



## VPI's VIP SCHOOL IN THE SPOTLIGHT

# AMITE ELEMENTARY

### An Interview with...

*Elizabeth "Libby" Covington and Rachel Nixon*

Amite, a small city, in Tangipahoa Parish is home of our school in the spotlight, Amite Elementary School! Principal, Elizabeth "Libby" Covington and inclusion teacher Rachel Nixon are excited about inclusion. After attending The Validated Practices Summer Institute, in June of 2005, these professionals returned to Amite Elementary with a more organized plan to implement inclusion.

**VPI:** Give me some background information on your school.

**Mrs. Covington:** We have a great school with wonderful teachers. We are a Title I school with about 74% of our students on free and reduced lunch. Our grade levels include Pre-K to 4 and our fourth grade is total inclusion. Some programs at our school include Head Sprout, Nuclear Reading, and Dibbles.

**VPI:** What are some accomplishments your school has made since the Summer Institute?

**Mrs. Nixon:** We have moved to full inclusion in our entire school. Behavior referrals have decreased and students are achieving higher standards. We are administering two types of assessments for reading. We administer a grade level test (4) and a test at the student's academic level (1). One student is no longer taking the first grade test because he can achieve an average grade on the fourth grade level. This is one of the many stories I can share.

The success that Amite Elementary is having with our inclusion program has made us a target for a model school. We are conducting inclusion trainings for area schools and spreading our knowledge about the effectiveness of inclusive practices. I was once a teacher who was fully against inclusion and now I am a strong advocate for inclusion.

**VPI:** What are some challenges your school is facing with inclusive practices?

**Mrs. Nixon:** It took approximately three months to learn how to utilize faculty and resources to make our inclusive practices successful. A daily challenge is collaboration time between general education teachers and special education teachers. We are currently using lunch time for collaboration. We are looking for some creative scheduling techniques that would allow time for collaboration and limit meetings before and after school.



**VPI:** What is the future direction your school will be taking with its inclusive practices?

**Mrs. Nixon/ Mrs. Covington:** We would like to be a more blended school, where every child is apart of our school and all teachers are equal.

### School Demographics

Grade Span:	PK – 4
Number of Students:	776
Low Income:	81.2%
English Language Learners:	0.0%
Caucasian:	36.9%
African-American:	62.2%
Asian:	0.6%
Hispanic:	0.3%
Native-American:	0.0%
Special Education:	14.3%

#### Amite Elementary School

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