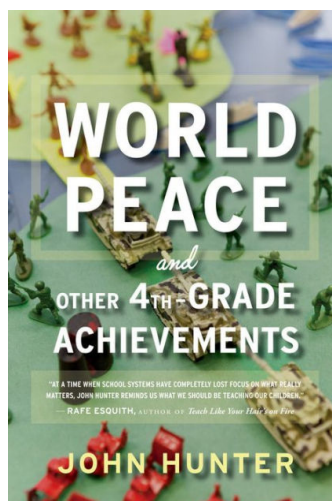




This year, ALERT classmates will have the opportunity to take on the roles of national leaders, business people, and bankers in the World Peace Game, a multi-week junior United Nations simulation based on the pioneering work of gifted educator John Hunter as detailed in *World Peace and Other 4th-Grade Achievements*. Students may also focus on a biography of an exemplary world leader, research a country or culture, investigate a crisis and suggest solutions, or design their own game that addresses events in the world.



ALERT teachers use Minecraft for Education in the classroom in order to engage students in creative thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and content related inquiry. Students will be learning about the fundamentals of architecture and applying them through Minecraft. In addition to the hands-on activities in class related to scaling, architectural elements, design and technological advancements through history, students will develop and enhance their coding skills in the digital world of Minecraft.



Minecraft Education does not replace hands-on engineering, building, or architectural learning. It is used as a medium to enhance student understanding and continue to develop their spatial and mathematical awareness.

Welcome to Elementary ALERT for 2023 - 2024!



Elementary ALERT Team

Jason Ashley
Jeanne Blackburn
Mary Fanning
Lauren Hughes
Kelly Lally
Lisa McNeill
Ramonica Pendarvis
Kristen Smarr

Mission Statement

The Richland School District Two ALERT program for academically gifted students, in association with families, the district and global community, affords each learner unique challenges to inspire the pursuit of highest academic standards by providing rigorous, differentiated curricula that cultivates excellence in leadership and life-long learning.

Active Learning Experiences in Resourceful Thinking

Program Director
Maria Kotsaka Kratsios, Ph.D.
Associate for Advanced Programs



This Year in Elementary ALERT

This year, ALERT students will explore the overarching theme of **CHANGE**. Central themes of *Preservation Versus Progress*, *Sustainable Living*, and *Adaptive Reuse* connect our two units, Humanity's Habitat and Nature's Habitat.

The adventure begins with students examining their world through the lens of architecture. Each student will learn about architectural styles, blueprints, scale, and measurement as they construct scale model houses. We will be learning to think like architects.

With our second unit of study, *Nature's Habitat*, students investigate conflicts of interest, critical stakeholders, and the difficult choices that environmental planning requires for preserving or developing South Carolina. This problem-based learning unit moves us from a concentration on the built environment to the natural environment as students identify and work with issues of significance.

Growth Mindset

Fostering a [Growth Mindset](#) is central to all of our ALERT units of study. We want students to understand the importance of effective effort and dealing with failure and challenges.

Habits of Mind

Art Costa's sixteen [Habits of Mind](#) are woven through all that we do and are essential to cultivating a Growth Mindset. Habits of Mind develop critical thinkers and help us to become lifelong learners. These are what intelligent, successful people do when confronted with new situations, challenges and/or problems.

M³ Mentoring Mathematical Minds

For our math component we will be using a unit called 'Getting Into Shapes!' from [Mentoring Mathematical Minds](#) (M³). Students will apply the math central to architecture as they work with shapes, measurement, and scale.



ALERT students will be using Renzulli Learning this year. "Renzulli Learning is an interactive online system that provides a personalized learning environment for students, resulting in increased engagement and higher academic performance." [Renzullilearning.com](https://www.renzullilearning.com)

Helpful Websites

[Hoagies' Gifted Education Page](#)

[Parent Tip Sheets - National Association for Gifted Children](#)

SENG ~ Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted <https://www.sengifted.org/senglibrary>