



Williams Memorial Elementary

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Jeffrey Beckwith, Principal

Shene White, Assistant Principal



During the Fall of 2010, Williams Memorial Elementary School, located in Dorchester School District #4, was chosen to become one of approximately 40 schools in South Carolina to be considered a TAP school. A federally funded program organized by the State Department of Education, TAP is designed as a performance-based compensation system that provides stipends to teachers based on their classroom instruction, their students' growth and overall school growth.

Along with stipends for performance, the TAP model is designed to develop multiple career paths for teachers by allowing them to advance their careers while still providing high quality instruction to their students. Professional Development discussions revolve around effective research based instructional strategies. The grant pays for additional Instructional Specialists called Master Teachers, who are responsible for providing on-going professional development for grade levels and departments based on best practices, research, data analysis and field testing. At Williams Memorial Elementary they have one Master Teacher for their primary teachers and another for their elementary level teachers.

When asked why they wanted to take part in the TAP program, the Principal, Jeffrey Beckwith, said it was two things. "One is to reward our strong teachers. They are dedicated, put a tremendous amount of time into their jobs, and they deserve the recognition for this. Additionally, this model allows us to coordinate professional development for our teachers that they can use." Mr. Beckwith continued by saying, "Our test scores are pretty good, especially for a rural school with the demographics that we have, but that is not enough for us. Our teachers and administration are highly competitive and take a lot of pride in what we do. We want to be the best so our children can be the best." In 2010, Williams Memorial Elementary received the S.C. Palmetto Gold Award for an overall school rating of "Good" and an improvement rating of "Excellent."

The TIF grant is a part of the federal government's 5 year, 1.2 billion dollar program to promote and reward great teaching as well as provide effective, relevant and on-going professional development. In 2010, the state received approximately \$47,000,000 in TIF grant money, the fifth largest amount offered to a statewide education agency.

Although TAP is a nationally recognized program, the state of South Carolina has received several recognitions for their effective implementation of the program in South Carolina. For the current school year, South Carolina has 70 schools from 15 districts participating in the program, however Williams Memorial Elementary remains the only school in the Tri-county that can be called a TAP school.

For more information about the South Carolina TAP program, you can go to <http://www.scteachers.org/tadvance/index.cfm>