	76	70	66
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	55	31	44	32	35
Number of students tested	47	43	50	44	48
3. Free or Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	67	83	63	59	38
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	41	42	31	29	23
Number of students tested	12	12	16	17	13
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject Math   Grade 4   Test Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT-SSS)

Edition/Publication Year 2003-2007   Publisher   Florida Department of Education

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	95	91	73	80	74
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	52	54	35	36	25
Number of students tested	75	67	74	74	80
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	100	100	75	83	82
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	46	69	50	50	18
Number of students tested	22	16	16	18	22
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	96	91	74	82	73
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	58	51	30	29	29
Number of students tested	47	67	50	44	48
3. Free or Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	83	83	63	71	70
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	25	58	12	24	8
Number of students tested	12	12	16	17	13
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject Reading (E)   Grade 5   Test Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT-SSS)

Edition/Publication Year 2003-2007   Publisher Florida Department of Education

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	91	88	80	75	55
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	38	57	39	43	24
Number of students tested	74	59	64	73	72
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	94	100	79	90	60
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	56	63	43	60	40
Number of students tested	18	11	14	20	15
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	89	86	78	67	57
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	36	59	38	38	22
Number of students tested	47	42	40	45	51
3. Free or Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	92	79	73		45
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	38	50	18		9
Number of students tested	13	14	11	7	11
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject Math   Grade 5   Test Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT-SSS)

Edition/Publication Year 2003-2007   Publisher Florida Department of Education

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	78	92	75	72	53
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	51	57	42	48	34
Number of students tested	74	59	64	74	72
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	78	100	79	75	87
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	66	82	43	70	40
Number of students tested	18	11	14	20	15
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	79	90	78	74	49
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	49	51	46	43	35
Number of students tested	47	41	40	46	51
3. Free or Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% Proficient (Achievement Level 3 or Higher)	62	93	73		36
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
% Scoring Achievement Level 4 or Higher	38	50	27		36
Number of students tested	13	14	11	7	11
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					