



**Board Member Brian Biggs and Ramseur Elementary School Principal Tammie Abernethy**

The North Carolina Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (NCASCD) has a prestigious Lighthouse School Award that is presented annually to one or more North Carolina schools that are leading the way in innovative programs and practices.

Among those nominated, the school or schools selected for the Lighthouse Award will be awarded at the NCASCD Annual Conference in February in Pinehurst.

For 2018-2019, the Leadership Team of the Randolph County School System has nominated Ramseur Elementary School for the Lighthouse School Award.

Many positive changes have occurred at Ramseur Elementary School, a small rural school serving a community of approximately 1,700, in recent years. Staff members recognize these changes and speak openly about the transformations.

When engaging in conversations about the changes, teachers say that they feel a strong “camaraderie among staff” which has not always been present. Other comments include “there is a willingness to roll with changes and take feedback” and “the overall culture for teachers and students is more structured [than in the past].” It is felt by staff that all of these changes have allowed a stronger focus on academics and minimized disruptive behavior. Overall, teachers say that Ramseur Elementary School’s consistency helps students with learning, and in turn, helps Ramseur retain quality teachers.

Based on academic achievement, the school community of Ramseur Elementary School has surpassed expectations in terms of demonstrating consistent student growth. In the last four years, the school has grown more than thirty-three points in student proficiency, which started at 28.7% in 2013 and increased to 62.4% proficiency for the 2017-2018 school year. Ramseur Elementary School is ranked in the top 2% of elementary schools in North Carolina in student academic growth, with a growth index of +5.87. In four out of the six subgroup categories, the school exceeded expected growth and met growth in the other two categories. Behind all of the school’s academic success is a model school structure that places value in strategic planning, positive school culture, and an overall focus on doing what is best for students.

Demographically, the school serves a population of 64.3% economically disadvantaged students and 22% English Language Learners. Our goal is to specifically provide targeted academic support. Title I funds are used strategically to employ two lead teachers who are an integral part of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and provide grade level coaching. Administrators and lead teachers facilitate professional development, guide data analysis, and provide support when planning engaging and rigorous lessons. During PLCs, teachers bring and analyze data to determine student progress. This information is used to form guided reading groups, plan “RAM time” (Reading And Math remediation and extension) and track each student’s performance. The academic progress of every student is vital, and it is reflected upon in our planning sessions.

Not only is there strategic planning and data-focused structure within the school, there also is a focus on preparing instruction based on innovative best-practices. With changes noted, teacher turnover has decreased significantly since 2013. There is now a sense of urgency among the staff that all students receive quality instruction with fidelity. The entire school follows a nationally-recognized, research-based, effective guided reading framework, as well as employing engaging Number Talks in math lessons. As an extension of concentrated reading instruction, during the first twenty days of school, staff executes "Camp Read-A-Lot." During this time period, students in first and second grade receive intensive reading instruction to combat the loss of reading skills attributed to "summer slide."

Over the years, Ramseur's culture has transformed into a positive environment which encourages student leadership through goal setting and a variety of clubs. The school will host its first "Student Show-Off Day" in 2019. On this day, students will lead conferences with parents and community members, discussing their academic progress. During these discussions, students will share the contents of their data notebooks, personal mission statements, and their goal setting process. To further the leadership mindset, students are offered an opportunity to showcase leadership skills through The Service and Young Mentors Club. As a part of the club, students work with local outreach programs, nursing homes, and collegiate summer baseball teams. In addition, students can explore their creative side through Art, Music, and Dance Clubs.

As an extension of the school day, Ramseur hosts parent nights throughout the year. On average, about 350 parents and community members attend these evening events. In order to include parents in their child's educational experience, our staff plans activities that are based on academic standards. Some of these activities include students teaching science concepts to younger students, parents being informed of math and reading strategies to use at home with students, and information regarding educational resources parents can access. One stand-alone night is planned for third grade students. During this event, parents and students enjoy a movie and popcorn, and receive a free book to encourage reading outside of school.

The academic transformation of Ramseur Elementary School can be attributed to a number of elements, including strong teachers and staff, engaging instruction, structured PLCs, a positive culture, and parental involvement. Ramseur can be defined as a school of "Continuous Improvement." In this school environment, the responsibility of helping every child grow is distributed among all staff members. Along with the idea that students can continue to learn and grow, this growth mindset has been adopted by teachers. Teachers exemplify and model this notion through their dedication to ongoing professional development. With the school community working as a cohesive team, there is no doubt the current success of Ramseur Elementary School will continue into the future.