

## North Carolina Middle School Raises Test Scores and Becomes a 'School of Distinction'

Source: James A. Lanier, principal, Pamlico County Middle School  
Research conducted during the 2000 school year.

### Study Description

Pamlico County Middle School first installed Accelerated Reader® (AR™) during the 1991–1992 school year and implemented Reading Renaissance® in the fall of 1996. In November 1997, the school hosted an on-site Reading Renaissance training seminar for all staff members. This training was key to maximizing the real power of AR.

After staff training, Lanier took steps to more thoroughly implement Reading Renaissance in his school. He initiated a Reading Renaissance Committee and appointed a Reading Renaissance Assistant, both of which have helped ensure the success of the program. The committee allocates duties and activities among faculty, and the assistant reads with students daily and assists with Renaissance implementation issues. Pamlico staff members have become highly committed to Reading Renaissance. They ensure that students are getting the recommended 60 minutes per day of reading practice; that students reach individual reading goals; and that students stay motivated to read. As a result of the staff's commitment, Pamlico County Middle School has earned Renaissance Model School distinction twice, and 21 teachers have achieved Model Classroom certification.

Every spring, schools in North Carolina are required to administer end-of-grade (EOG) reading and math tests in grades three through eight. Students are expected to score

at or above grade level, and also to show growth from year to year. Lanier uses the results to measure improvement in reading and math skills over time.

### Results

From 1996 to 1999, the percent of students scoring at or above grade level in the EOG reading and math tests rose significantly (see table 1). Lanier attributes the growth in both reading and math scores to Reading Renaissance. He believes that students who can read and understand better become better math students.

A longitudinal analysis of gains by graduating classes of 1998 to 2000 further demonstrates this steady improvement (see chart 1). The graduating class that finished sixth grade in 1996 and eighth grade in 1998 saw a 21.5% increase in the number of students scoring at or above grade level on the EOG reading test. The graduating class one year behind saw 18.5% more score at or above grade level in reading. The next graduating class saw an 11.4% increase in the number of students scoring at or above grade level from 1998 to 1999.

Pamlico County Middle School earned the honor of being named a 'School of Distinction' in 1998 and 1999—indicating that 80% or more of its students scored at or above grade level during the two years.

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### School Profile

#### Pamlico County Middle School

Bayboro, N.C.

Students: 392, Grades 6–8

Demographics:

Rural

Title I

Free or reduced lunch: 59%

Race/Ethnicity:

Black or African American: 36%

White: 62%

Other: 2%

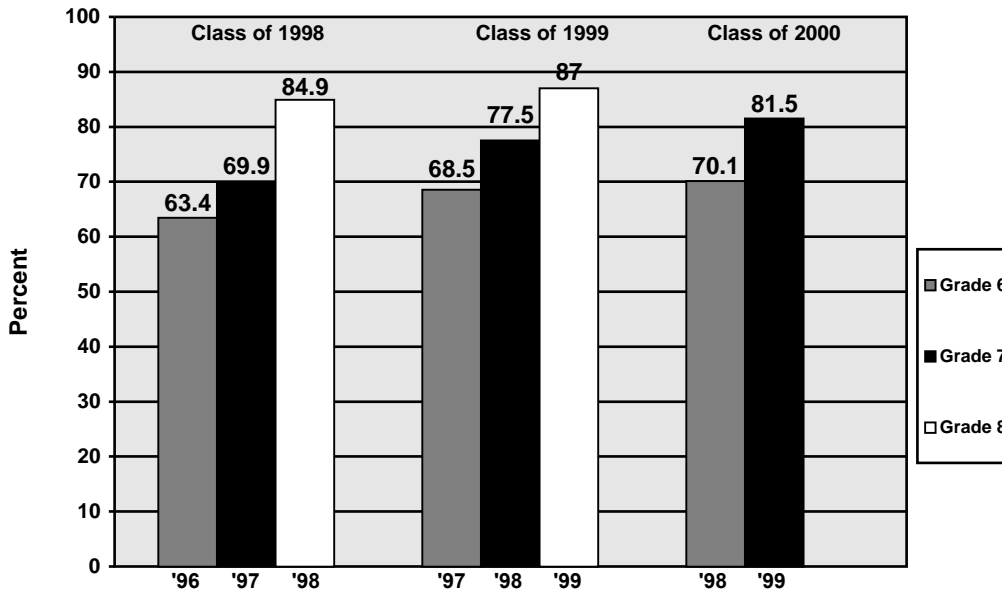
### Educator Background

**James A. Lanier** has been an educator for 30 years and the principal of Pamlico County Middle School since 1990. He was instrumental in bringing Accelerated Reader and Reading Renaissance to Pamlico, which has since achieved Renaissance Model School Certification. Lanier graduated from Fayetteville State University with a B.S. degree in Elementary Education (1970), an M.A. degree in Administration and Supervision (1987), and later received his Ed. Specialist degree from East Carolina University (1992). He credits the success of Reading Renaissance to Pamlico's dedicated staff, students, parents, and administration.

**Table 1: Pamlico County Middle School, Bayboro, N.C.**  
Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level

Grade & Subject	1996	1997	1998	1999
Grade 6 Reading	63.4	68.5	70.1	74.2
Grade 6 Math	82.1	76.9	94.0	98.4
Grade 7 Reading	59.3	69.9	77.5	81.5
Grade 7 Math	69.3	79.0	88.0	89.5
Grade 8 Reading	66.2	71.9	84.9	87.0
Grade 8 Math	69.1	69.2	91.8	90.8

**Chart 1: Pamlico County Middle School, Bayboro, N.C.**  
Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level in Reading  
Grades Six through Eight



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