

# Standards

# Rienzi Elementary School Overview of Standards 2002-2007

## Section Two

The seven standards of the *New Generation* was the focus chosen by Rienzi Elementary School. We chose this means of evaluation because its focus is centered on the student. Based on data collected, we deem that Rienzi Elementary is in full agreement with all seven standards. The criteria for each standard are presented below.



# Guided Self-Study

## Section Two: Accreditation

### Standards

#### Standard 1

*The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.*

Rienzi Elementary is in compliance with this standard.

Teachers, staff and community members completed a beliefs inventory in spring 2006. The teachers agreed one hundred percent on six of the statements in the inventory. This became the basis for our beliefs and mission statement.

We comply with the standards through our Parent Teacher Committee. The teachers and the administration are freely open to any suggestions from the parents and often ask for these suggestions. We utilize our school website to express our vision for the school, and our Parent Handbook is given out at the beginning of each year to express and communicate the vision of the Alcorn School District as well as Rienzi Elementary.

The teachers and administration here at Rienzi Elementary maintain a continuous profile of the students. We use our state SASI program to enter grades and biographical information. The teachers at Rienzi use the Edusoft program to track student progress through test scores. We use our actual Mississippi Curriculum Test scores to plot on a graph the two years before and the existing year's scores for the teachers to see weakness and strength noted on the different benchmarks tested.

Through this communication with the parents and community, Rienzi Elementary will continue to improve on ways to communicate with existing strategies and new ones.

## **Standard 2**

*The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.*

Rienzi Elementary School is in compliance with this standard.

### **Governance**

Rienzi Elementary operates under the policies and procedures set forth by the Alcorn School District Board of Education and Superintendent. These procedures and policies are enforced at the school. All stakeholders regard the administrator of the school as an effective and positive role model and treat him with the respect that his position demands. Students enjoy interaction with the administration but understand the role of authority.

### **Leadership**

The leadership at Rienzi Elementary maintains a focus on the school's mission and vision. The principal conducts formal and informal evaluations of the staff. Lesson plan requirements ensure that the state curriculum is being enacted, supported, and assessed. Feedback is provided to the teachers in a timely manner. The administration works diligently to provide resources for the faculty to support student learning. Teachers are allocated supply money at the beginning of the school year and feel comfortable going to the administration to request funds for instructional supplies. Teachers and the administration are able to request additional educational funding through the Rienzi Elementary PTC.

Monthly faculty meetings are held to discuss various topics such as technology, state-testing, classroom management, district policies, and various other school related issues. Rienzi Elementary has a Crisis Management Team and Plan that is prepared to handle any emergency. Teachers serve as leaders in the event of an emergency. The Alcorn School District in cooperation with the Red Cross offers First Aid and CPR training to our teachers and administrators on an annual basis for certification and renewal.

Teachers in grades K- 2 have been trained in the "Breakthrough to Literacy" Reading program. This program has been very successful in improving our students reading levels. Rienzi Elementary also has a Gifted and ACCEL programs for their students. After-School Tutorial Programs are offered for all grades as well as Summer Programs. Various forms of reinforcement are offered to our students. Award ceremonies are provided every six-week to recognize those students who make the Honor Roll. Rienzi Elementary also offers incentives for being in the Homework Club.

Faculty members are encouraged to attend professional development seminars and workshops. These workshops not only enrich our teachers with new techniques but also help them maintain their certification. Our teachers are present at all PTC meetings, Intramural Sporting events, Fall Festival's, Breakfast with Santa, Movie Nights, Open House, and other activities that take place in the school. The faculty works with the Principal in a very cooperative manner when assisting with school duties. The teachers maintain strong communication ties with the parents and are very cooperative and professional when meeting with them. The Principal maintains an "open door" policy when dealing with parents and students.

### **Standard 3**

*The school offers a research-based curriculum that supports best practices and clearly defines expectations for student learning.*

Rienzi Elementary School is in compliance with this standard.

Mississippi school systems are required to cover, at a minimum, the material in the state curriculum, but they are free to supplement it with additional topics they expect teachers to cover. Students will be tested on their mastery of this material through the state's standardized test, the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT). The Mississippi Department of Education encourages teachers to incorporate extra activities and projects that will stimulate critical thinking and in-depth learning on the part of their students. An example of this is our thematic units that are done school-wide each six weeks. Mississippi brochures were completed during the Mississippi unit and skits were performed during the farm unit. Higher order learning is also evaluated with reading fairs and science fairs. The benchmarks incorporate the content standards which tell the teacher what a student is expected to know (i.e., what concepts he or she is expected to master), and expands upon them by providing three additional items: suggested tasks, sample student work, and teacher commentary on that work. Benchmarks provide clear expectations for assessment, instruction, and student work. They define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards, enabling a teacher to know "how good is good enough." The benchmarks isolate and identify the skills needed to problem-solve, reason, communicate, and make connections with other information. Benchmarks also tell the teacher how to assess the extent to which the student knows the material or can manipulate and apply the information. Teachers are required to identify the standards/objectives the lessons cover in their lesson plans.

Grade level meetings have been established and have begun to meet on a regular basis for teachers to collaborate on lesson topics, materials and methods used to meet standards. Teachers work to create interdisciplinary units of study and cross-curricular activities. Teachers use the computer lab, classroom computers, field trips, and

guest speakers to enhance the students' learning experience. Teachers use novel studies to tie together reading, language arts, social studies, and/or science topics. Our school has a full library and computer lab that is open to students, parents, and faculty members at all times. We also have computers and access to the Internet in all classrooms. Teachers have access to educational resources such as Star reading series, DIBELS, United Streaming and Edusoft. These resources are used extensively to support the materials and skills covered in our curriculum.

Students receive Physical Education twice a week. With classroom teachers providing service the remaining days of the week. Students receive music once every other week. While survey responses indicate that staff, students and parents would like for students to receive music and physical education more, the allotment of teachers in this area is out of our control.

The librarian supervises Accelerated Reading progress. Students have been treated to visits by authors and illustrators who have read their books. Students have visited performances by the Corinth Theater of Arts. Students also take field trips to downtown Corinth for Heritage Day where they participated and won first place in a photo contest of architectural design. A former principal and the custodian play classical and inspirational music in the cafeteria for students and staff to enjoy.

Stakeholders are informed of policies and procedures through our student handbook, weekly newsletters and graded paper folders. Leadership also communicates with the stakeholders in written letters. Stakeholders have received copies of our conduct folders that are kept each six weeks, a copy of the homework note that is sent home to the parents anytime a student misses a homework assignment, as well as student expectations, playground rules, locker rules, and our classroom discipline plan. Rienzi Elementary School has a web page that can be accessed through the Alcorn County School District website. Our school events can also be accessed through the county website. Our sixth grade class produces a school newspaper for students that lists information such as upcoming events, class news, and birthdays.

Instruction is designed with individual students in mind. Ongoing assessments are utilized to teach and reteach, evaluate and re-evaluate students. These are done through "Climbing up A Mountain" and being "Shot out of a Cannon" to increase student motivation. Math Masters, Mad Minutes, Breakthrough to Literary, and Homework Club are ways students can achieve recognition for their basic skills. Teacher Support Team (TST), Title I, after-school tutoring, individualized instruction, peer tutoring and additional reteaching is used to catch at risk students. ACCEL, Accelerated Subject Placement, and Honor Society are ways students can achieve recognition for their critical thinking skills. Student's progress is displayed on the wall for all to see.

Student learning is discussed with individual students during conferences. Rubrics are used to ensure that students and parents have a clear understanding of the goals of an alternative assessment. Students are critiqued on their writing ability through portfolios and journals.

Instructional time is protected through scheduling approved by the administration. Parents may request copies of these schedules. Reading is set aside for everyone in the school during the first hour of the day, and all lesson plans are approved.

#### **Standard 4**

*The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.*

Rienzi is in compliance with this standard.

Students at Rienzi Elementary are assessed in a variety of ways to determine the level of student learning. There are formal tests administered to students that have been mandated by the county and/or state. The MCT, Mississippi Criterion Referenced Test, matches stated objectives and is administered in the spring. Students in grade 3 must meet state mandated benchmark requirements in the area of reading, language, and math. Any students not meeting this requirement will be retested in January of the following year to determine promotion to the next grade level. Ninety six percent of 3rd graders met the benchmark in reading during the 2005-2006 school year. Ninety seven percent met the language benchmark and ninety nine percent met the benchmark in math.

Data of MCT scores is plotted yearly to show growth or decline. Trend analysis scores showed that third grade students at Rienzi scored higher in both reading and language than the district performance scores. Third grade students at Rienzi matched the district performance in math during the 2005-2006 school year.

Data scores are kept in a file available for all teachers so that instruction in specific areas may be implemented. Teachers also are required to keep updated lesson plans, which include enrichment and remediation activities to meet individual student needs.

Other formal assessments used at Rienzi Elementary include:

Fox in a Box - K-2

DIBELS - K-2

MWA- Mississippi Writing Assessment - 4th

Teachers at Rienzi use other methods of assessing student learning in their classrooms. These include:

- Teacher made tests
- Class discussion and participation
- Accelerated Reader
- STAR Reading Assessment K-6
- Portfolios/Journals
- Rubrics for projects

Rienzi communicates student progress to both student and parents using a variety of methods. These include:

- weekly folders
- class newsletters
- parent/teacher conferences
- Mid-term progress reports
- MCT reports

## **Standard 5**

*The School has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.*

Rienzi Elementary is in compliance with this standard.

## **Human Resources**

The Principal has a graduate degree with 30 semester hours in Administration and Supervision from an institution recognized by an accredited US regional agency.

Rienzi Elementary provides a staff that is qualified to meet the vision, mission, and goals of the school for the 154 students currently enrolled. There is an administrative head, a part-time media specialist (two days a week), and one full-time secretary. Special needs resources include a part-time speech therapist (two days a week), part-time gifted teacher (8 hours), and two certified Special Education teachers. Three paraprofessionals are assigned to meet the special needs of our students during the day. All teachers at Rienzi Elementary school have earned at least a bachelor's degree that includes 12 semester hours of professional education from an institution recognized by an accredited U.S. regional agency. All professional personnel earn 10 hours of credit during each five years of employment to maintain their certification in the State of Mississippi. Certificates are on file in the principal's office.

Timber Hills Mental Health Services offers a part-time counselor to come to our campus once a week. Timber Hills as well as the Alcorn School District is immediately at our service if any emergency should arise.

## **Financial Resources**

The state and local budget provide approximately 85% of our financial needs. Supplemental funds come from the PTC, school picture sales, intramurals, concessions, festivals, and occasionally, special grants that have been awarded to Rienzi Elementary.

## **Physical Resources**

The school building is maintained at the site by a crew of two as well as the maintenance department of the Alcorn School District. All classrooms have adequate space and are housed in the main building of the school. All resource teachers have their own classrooms. All air conditioner filters are changed on a regular basis.

Grants and funds are used to maintain the schools landscape, the "Nature Habitat", ball field as well as the playground. Funds from the PTC were used to update the playground equipment at Rienzi Elementary.

## **Material Resources**

The media center at Rienzi Elementary maintains a collection of 4823 books; print and video reference materials, Edu-Soft, and a "Books on Tape" library. Our collection allows for 31 books per student. The media center is opened from 7am - 4pm at a minimum, for teachers, and from 8am - 3pm for students. The media specialist will also assist the teachers by pulling materials when requested.

Orientation is provided to all students at the beginning of the school year. The internet use policy and written permission to use forms are sent home to be read and signed by the parents.

The principal and technology technician oversee the purchase and use of new computer hardware and software. The principal uses and takes into account input from the faculty when purchasing computer needs for the school. The staff receives training when new equipment or software is purchased.

The media specialist at Rienzi Elementary follows the policy and guidelines established by the Alcorn District School Board for challenged materials

New media center materials are purchased through district funding. Approximately \$3000 is budgeted for new materials. Supplemental funds are available for the media

center to purchase reward prizes for students who meet the Accelerated Reader Book goals.

Rienzi Elementary has one computer lab containing 25 computers. Classroom teachers have at least three computers in their classrooms. Students receive 100 minutes of instruction in the computer lab each week. All computers are networked.

An adequate supply of consumable and non-consumable textbooks and teacher's editions in the current adoption are available for classrooms at all grade levels.

## Standard 6

*The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose to ensure achievement for all students.*

Rienzi Elementary School is in compliance with this standard.

Rienzi Elementary School has been an integral part of the community for many years. Since the late 1800's there has been a school at this location, so many of our students are the fourth or fifth generation to attend here. Many of our students and teachers are related to one another so there is indeed a very real sense of family between the school and the community.

Rienzi Elementary actively collaborates with community stakeholders to support student learning. The Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) meets on a regular basis, and is comprised of all faculty, staff, parents, grandparents, or guardians. The PTC benefits the school by sponsoring activities and events that involve students and community alike. The PTC regularly plans and sponsors Fall Festivals, family movie nights, and Little League Sports. The PTC spearheads fundraising opportunities that provide the school with money for items such as playground equipment, P.E. equipment, improvements for the library, and any other additional resources or educational materials the faculty might need. The PTC has just successfully completed a fundraiser that will provide air conditioning for the school gym. This endeavor involved many parents, community individuals, and businesses.

The community at large is kept informed of school achievements; activities and events through a weekly column entitled "Rienzi Happenings" published one of the local newspapers, *The Banner Independent*. This column provides the community with information such as dates and times for activities such as Open House, the Fall Festival, Reading Fair Workshops, Science Fair Workshops, and fundraisers, as well as student achievement on Honor Roll, Reading Fair Winners, Science Fair Winners, and other special awards.

The faculty and staff utilize an open house at the beginning of the school year that features a hamburger

supper that is open not only to students and their families but, to the community as well. A monthly calendar listing special events and activities is also made available to each family.

Rienzi Elementary makes available to the parents and community members a variety of ways to communicate needs, concerns, and suggestions. The PTC has been a very effective vehicle for family and faculty members to have their concerns addressed in a very constructive way. These meetings are open to any and all who wish to attend and participate. Rienzi Elementary school offers parents a formal chance to schedule conferences twice each six weeks; at the time three week progress reports are sent and again at report card time. The school promotes further communication between faculty and parents through the yearly formation of a Title I Advisory Committee. This committee consists of the Title I instructor, classroom teachers, the principal, and parents of students that are serviced by Title I. The purpose of this committee is to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the Title I program in meeting the academic needs of its students, and to address parent concerns about the Title I program.

Rienzi Elementary relies on the knowledge and skills of not only parents, but members of the community. The PTC is a very integral component of involving stakeholders in the enhancement of the work of our school. A variety of skills and talents, the greatest of which is a cooperative spirit, are required to plan and carry out the many successful events and fundraisers that this group provides, such as the Fall Festival and annual Beauty Pageant. Our school's Little League programs require much knowledge and skill that benefit not only the students, but the coaches and other volunteers as well. For the last few years Rienzi Elementary has been involved in the Barksdale Reading Program, which provides trained volunteers from the community to come to the school and read one-on-one with students.

Rienzi Elementary School communicates with families on a weekly basis through the use of student folders that are sent home on either Monday or Thursday. Folders contain student work from the previous week (both graded and non-graded), information on required projects such as due dates, instructions, and grading rubrics, as well as newsletters, monthly calendars, and permission slips for

field trips. The folders must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned the next day. At the beginning of the school year individual MCT Student Reports are sent home to parents. This reports shows the level of performance of that child in each of the three areas tested on the MCT (reading, language, and math) along with an explanation of each level. Throughout the year individualized STAR Reading Diagnostic Reports are sent home. These reports show Grade Equivalent Reading Level, Independent Reading Level, and strategies to be used by parents and teachers to help maximize student potential. The school recognizes academic achievement each six weeks with an Honor Roll Awards ceremony and an end of the year Academic Awards ceremony.

The faculty and staff of Rienzi Elementary School believe in the School's Mission Statement, **Together Everyone Achieves More.** The school and community have and will continue to work hand in hand together to ensure achievement for all students.

## **Standard 7**

*The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.*

Rienzi Elementary School is in compliance with this standard.

Rienzi continuously strives to improve our students' academic success. We offer a variety of programs aimed at reaching students of all ability levels. Rienzi offers an after-school tutoring program to provide struggling students with additional one-on-one instructional time. Tutoring is free of charge in this program. Our school also has a panel of teachers who meet together monthly, or more frequently as needed, to discuss our Tier II and Tier III students. The TST committee evaluates and makes recommendations for interventions aimed at increasing the success of our at risk students.

Rienzi offers a variety of programs to challenge our accelerated students as well. Individual students who exhibit an ability to perform at a higher level than their grade placement are offered the opportunity to "move up" in certain subject areas. For example, if a third grade student is reading at a fifth grade level, that student is allowed to do reading in the fifth grade classroom. Rienzi offers this in addition to our gifted program. Our gifted teacher works with accelerated children two days a week for a total of 6 hours. During the 2005-06 school year, Rienzi also implemented a program known as EXCEL. This program met after school one day a week and provided challenging instruction by two of our staff members in key subject areas to students performing above grade level.

Rienzi also strives to reward students' academic success and encourage student achievement through several clubs. The homework club is a club geared toward rewarding students who consistently complete homework correctly. These students are rewarded with a party each six weeks and a trip each semester for those who were in the club each six weeks. We also have an awards ceremony to recognize students each six weeks who earn A's and B's on their report cards. Rienzi also rewards students for following

classroom and school rules with an "E-Party" for exceptional behavior.

Our school also encourages reading success through the Accelerated Reader program. Our librarian monitors students' point totals and posts them in the hallway for students and parents to see. Teachers encourage students daily to read in their spare time and take tests on the accelerated reader program. In order to ensure students are challenging themselves, the STAR reading test is given to students in grades 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> on three different occasions throughout the school year. This computerized test evaluates the grade level at which a student is reading and comprehending. The scores are evaluated by the teacher and a copy is sent home to the parents. Rienzi also encourages writing through implementation of journal writing, writing portfolios, and D.O.L.'s. D.O.L. stands for "Daily Oral Language", and is a sentence or paragraph containing common grammatical errors which students must correct.

The staff at Rienzi works to monitor the effectiveness of instruction. Teachers meet yearly to graph the students' scores on the Mississippi Curriculum Test. We use this data to analyze individual areas of weakness and to focus our instruction to increase effectiveness. We also administer a practice test each year for the MCT. Students' scores on the practice test are printed out using Edusoft. These scores enable us to target problem areas for individual students and whole classes as well. Edusoft also allows us to print out test prep material which is in alignment with the state curriculum. These objectives are used when planning our lessons. Teachers here are required to submit lesson plans weekly to our principal for approval. Effectiveness of classroom instruction is monitored through informal observations weekly. Our principal gives us feedback through meetings concerning our classroom instruction.

Rienzi works to keep parents and the community informed. Teachers send home graded papers in folders weekly to inform parents of student progress. An average of each student's grades is sent home every three weeks. At this time, parents may request a conference to discuss their child's grades with his/her teacher. Teachers are available any time for parent conferences during a scheduled planning time. We also keep parents informed through notes, weekly newsletters, homework notes, PTC

meetings, open house, and parent workshops. Rienzi offers parents the opportunity to come during after school hours and receive assistance with projects such as reading fair and science fair projects. We also receive feedback from parents through out PTC program and parent surveys.

The staff at Rienzi participates in various workshops to improve instruction. Our staff attends grade-level meetings where we have the opportunity to share and receive ideas from other teachers. We also receive training on how to effectively use Edusoft to enrich our classroom instruction. Rienzi is currently piloting a program called Learning for Life, which is offered through the Boy Scouts. We received instruction through a video and a workshop on how to implement these lesson plans in our classroom. This program is geared toward helping students deal with the pressures of everyday life. Our staff also received the opportunity to attend several workshops dealing with children with special needs.

The Rienzi staff is continually striving to improve, set and reach higher goals. The students are the number one concern and every effort is being made so that they will receive all the advantages possible in becoming successful adults.