

2005-2006 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet Type of School: (Check all that apply) Elementary Middle High K-12 Charter

Name of Principal Mrs. Cecilia J. Green
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

Official School Name Hartford Magnet Middle School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 53 Vernon Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Hartford, Connecticut 06106-3214
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Hartford State School Code Number* 64-54

Telephone (860) 757-6201 Fax (860) 947-9935

Website/URL www.hmms.crec.org E-mail cgreen@crec.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Robert Henry
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Hartford Public Schools Tel. (860) 695-8000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Honorable Mayor Eddie A. Perez
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

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

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 with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or 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 2005-2006 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has 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 2000 and has not received the 2003, 2004, or 2005 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The 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 the 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.

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

1. Number of schools in the district: 27 Elementary schools
 4 Middle schools
 0 Junior high schools
 8 High schools
 _____ Other
 39 TOTAL
2. District per Pupil Expenditure: \$10,900
 Average State per Pupil Expenditure: \$8,620

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural area
 Rural
4. 1 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4 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
PreK				7	92	108	200
K				8	84	115	199
1				9			
2				10			
3				11			
4				12			
5				Other			
6	90	116	206				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							605
→							

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| <u>27</u> | % White |
| <u>34</u> | % Black or African American |
| <u>37</u> | % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>2</u> | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <u>0</u> | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| | 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: 5%

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	0
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	12
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	12
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	600
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	50
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5.0

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 7 %
45 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 4

Specify languages: Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, French, and Albanian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 49 %

Total number students who qualify: 296

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: $\frac{6}{36}$ % 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.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>20</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> Hearing Impairment	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>3</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>34</u>	<u> </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>18</u>	<u> </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u>3</u>	<u> </u>
Total number	<u>59</u>	<u> </u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 18:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. 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 between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	99%	98%	98%
Daily teacher attendance	2%	3%	6%	6%	5%
Teacher turnover rate	7%	7%	6%	9%	0%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	%	%	%	%	%

PART III - SUMMARY

From the moment you enter Hartford Magnet Middle School, it is clear that this is an incredibly diverse, vibrant, serious, and cohesive learning community. This spirit is engendered in the opening of the school's mission statement: "We come together, city and suburbs, with eager minds, a sense of pride, and a passion for achievement to create our Hartford Magnet Middle School family." The supportive, demanding, and closeness of family inspires all stakeholders to commit themselves to the success of all students and inspires students to meet those high expectations. The school's vision statement was developed in the fall of 2004 by staff, students, and parents to articulate what the school will look like when the school fulfills its mission statement. This delineation of concrete indicators is now the basis of all decision-making – instructional practices, school schedules, adoption/revision of policies, staff development efforts, communication with parents, etc. The school's relentless focus on achieving its mission to be a unified, supportive, rigorous, diverse learning environment has made it one of the most successful magnet schools in the region. In fact, the waiting list to attend the school continues to grow each year. Families who do "win the lottery" (literally and metaphorically) and are admitted to the school demonstrate extraordinary commitment to both the individual student and the school community.

The school's standards-based curriculum demands cognitive engagement from students via in-depth exploration of topics and themes so that they will be successful at the region's most competitive high schools. Content areas and units of study in both core and Encore (Unified Arts) subjects are framed by essential questions to assist students in attaining conceptual understanding and 'big picture' ideas and concepts that may be transferred across grades and subject areas. Teachers encourage questioning and the exchange of ideas so that students can "uncover" curricular content through hands-on activities, inquiry, and collaborative learning. In all grades and subject areas, a wide variety of assessments (performance tasks, projects, writing prompts, standardized tests) are utilized to create a well-rounded picture of a student's achievement. Student work is evaluated using common rubrics to ensure consistency in scoring, to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment design, and to discuss instructional strategies for further improving student achievement. Technology is infused into all aspects of school life to foster communication, analysis of current performance levels, and prepare students for the 21st century workforce.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) is designed to measure student performance in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics, focusing on content that is reasonable to expect students in each tested grade to master. Student performance is compared to an absolute standard of specific learning goals and objectives as identified by the Connecticut Curriculum Frameworks. The data included in the application represent the past three years of results where the CMT is based on a September administration of the test, in grades 4, 6, and 8, assessing the skills mastered by the end of grades 3, 5, and 7. (NOTE: Beginning in 2006, CMT will be administrated annually in March for grades 6, 7, and 8.) The CMT results are reported on a scale of 1 to 5 (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal, and Advanced). Students who demonstrate meeting the standard (as indicated by AYP) score at the Proficient level and above. More information on the Connecticut Mastery Test can be found at www.cdse.state.ct.us and summaries of the results can be found at www.cmtreports.com.

The HMMS population consists of three ethnic subgroups, currently 45% Black, 35% Hispanic, and 16% White. The remaining 4% of our students represent subgroups which are not included in the report from the Connecticut State Department of Education, because have fewer than 20 students each. In 2003-2004, there were only 16 White students tested, so their results are not included for that testing year. Our scores indicate that an achievement gap exists, between subgroups, upon the students entering HMMS. On the 2002 writing portion of the CMT, the gap between Black and Hispanic students reaching Proficiency was 15 percentage points, and between White and Hispanic students was 33 percentage points. In 2004, the gap in achievement between Black and Hispanic was down to 9 percentage points, and the White and Hispanic gap was down to 13 percentage points.

The students at HMMS are almost equally represented in terms of eligibility for free or reduced lunch or not. Both subgroups made similar improvement on the reading portion of the CMT. In 2002, 73% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch scored at or above Proficient, by 2004, the score increased to 77%. Similarly, in 2002, 83% of students not eligible for free or reduced lunch scored Proficient or above on the Reading portion of the CMT; this score increased to 88% by 2004. Ethnic subgroup achievement gaps have shrunk over the last three years; economic subgroups have shown an increase in improvement at the same rate, at HMMS.

In Connecticut, scores are reported by subgroup and comparisons are made within Educational Reference Groups (ERG). ERG is a classification system in which school districts that have public school students with similar socioeconomic status and need are grouped together for district level comparisons. Students at HMMS performed well above other Hartford and ERG I schools. For example, on the Mathematics section of the 2004 CMT, 81% of HMMS students performed at or above the Proficient level, compared to only 44% of ERG I students and 45% of Hartford students.

In addition to the CMT, school-based assessments provide meaningful data about student performance. In English, four core assessments are administered: DRP (TASA) to measure degree of reading power, 4Sight to measure reading comprehension, site-based grammar test to measure grammar skills related to editing and revising, and Direct Assessment of Writing (both site-based and district-based) to measure student ability to respond to a timed writing prompt. The DRP (TASA) is administered once in the fall and once in the spring (via CMT), 4Sight is administered quarterly, the grammar test is administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, and writing prompts are completed at the beginning of the year and quarterly throughout the remainder of the year. In mathematics, each math course has a core assessment that is administered at the beginning of the year to diagnose current achievement levels and

then re-administered mid year (first half of the assessment) and end of year (second half of the assessment) to gauge student progress over time.

2. Using Assessment Results:

At the school level. HMMS houses all assessment data (subject area core assessments, report card and progress report results, attendance, district-wide test results, and state mastery test results), student schedules and demographic information in a common database. Reports are generated in Microsoft Access to allow for more sophisticated analysis of data so that staff can target instruction appropriately. This database allows all staff to monitor results on individual assessments, track student progress (within and across classrooms), and identify gaps (in curriculum, in achievement) to refine instructional practice. There is a full time teacher leader whose responsibility is to create, maintain, and generate reports upon individual requests.

Assessment results during the year focus instruction and become the basis for course recommendations for the following year. To reduce the time students need to spend learning new assessment systems, common assessment formats, vocabulary, and rubrics are used as much as possible. To avoid “testing fatigue,” the staff develops an assessment calendar so classroom, school, and district assessments do not overlap. Data are used as an integral piece of all staff meetings (both full staff and vertical subject area teams) to identify achievement gaps and develop action steps for improving student performance. Action steps are supported through targeted staff development, including professional development workshops, work of instructional coaches, and informal and formal teacher observation protocols.

At the team and classroom-levels. To ensure that students are effectively placed into appropriate ability-level classrooms, incoming sixth graders take placement exams in the spring of their fifth grade year in both reading and mathematics. In English, student assessment work is housed in a portfolio to provide evidence about current achievement and areas for further development. The portfolio is the basis of individual student-teacher conferences to optimize the effectiveness of learning, especially in Honors English and in Academic Literacy classes. In sixth grade mathematics, student performance is monitored via pre and post testing within each unit to make sure that the teaching is responsive to achievement gaps. As students begin to be grouped based on Algebra readiness, teachers differentiate seventh and eighth grade course work to ensure all students are appropriately challenged and will be successful at meeting established state goals and prepared for rigorous high school math programs.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Staff. Assessment results follow a flow chart that starts with the administration giving the information to the academic coaches. The coaches, in conjunction with the administration then share the assessment results with staff showing achievement on the school, department, classroom, and student levels to facilitate ownership and collaboration. This data is used to determine individual and full staff professional development needs and to focus ongoing curriculum development.

Students, Parents/Guardians, and Community. All teachers share achievement results with parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year and at regularly scheduled report card conferences. Parents/guardians also receive written reports via eight progress reports a year. Parents/guardians are able to access their child’s achievement data on the school’s web-based server. Instructional coaches host evening informational meetings for parents to discuss curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices to maximize the effectiveness of school-family partnerships in raising individual student performance.

Teachers and administrators utilize the school email system in a continuing manner to communicate quickly with parents at home and work. These communications are recorded in team logs to track the nature of the concerns and to coordinate communication efforts across classrooms. The school's Family Resource Aide and counselors also serve as liaisons to non-English speaking parent/guardians. In addition to student-specific communication, general information about student performance is communicated through school-wide events that take place regularly throughout the year, including: School-wide CMT Assembly, Family Math Night, community-wide information fairs, School Improvement Team meetings, and monthly PTO meetings. The school publishes a monthly newsletter to communicate assessment information (upcoming testing, results, and guidelines/tips) mailed to every student's home address.

Because HMMS is a magnet school and draws from 23-districts (including Hartford) the school also reports general school assessment results via press releases to media outlets, the school website, and literature on the school and its programs to make this information easily accessible to stakeholders in all participating districts. The school also hosts an internet website at www.hmms.crec.org which highlights scores and historical performance data from various assessments as well as providing an electronic copy of the school newsletters and other relevant information.

Sharing Success:

The faculty of HMMS prides itself on the achievement of the students, the curriculum, and the school and has often been invited to share their insights and practices with educators on local, regional, and national levels. Over the last five years, HMMS staff have presented at prestigious local, state and national conferences, such as: NELMS, AMS, ASCD, AASA, NASSP, and NABSE. HMMS staff also partnered with Foundation for Excellent Schools and Trinity College to promote academic success with other schools throughout the country. The school also opens its doors to a wide variety of visitors to both showcase and receive feedback on instructional practices. Focused visitations include a regional Superintendent's Network led by Richard Elmore, a nationally renowned Classroom Walkthrough training series, and educators and dignitaries interested in replicating the magnet school model and school culture.

School-based instructional coaches share curriculum success at district content area meetings both through the communication of results and the presentation of professional development workshops that model strategies that have proven effective at raising student achievement. School administration shares the successes of the school with other administrators at district meetings, superintendent meetings, and magnet school meetings. Administrators also share successes of HMMS through monthly newsletters, the web site, Parent Association meetings, and School Improvement Team meetings. The administration has recently created a media and school mailing list to let schools and parents in all 23 districts know about success at HMMS in a timely manner. Administration also welcome visitors to the school both to observe classrooms as well as meet with instructional coaches to discuss existing policies and practices designed to maximize the school's overall effectiveness at meeting the needs of every child.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum

The English program focuses on strategic reading and writing instruction to maximize skill development and passion for language. Reading and grammar instruction is based on McDougal Littell's *Language of Literature* series. High interest readings are supplemented with *Bridges* and with an extensive school library collection designed to meet the needs of all ability levels and interests of students. The writing

curriculum (based on *Empowering Writers* series) ensures students write in different genres; a significant emphasis is placed on expository and persuasive writing to meet the state's requirement for proficiency in these areas. All sixth grade students take both a reading class and a writing class. Seventh grade students take one integrated English class with a focus on persuasive writing, developing an argument through reading, and honing content area reading comprehension skills. Eighth grade students participate in a literature-based English class to hone reading, writing and critical thinking skills. The school's reading specialist teaches an academic literacy class for students in all three grades who need additional support to achieve state goals.

The Mathematics program clusters students based on current achievement levels to provide a rigorous and targeted learning environment. Concepts and skills aligned with the state frameworks are spiraled over the three-year course of study to ensure that students are prepared for rigorous high school programs and state assessments. Sixth grade students take a general math class. Seventh grade students are placed in pre-Algebra based on demonstration of prerequisite skills or into the general math class. Eighth grade students have several options: Algebra (for those students who successfully completed pre-Algebra in seventh grade or who are recommended for the course by their general math teacher – this includes over 30% of all eighth graders), Pre-Algebra (modeled after a high school course) either as a traditional course or through the “I Can Learn” lab, and an “I Can Learn” math lab which uses technology to create a self-pacing learning environment. An academic numeracy class is offered during the Encore period for students at all three grade levels who need additional instructional support to meet established goals.

The Social Studies program develops responsible citizens who use history as a way to analyze and understand the present and exercise their rights and responsibilities as a member of local, regional, national, and global communities. This unique curriculum creates a cohesive three-year scope and sequence with an emphasis on government and civics and a core set of skills to ensure a strong foundation for rigorous high school work in both Social Studies and English. Materials and areas of emphasis are selected that encourage students to connect what they are studying and their own lives, express their points of view, and benefit from the point of view of others.

The Science program uses the Prentice Hall Science Explorer series to explore key concepts and to hone scientific inquiry skills. Students work both independently and collaboratively in well-equipped science labs to achieve instructional goals and objectives. They are expected to demonstrate learning through formal lab reports (scored with a site-based rubric), unit tests, and projects. All students also complete an annual science fair project to showcase their individual interests and skill development.

The World Language program uses Spanish to increase cognitive development, provide a deeper understanding of language, and enhance communication with members of the school and local communities. In sixth grade Spanish is taught as an Encore class on a rotational schedule, generally meeting two times per week. In seventh and eighth grades, Spanish is taught as a core subject for students who have met general literacy standards/requirements. Spanish teachers are placed on seventh and eighth grade cluster teams to work together with their colleagues to serve the students on that team, collaborating especially closely with English teachers on grammar and sentence structure.

The Encore program offers students a wide range of opportunities to explore the visual arts, physical education, health, general and instrumental music, and technology. Unique features of this program include a competition size swimming pool, a PITSCO science lab, and the opportunity to attend classes at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts (located on the same campus) in theater, ethnic drumming, fashion design, photography, film and television, and dance.

2a. **(Elementary Schools) Reading:** Not applicable.

2b. **(Secondary Schools) English:**

The English curriculum at HMMS focuses on achieving success for all students in the areas of reading and writing. The curriculum builds students' literacy skills through independent reading, cooperative learning, highly engaging reading and writing topics, and a focus on individual student needs. Selections for reading are based on connections to other content areas (social studies in particular), student ability, and student interest. Regardless of reading material, students are challenged to delve into deeper understanding using the following active reading strategies: monitor understanding, summarize, infer (including visualize and predict), question, connect, and evaluate. Teachers use research-based instructional strategies that give students greater access to both literature and nonfiction reading. Through a rigorous assessment process, teachers gain invaluable information about students and instruct in order to meet individual student needs. Site-based literacy rubrics (based on state standards) enable teachers to score student work in a collaborative and consistent manner. Literacy rubrics provide students with clear guidelines that allow them to self-assess their work. Students who read below grade level are challenged and supported in both general English classes and Academic Literacy. At least two English classes in each grade are co-taught by a special education teacher. All students benefit from this inclusive model, and students who need additional support can find that support from either the general or special educator. Students move through the English curriculum so that by the end of eighth grade, they are engaged in a course that is modeled on high school English with a mixture of classic and contemporary literature, analytical and personal writing. Because of the rigorous curriculum and instruction based on student need, HMMS students leave ready to pursue high school English with confidence and competence.

3. **Mathematics, Science, Art, Etc.:** The HMMS Music department showcases the talents and creative abilities of almost 200 students. Students are engaged in the study of instrumental, vocal, and general music. The success of HMMS students is based on the ability "to produce critical and creative works." The music curriculum engages students in the continual creation of such works. The school's band rehearses enthusiastically to produce music for several concerts per year. The 100+ member band has also performed at the Hartford Civic Center before Harlem Globetrotters and Doc Hurley Tournament games, and as part of the Hartford Veterans' Day Parade. The HMMS choir has been a part of several local and statewide performances, including a performance for the State Board of Education. Each winter and spring, students, staff, parents and community members are entertained by the band, choir, and string ensemble at seasonal concerts. General music classes give non-band or choir members the opportunity to engage in the creation and study of music through keyboarding. Music contributes to the success of HMMS students through the building of critical thinking skills and student confidence. In preparing students for the "region's most competitive high schools," the study and performance of music is valued as an essential part of this preparation.

4. **Instructional Methods:** Instructional practices at HMMS are based on positive research based teaching behaviors that include effective classroom management, active engagement of all students, and efficient use of instructional time. The focus is on academic content and skills with clear learning goals. Instructional practices and activities honor individual differences in students' approach to learning which leads to greater conceptual understanding. Instruction is delivered in a rotational block schedule of 80 min. which fosters use of a variety of instructional approaches and learning activities in both the core and encore classes.

Integrated Instruction. Authentic connections are made across subjects and grade levels to maximize the opportunities for students to apply what they learn in new and increasingly sophisticated ways. Teachers work collaboratively on both grade level and subject area teams to strengthen ties across the curriculum as

well as reinforce the use of common vocabulary and instructional practices.

Active /Experiential Learning. Students use manipulatives to explore and model mathematical relationships, engage in science labs that encourage exploration and inquiry, participate in writing workshops with peer review, utilize interactive audio activities in world language, and find real world connections through simulations, debates, and role playing in social studies, language arts, and world language classes.

Multiple Resources. Multi media, technology, primary documents, and trade books are used for teaching and learning. Academic classrooms, as well as encore classes, have access to smartboards and computers to enhance the learning experience. TI 83 calculators are used regularly in algebra classes; DVD's in world language enable students to make connections from unit to unit, and analysis of primary source documents promotes learning in social studies classes. Independent reading selections honor diverse interests, achievement levels, and cultural backgrounds (both in trade book selections and library media center collection).

Higher Order Thinking. Teachers employ questioning strategies and techniques to encourage higher order/critical thinking skills through the use of essential questions that encourage student understanding of the content and facilitate skill development.

Differentiated Instruction. Block scheduling allows for teachers and students in both core and encore classes to move seamlessly from whole group to small group and individual learning activities, reducing over-reliance on whole class, teacher directed instruction. Inclusion classes, utilizing the co-teaching models, meet the needs of our special education students, 'at risk' students, and English language learners. Learning centers, tiered instruction, learning contracts, complex instruction and web quests are some of the differentiated strategies utilized.

5. Professional Development:

Teaching all students is a challenging job but grows even more complex when working in a magnet school with students from 23 school districts. Professional development addresses learning priorities that have been identified from staff analysis of student data. School leadership ensures that these development efforts are implemented into the classroom through the coaching support of instructional coaches and curriculum leaders and through the evaluation protocol used through the formal evaluation process. A recent professional development initiative was to create common assessments in individual subject areas to emphasize key skills and concepts as well as provide additional evidence of current achievement levels so that curriculum focus and instructional practice could be revised as appropriate. This development work not only clarified the goals within subject areas but also revealed important opportunities for full staff collaboration (using consistent vocabulary, common rubrics, etc.).

Instructional coaches (certified teachers in the areas of science, literacy, and mathematics) conduct monthly curriculum meetings, co-ordinate district and site-based core assessments, conduct informal classroom observations, model best teaching practices (especially for new teachers), monitor lesson plans, disseminate vital information and resources to department members, attend district and other professional development sessions, and present professional development workshops. They lead the work with respect to on-going adjustments/refinement in curriculum design and related assessments. Recent initiatives include: development of anchor sets, creation/refinement of site-based rubrics, identification of effective differentiation strategies, scoring of core/major assessments to ensure consistency in scoring, digital grade entry, etc. (Note: In social studies and world languages there are curriculum leaders who lead subject area initiatives as well as teach.)

Another layer of intensive professional development support is provided to new teachers. New teachers are paired with a subject area mentor who provides support both in classroom instruction and in meeting state certification requirements (BEST portfolio). In addition, new teachers meet regularly with the school's "master mentor" – a certified teacher who provides emotional and professional support both as a whole group and individually. New teachers also receive extensive coaching from the school-based instructional coaches.

ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Subject Math Grade 8 Test Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year 3rd Generation Publisher Connecticut State Department of Education

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Testing month	September	September	September
SCHOOL SCORES			HMMS
% At or Above Proficient	79	77	81
% At or Above Goal	48	50	46
Number of students tested	201	196	199
Percent of total students tested	99.5	99.5	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0.5	0
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. Black			
% At or Above Proficient	80	78	80
% At or Above Goal	48	42	44
% At Advanced	4	6	4
Number of students tested	93	89	89
2. Hispanic			
% At or Above Proficient	73	69	74
% At or Above Goal	40	51	37
% At Advanced	4	2	1
Number of students tested	80	87	70
3. White			
% At or Above Proficient	86	N/A	93
% At or Above Goal	72	N/A	60
% At Advanced	43	N/A	30
Number of students tested	21	16	33
4. F/R Lunch			
% At or Above Proficient	77	77	74
% At or Above Goal	41	51	40
% At Advanced	4	3	7
Number of students tested	107	117	103
5. Full Price Lunch			
% At or Above Proficient	80	76	89
% At or Above Goal	56	49	53
% At Advanced	13	8	11
Number of students tested	94	79	96

Subject Reading Grade 8 Test Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year 3rd Generation Publisher Connecticut State Department of Education

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Testing month	September	September	September
SCHOOL SCORES			HMMS
% At or Above Proficient	77	84	82
% At or Above Goal	68	71	69
Number of students tested	200	196	199
Percent of total students tested	99	99.5	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0.5	0.5	0
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. Black			
% At or Above Proficient	88	91	84
% At or Above Goal	74	76	73
% At Advanced	12	16	10
Number of students tested	92	89	89
2. Hispanic			
% At or Above Proficient	63	76	75
% At or Above Goal	55	65	56
% At Advanced	9	5	9
Number of students tested	80	87	70
3. White			
% At or Above Proficient	96	N/A	88
% At or Above Goal	86	N/A	82
% At Advanced	62	N/A	55
Number of students tested	20	16	33
4. F/R Lunch			
% At or Above Proficient	73	83	77
% At or Above Goal	63	73	64
% At Advanced	9	12	14
Number of students tested	107	117	103
5. Full Price Lunch			
% At or Above Proficient	83	84	88
% At or Above Goal	72	68	74
% At Advanced	24	16	24
Number of students tested	93	79	96

Subject Writing Grade 8 Test Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year 3rd Generation Publisher Connecticut State Department of Education

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Testing month	September	September	September
SCHOOL SCORES			HMMS
% At or Above Proficient	94	91	95
% At or Above Goal	73	69	77
Number of students tested	200	196	199
Percent of total students tested	99	99.5	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0.5	0
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. Black			
% At or Above Proficient	92	96	94
% At or Above Goal	74	70	74
% At Advanced	25	21	25
Number of students tested	93	89	89
2. Hispanic			
% At or Above Proficient	94	84	91
% At or Above Goal	66	62	72
% At Advanced	19	16	21
Number of students tested	79	87	70
3. White			
% At or Above Proficient	95	N/A	96
% At or Above Goal	90	N/A	87
% At Advanced	38	N/A	45
Number of students tested	21	16	33
4. F/R Lunch			
% At or Above Proficient	91	89	93
% At or Above Goal	68	71	75
% At Advanced	20	17	25
Number of students tested	106	117	103
5. Full Price Lunch			
% At or Above Proficient	95	95	95
% At or Above Goal	77	66	78
% At Advanced	28	27	30
Number of students tested	94	79	96

Subject Math Grade 6 Test Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year 3rd Generation Publisher Connecticut State Department of Education

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Testing month	September	September	September	September	September
SCHOOL SCORES					HMMS
% At or Above Proficient	72	85	82	82	88
% At or Above Goal	41	56	55	62	61
Number of students tested	180	144	174	198	197
Percent of total students tested	98.4	98.6	100	99	9
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	2	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1.6	1.4	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% At or Above Proficient	76	83	88	73	79
% At or Above Goal	36	51	55	59	47
% At Advanced	5	4	7	5	3
Number of students tested	42	47	60	59	61
2. Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient	61	85	74	72	88
% At or Above Goal	34	54	50	51	51
% At Advanced	5	7	5	5	9
Number of students tested	82	73	66	74	74
3. White					
% At or Above Proficient	n/a	n/a	91	95	100
% At or Above Goal	n/a	n/a	77	79	84
% At Advanced	n/a	n/a	36	49	43
Number of students tested	8	10	22	43	56
4. F/R Lunch					
% At or Above Proficient	72	89	86	81	87
% At or Above Goal	36	58	52	62	52
% At Advanced	4	11	8	17	14
Number of students tested	136	91	79	148	77
5. Full Price Lunch					
% At or Above Proficient	73	76	88	86	89
% At or Above Goal	57	53	58	61	67
% At Advanced	14	6	12	18	22
Number of students tested	44	51	95	49	120

Subject Reading Grade 6 Test Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year 3rd Generation Publisher Connecticut State Department of Education

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Testing month	September	September	September	September	September
SCHOOL SCORES					HMMS
% At or Above Proficient	78	68	82	77	82
% At or Above Goal	47	44	67	61	69
Number of students tested	180	144	174	198	197
Percent of total students tested	98.4	98.6	100	99	99.5
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	2	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1.6	1.4	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% At or Above Proficient	72	77	87	82	84
% At or Above Goal	57	64	75	67	64
% At Advanced	0	10	10	14	7
Number of students tested	42	48	60	59	61
2. Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient	49	58	72	59	74
% At or Above Goal	28	44	49	40	58
% At Advanced	5	7	0	4	7
Number of students tested	82	73	65	74	74
3. White					
% At or Above Proficient	n/a	n/a	91	95	91
% At or Above Goal	n/a	n/a	86	86	86
% At Advanced	n/a	n/a	45	35	32
Number of students tested	8	10	22	43	56
4. F/R Lunch					
% At or Above Proficient	59	66	78	76	74
% At or Above Goal	41	53	60	59	56
% At Advanced	6	9	9	15	12
Number of students tested	136	94	78	147	77
5. Full Price Lunch					
% At or Above Proficient	75	72	86	80	87
% At or Above Goal	68	58	72	67	77
% At Advanced	11	16	12	14	17
Number of students tested	44	50	95	59	120

Subject Writing Grade 6 Test Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year 3rd Generation Publisher Connecticut State Department of Education

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Testing month	September	September	September	September	September
SCHOOL SCORES					HMMS
% At or Above Proficient	68	81	90	86.8	92
% At or Above Goal	37	49	68	64	66
Number of students tested	179	144	174	197	197
Percent of total students tested	97.8	98.6	100	98.5	99.5
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1.1	.7	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% At or Above Proficient	83	85	100	97	92
% At or Above Goal	42	47	77	79	62
% At Advanced	9	9	22	20	13
Number of students tested	43	47	60	59	61
2. Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient	56	76	84	75	89
% At or Above Goal	26	46	59	41	58
% At Advanced	7	8	12	7	12
Number of students tested	81	74	66	74	74
3. White					
% At or Above Proficient	n/a	n/a	86	95	96
% At or Above Goal	n/a	n/a	73	79	76
% At Advanced	n/a	n/a	55	30	21
Number of students tested	8	10	22	43	56
4. F/R Lunch					
% At or Above Proficient	67	81	86	86	90
% At or Above Goal	38	54	64	63	54
% At Advanced	10	8	22	20	16
Number of students tested	134	93	79	148	77
5. Full Price Lunch					
% At or Above Proficient	78	80	94	90	93
% At or Above Goal	42	42	71	67	75
% At Advanced	11	18	25	14	17
Number of students tested	45	51	95	49	120