2008 No Child Left Behind–Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education   [X] Public   [ ] Private

Cover Sheet   Type of School
(Check all that apply)

[X] Elementary [ ] MIddle [ ] High [ ] K-12
[ ] Charter [X] Title I [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal   Mrs. Catherine R. Scuffins
<div style="font-size:smaller">(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)</div>

Official School Name   Hickory Elementary School
<div style="font-size:smaller">(As it should appear in the official records)</div>

School Mailing Address   11101 Hickory School Road
<div style="font-size:smaller">(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)</div>

Williamsport	Maryland	21795-3122
City	State	Zip Code+4(9 digits total)

County   Washington   State School Code Number* 2602

Telephone (301) 766-8198   Fax   (301) 582-5799

Web site/URL http://www.wcboe.k12.md.us   E-mail scuffcat@wcboe.k12.md.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____   Date _____
Principal's Signature

Name of Superintendent   Dr. Elizabeth M. Morgan
<div style="font-size:smaller">(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)</div>

District Name   Washington County Public SChools   Tel. (301) 766-2800

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____   Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson   Mrs. Roxanne Ober
<div style="font-size:smaller">(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)</div>

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____   Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

Mail by commercial carrier (FedEx, UPS) or courier original signed cover sheet to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 5E103, Washington DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school's application as page 2.

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2007-2008 school year.

3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2002 and has not received the No Child Left Behind–Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years.

5. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review.

6. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available. Throughout the document, round numbers to the nearest whole number to avoid decimals, except for numbers below 1, which should be rounded to the nearest tenth.

DISTRICT   (Question 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1.   Number of schools in the district:

25	Elementary schools
7	Middle schools
	Junior High Schools
7	High schools
6	Other
45	TOTAL

2.   District Per Pupil Expenditure: 9127

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 10371

SCHOOL   (To be completed by all schools)

3.   Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [   ]   Urban or large central city
   [X]   Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban are
   [   ]   Suburban
   [   ]   Small city or town in a rural area
   [   ]   Rural

4.   4   Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

   _____   If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5.   Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
Pre K	15	22	37		7			0
K	27	21	48		8			0
1	23	25	48		9			0
2	17	15	32		10			0
3	23	16	39		11			0
4	18	23	41		12			0
5	21	27	48		Other			0
6			0					
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL								293

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0	% American Indian or Alaska Native
2	% Asian or Pacific Islander
11	% Black or African American
3	% Hispanic or Latino
84	% White

100 % TOTAL

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year   20   %

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1 until the end of the year	29
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1 until the end of the year	29
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	58
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	293
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row	0.20
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	20

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 5   %

   13   Total Number Limited English Proficient

   Number of languages represented: 3

   Specify languages: Russian
   Spanish
   Vietnamese

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 53   %

   Total number students who qualify: 136

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low income families, or the school does not participate in the federally supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 13   %

                                         38   Total Number of Students Served

     Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

2	Autism		Orthopedic Impairment
	Deafness	8	Other Health Impairment
	Deaf-Blindness	8	Specific Learning Disability
1	Emotional Disturbance	18	Speech or Language Impairment
	Hearing Impairment		Traumatic Brain Injury
1	Mental Retardation		Visual Impairment Including Blindness
	Multiple Disabilities		

11. Indicate number of full time and part time staff members in each of the categories below:

Number of Staff

	Full-time	Part-time
Administrator(s)	1	
Classroom teachers	13	
Special resource teachers/specialists	5	7
Paraprofessionals	2	3
Support Staff	3	11
Total number	24	21

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   23   **: 1**

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Please explain a high teacher turnover rate. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy in attendance, dropout or the drop-off rates. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates, and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Daily student attendance	97 %	97 %	96 %	96 %	96 %
Daily teacher attendance	94 %	95 %	94 %	%	%
Teacher turnover rate	21 %	29 %	54 %	%	%
Student drop out rate (middle/high	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Student drop-off rate (high school)	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %

Please provide all explanations below

During the 2004-05 school year, 54% of the teachers at Hickory were new to the school. In May of 2004, new administration was appointed to the school. Involuntary transfers to other county schools and non-renewals accounted for this turnover. In the 2004-05 school year there were thirteen teachers new to Hickory. In May of 2005, teachers were provided

from administration the expectations for the upcoming school year. Teachers were given the option of transferring from the building or remaining to begin this new journey. Due to transfers and non-renewals, seven teachers were new to the building. Again, in May of 2006, expectations were provided. Due to transfers and non-renewals, there were 5 teachers new to Hickory. It is important to note that because of various part-time positions, it is difficult to keep teachers in the same position for long periods of time. Over the course of three years, there have been 3 new part-time enrichment teachers, 3 new part-time special education teachers, and 3 new part-time guidance counselors. All the teachers who have held these positions have left Hickory for full-time employment.

PART III - SUMMARY

Hickory Elementary is a small suburban school located in Williamsport, Maryland. Opening in 1975, Hickory is one of five open spaced schools and one of eight Title I schools in Washington County. The Hickory community is comprised of one subsidized housing project, a low-income trailer park and middle-income single-family homes. Presently there are two homeless families whose children attend Hickory.

For the 2006-07 school year, the school had an enrollment of 293 students in grades pre-kindergarten to five. There are two half-day pre-kindergarten classes and 2 classrooms each of grades kindergarten to five. Kindergarten is a full-day program. The school has a full time Student Achievement Specialist to assist with data analysis, interventions and professional development. There is one full time special education teacher/case manager. A full time Title I intervention teacher delivers services to students in grades kindergarten to two. Full time gym and media teachers also deliver instruction to students. Several part-time teachers deliver services to children in art, music, enrichment, ELL, and intervention. Additionally, Hickory has a part-time speech pathologist and guidance counselor. Special education personnel include one full time and two part-time paraprofessionals. A part-time Family Community Partnership Coordinator assists with home visits, parenting issues, community services, and student learning.

Through a focused mission and vision, Hickory is committed to ensuring that all students attain mastery of essential skills. Collaboratively created, Hickory's mission states, 'Hickory Elementary is committed to creating a school where students reach their academic potential, have no limits to their academic success, and contribute meaningfully to society.' Based on ten values and beliefs, 'It is the vision of Hickory Elementary School to become a professional learning community that sustains a supportive learning environment where all students are able to comprehend, compute, communicate, collaborate, problem solve, and acquire a viable core of knowledge in all subject areas.' Using the Professional Learning Community philosophy of doing 'Whatever it Takes,' all staff is held accountable for student learning. School Improvement Team meetings are conducted with the entire staff. Contributions regarding student learning and achievement are expected from all educators.

Hickory has structured a schedule where team level and encore teachers are provided a daily shared 50-minute planning time. All grades levels are provided uninterrupted blocks of time for language arts, mathematics and writing instruction daily. Once a week team planning is designated for the Classroom Focused Improvement Process (CFIP) where teachers discuss data, best practices, and interventions to address individual needs of students. Included in this process are administration, Student Achievement Specialist, classroom teachers, intervention teachers and special education staff. This team approach allows for collaboration regarding student achievement and data to address appropriate interventions and instructional strategies.

Designated as a Maryland Emerging School of Character, Hickory Elementary believes that community involvement is a vital key to success. Staff and students participate in monthly community service projects that benefit local, national and international projects. Service projects have included a book drive to assist students affected by Hurricane Katrina, Trick or Treat for UNICEF, Salvation Army canned food drive, holiday cards for soldiers in Iraq, National Denim Day for Breast Cancer Awareness, Jump Rope for Heart and Go Red for the American Heart Association.

To acknowledge the importance of the parent/school partnership, all teachers make home visits before the school year begins to establish a relationship between the home and school. All families are contacted by either a home visit or phone call. Welcoming packets are given to all families, introducing them to the expectations at Hickory. An open house is provided to all pre-kindergarten and kindergarten families to assist with transition. During the 2006-07 school year, parents and community members contributed 3,497 volunteer hours to Hickory students and staff.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

In accordance with the requirements of No Child Left Behind, Maryland introduced the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). MSA assesses the Maryland content standards in reading, mathematics and science. MSA scores indicate how well children have mastered reading, mathematics, and science skills specified in the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC). MSA scores also show how children performed compared to other students across the nation. The test is administered annually to students in grades 3-8 and provides educators, parents, and the public valuable information about student, school, school system, and state performance. MSA information may be found at www.mdk12.org and www.mdreportcard.org.

MSA is a criterion-referenced test measuring student proficiency and advanced proficiency in reading and mathematics. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is designed to measure continuous yearly improvement. Maryland has established performance targets called Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO's) to assess the progress of student subgroups, schools, school districts, and state. This annual measurement ensures that schools meet the NCLB goal of 100% student proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics by the end of the 2014 school year. The intent is to ensure that schools direct their instructional improvement efforts toward all students. The 2007 AMO's are 67.2% for reading, 63.9% for mathematics, and 94.0% for attendance.

MSA is composed of selected response (multiple-choice) questions and brief and extended constructed responses (BCR, ECR) similar to short-essay questions. Each child is provided a score and level to determine overall mastery of reading, math and science skills. Three achievement levels are determined for students: Basic (below grade level), Proficient (on grade level) and Advanced (above grade level).

Hickory has either met or exceeded overall AYP in all subgroups since the inception of MSA. Attendance for the 2006-07 year was 96.9%. For 2007, overall reading scores increased in all grade levels: Grade 3' 80.0% to 87.8% proficiency, Grade 4'81.4% to 92.3% proficiency and Grade 5'66.7% to 87.2% proficiency. For 2007, math scores included: Grade 3'92.5% to 78% proficiency, Grade 4'79.0% to 94% proficiency and Grade 5'63.9% to 93.6% proficiency. Although there was a decrease in grade 3 math proficiency, there was an increase from 22.5% in 2006 to 37.7% in 2007 for advanced students.

Statistics from four subgroups are indicated in Hickory data. With a FARM rate of 53.1%, it is vital that increased student achievement occurs for these identified poverty students. Increases of reading proficiency of 15.5% in Grade 3, 6.7% in Grade 4, and 40.3% in Grade 5 have occurred over the last year. In Math, increases of 22.3% in Grade 4 and 44.3% in Grade 5 have been recorded. Grade 3 FARM student achievement remained the same at 87.5% proficiency. African American students comprise another subgroup in grades 3 and 5. In grade 5, 100% of African American students were proficient in both reading and math. In grade 3, 100% of African American students were proficient in math and 80% were proficient in reading. Special education students in grade 3 increased 25.7% in reading and 11.4% in Math. Grade 5 special education students increased 46.7% in reading and 43.3% in Math in 2007. There were not enough special education students in grade 4 to be recorded as a subgroup. Grade 3 white student data indicates an increase of 8.4% in reading and decrease of 13.5% in math. Grade 4 white students increased 10.8% in reading and 18.9% in math. An increase of 20.5% in reading and 31.2% in math was achieved with white grade 5 students. When viewing data for current 5th grade students, reading scores improved in 2005 from 72.5% to 81.4% in 2006, to 87.2% in 2007, an increase of 14.7% over three years. For mathematics, significant improvements are also noted with a proficiency rate of 77.5% in 2005 to 79% in 2006 to 93.6% in 2007, an increase of 16.1% over three years.

Continuous improvement will remain a focus at Hickory. Data will be a driving force in planning, instructional delivery and interventions. Staff will continue to use multiple data sources to address student needs so that all students will be successful learners.

2. **Using Assessment Results**

Hickory utilizes assessment information to plan for strategic instruction for students. Three sources of data are utilized: MSA, county data including monthly reading assessments and unit math tests, and daily classroom artifacts. These three sources are triangulated to determine areas of strength and concern for whole class and individual students.

The School Improvement Plan is developed using the information obtained from all data sources. SIT members analyze MSA and benchmark results to design a SIP addressing student achievement. School-wide data, accountability targets and AMO's are used in SIP development. A needs assessment focusing on student achievement, school climate, parent-family-community involvement and instructional practices identifies strengths and areas requiring growth in student learning. Positive and negative factors contributing to student growth are discussed to assist with SIP development.

Staff meets weekly at CFIP meetings to discuss data and student achievement. The CFIP process is the primary mechanism for improving student and teacher performance. Staff members are given a planning notebook containing the previous year's assessment data and individual student information. Planning grids and calendars are provided to assist with long-term planning in reading and math.

Triangulated external, benchmark and classroom data identifies strengths used for planning enrichment and differentiation to encourage learning at a higher level for those who have mastered targeted standards. Areas for growth are determined with interventions and differentiation planned. Individual student data from the county data management system is analyzed, allowing staff to deliberately target students not meeting proficiency. Questions driving this dialogue include, 'Are these the results that were expected given students' performance in class?' 'How far were various subgroups from meeting proficiency?' and 'What predictions can I make about student performance on MSA given benchmark results?' Collaborative teacher teams identify strategic plans of instruction and intervention. Reading and math intervention groups are identified for each grade level with intervention, special education, enrichment, SAS, and classroom teachers implementing best practices with students.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results**

Communicating assessment results is a vital key in understanding learning expectations and student proficiency. Expectations are communicated before the school year with home visits to all families. Classroom teachers and the Family-Community Partnership Coordinator (FCPC) meet with families to begin a positive school-family relationship. Monthly school and classroom newsletters provide continuous information about student learning. MSA results are provided to parents through the Maryland Report Card, MSDE and WCPS websites. A parent assessment night is held in September explaining MSA and county assessments. Conducted by each classroom teacher, parents receive an assessment overview and complete a practice benchmark with their child, which opens a dialogue between parent and child. Assessment progress forms are sent home after each county benchmark indicating proficiency level, strengths, and areas of concern. The form provides areas for teachers to include instructional tips and for parents to correspond with teachers. Educational flyers providing home learning tips and parenting strategies are sent home monthly.

Evening activities are offered to provide learning opportunities for families. Family Math Night, Multicultural Night, and parenting workshops communicate information relative to their child's education and school performance. The PTA assists in relaying academic achievement to parents through PTA sponsored activities. Assessment information is provided through the SIP which is available to all parents.

Day-to-day student performance is conveyed to parents and students in numerous ways including agendas, weekly newsletters, and conferences. Formal conferences are held in November for all students and in February for struggling students in reading and/or math. Students are cognizant of day-to-day classroom performance, benchmark and MSA data. Feedback is given to students in a timely manner. Proficiency certificates and 'Wall of Success' stars are provided to students achieving proficiency. Teachers turn data into learning experiences by modeling exemplary responses, graphing results and analyzing data changes. Students understand their strengths and areas of concern and are held accountable for their learning.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Hickory Elementary shares its success with colleagues in Washington County and Maryland. Elementary Cohort school principals, assistant superintendent, elementary director and supervisors meet bi-monthly to discuss the executive's director's report. Topics included in the discussion are benchmark data, effective instructional strategies and appropriate interventions. This provides the opportunity for schools to share successes and discuss commonalities. In 2006 and 2007 Hickory was named a Character Counts School of the Year where we shared community service successes at the state conference.

Teachers share their knowledge, skills and accomplishments with colleagues in the county. The SIT facilitator has presented information regarding the CFIP process and SIP development to county schools. Two staff members are county demonstration teachers who impart their teaching expertise with others. One staff member has created a county demonstration tape that is used as an intervention model for colleagues. The SAS teaches a MSDE reading class at Hickory and encourages her students to review classroom libraries and literacy centers. Curriculum and Instruction Specialists and WCPS teachers regularly visit the school to observe implementation of best practices. The special education teacher uses her expertise to assist case managers with special education issues. Teachers and administration participate in county focus groups (planning, intervention, enrichment), piloting a new math intervention program and second-generation study groups. Hickory staff has facilitated grade level sessions for new teachers at the New Teacher Academy. The FCPC shares details of specific programs that are having a positive impact on the student performance with other Title I schools at monthly meetings. The SAS and principal engage in critical friends groups that encourages discussion of student learning and success. Participation in all these activities allows staff to bring information regarding Hickory successes to very specific groups in WCPS.

The school's initiative and achievements are shared and highlighted with parents and community through parent communications, volunteerism, monthly Character Counts celebrations and PTA meetings. As we travel on the road to student success, we will continue to spread the news of the great accomplishments at Hickory Elementary.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

   Aligned with the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum, Hickory Elementary provides a rigorous instructional program. High expectations for learning along with rich interactive activities and tasks ensure success for all students. Using differentiated instruction, highly qualified staff delivers a curriculum promoting critical thinking, problem solving, self-reflection, and application of content. Higher order questioning along with student-centered activities encourage active engagement in all grade levels. Instruction is designed to motivate students while providing a structured and focused purpose for learning.

   The goal for Hickory's curriculum is to ensure success for all students. The instructional program is aligned with the school improvement plan, which is revisited monthly to monitor instructional strategies and actions steps that have been identified as key strengths and areas for growth. To assist with the common purpose of success for all, weekly Classroom Focused Improvement Process (CFIP) meetings are held collaboratively with classroom teachers, administration, Student Achievement Specialist (SAS), intervention and special education teachers. Differentiated activities are developed and delivered to address students' learning styles. Teachers instruct students using rubrics and model expectations, thus setting a clear, precise standard for successful learning.

   Realizing that continuous assessment and data analysis are vital keys in creating a program where all students' needs are addressed, data is discussed weekly at CFIP meetings. During this 45-minute session, discussion occurs regarding MSA, monthly benchmark, and daily ongoing data to assess the instructional program for every student. Strengths and areas of concern are determined for the overall class and individual students. Common questions asked include, 'What do we want all student to learn?' 'How will we know when each student has acquired the intended knowledge and skills?' 'How will we respond when students experience initial difficulty so that we can improve upon current levels of learning?' and 'How will we respond to students who have already mastered the material?' Interventions and enrichments are discussed to determine the appropriateness of the program. Teachers bring student artifacts to reflect and compare classwork to predetermined rubrics that set criteria for assessment. Furthermore, common assessments and exit tickets are developed at this time to assist with common expectations.

   Reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies are taught daily in all grade levels. Hands-on science occurs using the FOSS science program. Social Studies is routinely integrated into language arts. Also included in the daily schedule in all grade levels is core extension, a 40-minute block of time to address intervention and enrichment needs of students. At this time students are provided additional supports in reading, mathematics, and/or writing. All staff, including intervention, special education and enrichment, participates in delivering services to students. Field trips are encouraged to extend and reinforce the core curriculum areas and make learning authentic and real.

   Hickory provides additional instruction in after-school activities. The 21st Century Extended Learning Program is an after-school program that supports the VSC in language arts and mathematics. Targeted students receive core curriculum instruction as well as enrichment activities during this program. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their child's education through activities including MSA/test preparation night, Family Math Night, and Multicultural Night. Additional learning opportunities, such as Leap Pads for kindergarteners, FROG reading activities for all grade levels, Suduko math challenges for fifth graders, Grade 1 author studies, and Mega-Fun Math Card Games for Families on all grade levels are provided throughout the school year to support learning at Hickory.

2a. **(Elementary Schools) Reading:**

   Hickory utilizes Maryland's VSC as a framework for reading/language arts. The county reading program is Houghton Mifflin however, supplemental materials are utilized. The daily 120-minute language arts block includes reading and writing. The reading program incorporates five areas of reading education: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Teachers determine the needs of individual students and

differentiate accordingly. They plan for whole group, differentiated small groups, and independent reading time for application of skills and strategies. Flexible student groupings based on daily evaluations and benchmark assessments occur frequently. With reading and writing developing along parallel paths, the schedule consists of three blocks to integrate Language Arts.

The blue block is direct instruction of reading skills and comprehension strategies. Lasting 20-40 minutes, students participate in interactive read alouds, shared reading, message time and interactive spelling/word study. They explore reading, language, and word study using informational and literary texts. Students listen to, read, and discuss texts representing various genres. Students learn word meanings and structures as well as skills and strategies leading to comprehension.

The 40-60 minute white block focuses on students becoming independent readers. Students apply decoding skills and comprehension strategies from the blue block to construct meaning through guided and independent reading, literacy centers and literature circles. Teachers assess through the use of running records, individual reading inventories, and oral and written responses to reading. Students engage in reading 'just right' texts for extended periods of time. Extensive classroom libraries have been created to provide students the opportunity to explore various genres for independent reading.

The 30-40 minute writing workshop provides time for teaching the processes and skills of writing. Students develop writing skills and use writing as a tool for communication. Students learn the writing process, conventions of writing and how to compose for various purposes and audiences. Mini lessons, direct instruction and modeling, are provided to assist students. Learning occurs through modeled, shared, guided and independent writing.

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

The goal of Hickory's mathematics program is for all students to achieve mathematical proficiency by developing conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. The end result is the ability to think and reason mathematically and use math to solve problems in authentic contexts. Aligned with the Maryland VSC and NCTM Principles and Standards, the math program is organized under six strands: Algebra/ Patterns/ Functions, Geometry, Measurement, Statistics, Probability, and Number Relationships and Computation. These strands are developed through four mathematical processes: Problem Solving, Reasoning, Communication and Connections. The integration of both concepts and processes is essential for the development of meaningful understanding of mathematics.

The mathematics instructional framework consists of a 5-7 minute warm up when teachers make connections to prior learning and pose an essential/focus question for direct instruction. Lasting 40-50 minutes and using problem-based activities, students engage in a variety of instructional activities including differentiated independent/partner exploration, direct instruction based on student need, and/or guided practice. By transforming classrooms into a mathematical community, students apply their knowledge into authentic and relevant activities through manipulatives, small group/partner exploration, and hands-on activities. Daily assessments and monthly pre-and post-assessments allow teachers to differentiate instruction. Teachers provide differentiated activities to engage students so that new concepts are developed and math makes sense. Students must be proficient with math facts and skills so they can be effective mathematical problem solvers.

Communicating mathematics is an additional focus during math instruction. It is essential for students to explain their mathematical reasoning both orally and though writing. It is expected that students use math vocabulary, diagrams, charts, symbols, and drawings to assist with written explanations. Opportunities to communicate math processes and procedures occur through brief and extended constructed responses and math journals. Students integrate their math knowledge into other curriculum areas and real life situations daily.

4. **Instructional Methods:**

Doing 'whatever it takes' is the premise used in developing a strong instructional program for Hickory students. All staff believes that every child will learn and it is our responsibility to ensure this occurs. Focusing on student learning rather than teaching, staff asks common questions including, 'What are the best instructional strategies to help all of my students learn?' and 'How can I engage students in real and meaningful ways so they will reach high levels of achievement?'

Clear objectives as well as the purpose for learning are provided to students (orally and written) with every lesson. Direct instruction, modeling, guided and independent practice provide students with specific expectations to ensure success. Students are provided connections to prior knowledge and scaffolding to assist with understanding. Small group instruction, reciprocal teaching, and peer tutoring are additional methods teachers implement into classroom instruction. Technology supports the VSC as students utilize and apply information gathered from the web.

Emphasizing active student engagement, cooperative learning, every pupil response, and reflective thinking, students are provided instruction encouraging higher order thinking. Differentiated instruction is incorporated into lessons to meet individual needs. Manipulatives, authentic problem solving, and hands-on learning are additional methods implemented by instructional staff. Strategic reading and math interventions are incorporated daily during core extension for advanced students as well as students experiencing difficulties. Hickory has adopted a special education case management model which allows the special education teacher to case manage all special education children part-time while addressing IEP/intervention needs during the remainder of the day.

Instructional decisions are data driven. Through dialoging with teachers and reviewing student data at CFIP meetings, staff identifies grade level areas of need. Best practices, instructional resources, student groupings and intervention changes are discussed thus allowing teachers to closely monitor student progress and identify students who may be in need of additional assistance.

5. **Professional Development:**

Using the philosophy of a Professional Learning Community, Hickory's professional development is job embedded with all staff taking responsibility for learning. The goal for professional development is to help teachers enhance their knowledge and refine teaching skills. Fostering collegiality and problem solving, professional development emphasizes continuous improvement within the classroom.

Professional development needs are identified by responses to a survey created by the School Improvement Team (SIT) at the beginning of the year. Professional Development is aligned with the School Improvement Plan (SIP), and is focused on maintaining common goals for improving student learning. A leadership team consisting of administration, SIT facilitator, and SAS meets weekly to review progress on PD goals. CIFP sessions are used to guide decisions on professional development.

For 2006-07, Hickory staff participated in various PD activities including Ruby Payne Framework of Poverty, Motivating Minds, Differentiated Instruction, Higher Order Questioning, and Performance Matters Data Analysis. Professional Development activities are structured for teachers to examine, reflect and plan for implementation. Critical Friends Protocols are regularly used with staff to increase self-reflection and accountability for learning. Staff members engage in PD opportunities provided by the local school district, community agencies, and Maryland State Department of Education.

Mentor teachers, curriculum and instructional specialists, and the SAS are instrumental in delivering PD activities to staff. Emphasizing continuous PD, the staff regularly uses team planning, collaboration, and reflection of student achievement through artifacts and data. Using the expertise and strengths of Hickory personnel, PD activities have been planned and presented to colleagues in the county. Teachers are encouraged to implement new instructional practices, self reflect, and adapt instruction to better meet the needs of students. Through classroom visitations, grade level/subject area resources, coaching, and demonstration lessons, Hickory teachers continually refine their skills. A professional development library, including resources addressing best practices and current research, is maintained for staff use. Additional resources are purchased based on the needs identified by SIT.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Subject Reading (LA) Grade 3 Test State Criterion-Referenced Test: Maryland School

Edition/Publication Year _____ Publisher Harcourt Brace

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	February	February
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Proficient	88	80	73	84	83
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	10	13	15	11	7
Number of students tested	41	40	40	37	29
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Proficient	88	72	75	77	91
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	13	4	10	6	9
Number of students tested	24	25	20	17	11
2.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
3.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject   Reading (LA)   Grade   4   Test   State Criterion-Referenced Test:Maryland School A

Edition/Publication Year _____   Publisher   Harcourt Brace

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	February	February
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Proficient	92	81	91	89	
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	26	21	8	26	
Number of students tested	39	43	36	27	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Proficient	85	78	92	93	
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	20	17	0	21	
Number of students tested	20	23	13	14	
2.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
3.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject   Reading (LA)   Grade 5   Test State Criterion-Referenced Test: Maryland School A

Edition/Publication Year _____   Publisher   Harcourt Brace

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Proficient	87	67	84	82	78
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	26	25	29	30	28
Number of students tested	47	36	31	50	36
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Proficient	87	47	93	79	68
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	26	6	20	15	5
Number of students tested	23	15	15	27	19
2.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
3.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject __Math__ Grade __3__ Test State Criterion-Reference Test: Maryland School A

Edition/Publication Year _____ Publisher __Harcourt Brace__

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	February	February
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards Proficient	78	93	78	65	89
% "Exceeding" State Standards	32	23	18	14	17
Number of students tested	41	40	40	37	29
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	88	88	80	47	82
% "Exceeding" State Standards	33	16	15	6	36
Number of students tested	24	25	20	17	11
2.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
3.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Subject Math   Grade 4   Test State Criterion-Referenced Test: Maryland School

Edition/Publication Year _____   Publisher Harcourt Brace

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	February	
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Proficient	97	79	76	85	
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	44	21	5	26	
Number of students tested	39	43	37	27	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Proficient	95	73	57	86	
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	25	18	7	29	
Number of students tested	20	22	14	14	
2.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
3.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					

Edition/Publication Year _____ Publisher Harcourt Brace _____

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	February	February
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Proficient	94	64	71	62	67
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	15	6	23	4	6
Number of students tested	47	36	31	50	36
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Proficient	91	46	80	52	58
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Advanced	8	0	20	0	0
Number of students tested	23	15	15	27	19
2.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
3.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					
4.					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested					