

Revised 3/23/06

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. Susan S. Evans

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name

Ridgely Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address

121 East Ridgely Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Lutherville

City

Maryland

State

21093-5222

Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County

Baltimore County

State School Code Number* 0852

Telephone

(410) 887-7650

Fax (410) 887-7834

Website/URL

<http://schools.bcps.org/schools/cms/ridgely/>

E-mail rims0852@bcps.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.

_____ Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*

Dr. Joe A. Hairston

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name

Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS)

Tel. (410) 887-4554

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.

_____ Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson

Mr. Thomas Gryzmski

(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.

_____ Date _____

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

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

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:
- | | |
|------------|---------------------|
| <u>104</u> | Elementary schools |
| <u>26</u> | Middle schools |
| <u>0</u> | Junior high schools |
| <u>24</u> | High schools |
| <u>4</u> | Other schools |
| <u>158</u> | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$8,899.00

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$9,062.00

Source: 2005 Maryland Report Card website (<http://www.mdreportcard.org/>)

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

NA 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
6	168	167	335
7	166	167	333
8	180	168	348
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →			1016

[Throughout the document, round numbers to avoid decimals.]

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>80</u> % | White |
| <u>9</u> % | Black or African American |
| <u>2</u> % | Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>10</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: 7 %

[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.	39
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	34
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	73
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	1016
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.072
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 1 %
7 Total Number of Limited English Proficient
 Number of languages represented: 5
 Specify languages: Chinese, Arabic, Korean, Spanish, and Bulgarian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7 %
 Total number of students who qualify: 75

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 programs, 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: 7 %
72 Total Numbers 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> 3 </u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u> 13 </u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u> 29 </u> Specific Learning Disability
<u> 26 </u> Emotional Disturbance	<u> 1 </u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> Hearing Impairment	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> </u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u> </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)	3	0
Classroom teachers	60	1
Special resource teachers/specialists	5	5
Paraprofessionals	7	0
Support staff	4	1
Total number	<u>79</u>	<u>7</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 17:1

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	96 %	96 %	96 %	96 %	96 %
Daily teacher attendance	94 %	95 %	96 %	96 %	97 %
Teacher turnover rate	12 %	5 %	8 %	9 %	11 %
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Student drop-off rate (high school)	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %

PART III - SUMMARY

Ridgely Middle School is a dynamic learning environment where students are encouraged to fulfill their scholastic and personal potential. We provide enriching opportunities for all students through a well-rounded curriculum featuring strong academics in standard, gifted and talented, and special education programs and extracurricular activities.

Ridgely consistently demonstrates dedication to excellence through outstanding performance in local, statewide and national assessments. In 2005, 92% of our students were reading at or above the proficient reading level on the reading Maryland School Assessment (MSA). Likewise, 82.2% of students scored at or above proficient on the math MSA, exceeding the County and State levels of achievement. Beyond state-wide examinations, our students take pride in their accomplishments in the gifted and talented English, math, science, art and social studies programs. Students also shine at the County and State levels with superior performances in music adjudications and individual performances. Some 79% of the school's population participates in a music group. Our World Language program provides an opportunity for seventh and eighth grade students to study French, Spanish, or Latin. Eighty-seven, eighth grade students were inducted into the National Junior Honor Society this year. We also had 707 students achieve the Honor Roll during the first quarter of 2005-06 school year, translating into more than two-thirds of Ridgely's school body of 1,016 students.

Extracurricular enrichment is another important dimension of Ridgely Middle School, where values of self-confidence, teamwork, and respect are promoted, thereby enhancing student achievement. In addition to numerous before-and-after school intramurals, Latin Club, Science Club, Yearbook, Choral and Instrumental Ensembles, Drama Club, Ceramics Club, 24 (math) Club, and Student Government Association are only a few of Ridgely's more than 25 after-school groups. We strive to reinforce classroom curricula through these diverse programs and continually see positive effects on student learning. Not only is there greater retention of content, but the groups also add to our positive school environment and motivate students to pursue their personal interests.

Supplemental academic services are provided to ensure improvement and success for every student. Services include: math with assistance, the Wilson and Fast Tracks reading programs, and "come back" tutoring, which allows students to complete assignments with additional time to follow-up on work.

Our school implements Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through our special education and Student Support Team programs. Faculty members closely monitor students' academic needs through careful review and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans with current teachers acting as case managers, thus providing more specialized instruction for students who require it. Our Special Education program offers a continuum of services from Intensity I-V. Behavior Learning Support and Functional Learning Support programs are provided. Crisis intervention, psychological, speech, and social work services support these specialized programs. Ridgely's faculty is sensitive to the unique learning needs of students; teachers differentiate instruction to benefit each child.

Ridgely's success is due, in part, to the generous support of our Parent Teacher Association. The group's unwavering dedication to students, faculty and community has afforded opportunities for an active Cultural Arts program featuring Artist-In-Residence programs, an annual Scottish student music exchange, as well as culturally and academically enriching assemblies. The Strive for 25 school-wide reading incentive program is also supported. The PTA has established many community partners through our annual Craft Fair fundraiser, helping to keep Ridgely a flourishing, positive force in the surrounding community.

Not least of all, our students strive to live the motto, "Ridgely Students are Respectful, Responsible and Ready" through service and outreach to others in the greater community. Over and above the service projects imbedded in the curricula, approximately 20% of students log additional volunteer hours, eagerly participating in canned food drives, benefit car washes, UNICEF fundraisers, and toy donations. Through service, students strengthen individual values of respect and magnify what it means to be a part of the Ridgely Middle School family.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

In March, 2003, in response to new requirements from the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (ESEA / No Child Left Behind), Maryland introduced the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). The MSA was administered to students in grades 3, 5, and 8 in mathematics, and 3, 5, 8, and 10 in reading. Student, school, district, and state achievement is measured on three proficiency levels: Advanced, Proficient, and Basic.

The MSA produces a score that describes how well a student masters the reading and mathematics content specified in the Maryland Content Standards and the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC). MSA scores are criterion-referenced scores depicting student performance against the Maryland VSC. The website for state assessment information is <http://mdreportcard.org/>.

Ridgely's MSA mathematics results over the past three years show a continuous increase of student achievement. The percentage of students school-wide scoring at or above proficient in mathematics has increased by 16%, from 66% in 2002-03 to 82% in 2004-05. The percentage of students scoring at advanced levels also increased by 22%, from 25% advanced to 47% advanced during this same time period.

Caucasian students comprise the majority population. Mathematics test scores for this group are comparable to the school's scores within a range of one to three percentage points. Asian American students are the highest performing subgroup when they are compared to the school's scores and as they are compared to the majority population.

The most improved subgroup in mathematics is African American students. During the past three years, the percentage of African American students scoring at or above proficient has increased by 34%, from 18% in 2002-03 to 52% in 2004-05. This is almost double the gains made by Caucasian students (18% increase) and more than double the gains made by students in the entire school (16% increase) during the same time period. Although significant mathematics gains have been made by African American students, discrepancies still remain between the school and majority populations and African American students. The same is true of two other subgroups, special education students and those students qualifying for free and reduced meals.

Not only has student performance increased at the proficient level in mathematics school-wide, but the percentage of students achieving advanced levels within all subgroups has also risen.

Ridgely's MSA reading results over the past three years show a similar increase of student achievement. The percentage of students school-wide scoring at or above proficient in reading has increased by 10%, from 82% in 2002-03 to 92% in 2004-05. The reading scores for Caucasian students are comparable to the school's scores within a range of one to two percentage points. The Caucasian student subgroup is the highest performing subgroup when compared to the school's overall reading scores.

The most improved subgroup in reading is special education students. During the past three years, the percentage of special education students scoring at or above proficient has increased by an impressive 43%, from 19% in 2002-03 to 62% in 2004-05. This is more than quadruple the gains made by students in the entire school (10% increase) during the same time period. Similarly, African American students have more than tripled (32% increase) the gains made by students in the entire school during the same time period. Although significant reading gains have been made by special education and African American students, discrepancies continue to exist between the school and majority populations and special education, African American, and free and reduced meals student subgroups.

Test results over the past three years show that we are significantly closing the achievement gap in mathematics and reading for African American, special education, and free and reduced meals student subgroups as we work to make "No Child Left Behind" a reality for each child in our school.

2. Using Assessment Results:

In its commitment to improving student achievement, the faculty at Ridgely Middle School utilizes assessment data in various ways. Faculty and parents are active members of the School Improvement Team (SIT). Analysis of the MSA data is employed as the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is developed each year and periodically revisited throughout the year by the SIT and faculty. This analysis impacts all curricular areas. It drives classroom instruction, remediation, and enrichment in the two areas assessed, mathematics and reading. Assessment results are used to create the necessary student programs in the master schedule and subsequent teacher assignments. The individual strengths of our faculty members are used to best meet each student group's needs. For example, to better support the needs of students in our self-contained behavior learning support math classes, a special educator and a certified math teacher are assigned to the class as well as other additional adult support personnel.

Math teachers identify students scoring below the proficient levels on BCPS Benchmarks that target indicators for the MSA and provide instruction in the regular mathematics class with pull out/come back assistance classes modeled on the BCPS Algebra with Assistance program. These second dose classes reinforce and specifically work on skills taught in the lessons of the classes earlier in the day. In addition, for every student not scoring proficient on the MSA, math teachers create a profile sheet that lists the specific MSA objectives not mastered and targets those objectives in their instruction through drills, classroom practice, and homework as well as through remediation in additional lunch time and after school coach classes.

Students in grades seven or eight identified as proficient or advanced readers select a world language, while basic readers from the MSA receive daily instruction in scheduled small group reading classes centered on the BCPS mandated Fast Tracks Program. Interdisciplinary teaching teams are aware of not only the basic readers, but also those who were proficient within ten points of being basic. Sixth grade reading teachers use a profile sheet based upon reading skills from the Maryland VSC to track skill development of every sixth grade student not scoring proficient on the fifth grade reading MSA.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Ridgely strives to keep parents, students, and community informed about student progress, achievement, and assessment results throughout the year. Teachers, administrators, and parents collaborate through monthly school improvement meetings to evaluate data and plan school programs. Vertical articulation teams meet with representatives from elementary schools and high schools to ease transitions to and from Ridgely. Conferencing with parents is important on each grade level, and teaching teams not only meet with parents during team planning one day per week, but are flexible in scheduling conferences to meet parents' needs. Throughout the school year communication with parents occurs through interim reports, phone calls, homework emails, planners, teacher websites, parent conference evenings, and progress reports when students struggle. Many teams provide newsletters with news not only from the team, but from departments throughout the school. Physical education teachers use photographs to show parents student progress. Teachers recognize student achievements by mailing each student a complimentary postcard during the year.

Our supportive, active PTA, together with the school, mails home a monthly newsletter which includes a principal's column and a message from the PTA president. The principal sends additional letters to celebrate achievements or communicate issues of concern. The school nurse and Ridgely Student Assistance Program (RSAP) committee keep the community informed using fliers about resources offered by the Health Educators Linking Parents and Students (HELPS) Coalition. Evening activities, including winter and spring concerts for each grade level, an annual Arts in Action night, and the Science Fair, allow parents and the community first hand involvement in celebrating student performances.

The school website provides valuable information about school activities as well as links to teacher email addresses and websites and links to the Baltimore County Public Schools and Maryland State Department of Education websites, providing other informational resources and state assessment results. Families receive individual student MSA results by mail.

4. Sharing Success:

The faculty and staff of Ridgely Middle School consistently work to share the success of our students and our professional expertise with other schools and teachers throughout the county, state, and internationally. Faculty members are involved in writing, piloting, evaluating, and updating county-wide curricula in all curricular departments. Our teachers have presented at county-wide professional development meetings and workshops to share teaching strategies that have influenced our success, and several teachers have taught related in-service and college level courses.

Our math teachers contribute test items for the BCPS math exams and have attended the Governor's Academy for Algebra and Data Analysis. Teachers on our middle to high school Transition Committee presented data and studies to our receiving high school faculty about difficulties that arise during transition from middle to high school. One of our science teachers won the Marion Bowers Award from the National Aquarium in Baltimore and, as a result, worked with the National Aquarium's Education Department to develop activities for teachers throughout Maryland.

The art department hosts Teacher to Teacher workshops held with other middle school art teachers in BCPS. Several of our teachers have and continue to present at the BCPS annual New Teacher Meeting. The expertise of our music department is accessed regularly either by BCPS' curricular office or other music educators in the county and state. Our orchestra teacher and her students were selected to participate in the Eastern Division Music Educators National Conference and the Maryland Music Educators Convention. Our teacher prepared students to perform under the direction of nationally known clinicians for an audience of music educators in the state and east coast.

International friendships are established between faculty, students, parents and the Ridgely community with two sister schools - Bell Baxter Jr.-Sr. High School in Cupar, Scotland, and Fitz Alan Sr. High school in Cardiff, Wales. Since 1999, schools have traveled 'across the pond' to perform in each other's countries. This year, we are hosting for a second time, students and staff from Bell Baxter in June. Their visit will culminate with a joint performance of RMS students and Bell Baxter students.

Our school is an active Professional Development School. We work closely with Towson University faculty in an on-going mentoring student-teaching program for university students. Likewise, Ridgely faculty mentor aspiring student teachers from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Peabody Conservatory of Music, and other local colleges and universities.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. School Curriculum:

The Ridgely Middle School curriculum encompasses a vast array of subject areas. Each discipline features units of study with broad interdisciplinary applications. All curricular areas are aligned with the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) as designated by the BCPS Essential Curriculum. This curriculum clearly defines what content and skills all students must know and be able to do and infuses student service learning objectives throughout.

Reading and Language Arts - Teachers adhere to the scope and sequence of the guides' objectives daily. Students in both academic and gifted and talented programs are actively engaged in interpreting literature and composing written responses which connect their lives to the literature.

Mathematics – Sixth grade students receive either Math 6 or GT Math. Seventh grade students are offered Passport 7, pre-algebra or Algebra I. Students can earn one high school credit each for Algebra I and II. Eighty percent of eighth grade students are enrolled in Algebra I or II. In 2004-05, ALL seventh grade Algebra I students passed the High School Assessment. A Head and Shoulders program allows students advanced above Algebra II to study geometry and earn high school credit.

Social studies – Students study World Cultures in grades six and seven. Grade eight students study American History through Reconstruction. Emphasis is on students *actively* developing the ability to locate, organize, interpret, analyze, explain and evaluate primary and secondary sources.

Science – Students learn critical thinking skills via the gathering, analysis, and evaluation of data

in a variety of topics in biology, chemistry, physics, and earth/space science. Students explore historical and modern examples of how scientific theories are constructed as well as predict and test hypotheses. Students examine human implications of science and technology within local and global contexts.

World Language – Our school offers seventh and eighth grade students Spanish I and II, French I and II, and Latin I and II. The curriculum provides a rigorous foundation for students to continue a language in high school. Passing year-end exams allows students to earn high school credits.

Music - Instrumental and choral music enable students to organize musical ideas and sounds creatively and evaluate musical compositions based on aesthetic criteria. The study of social, political, and ethical issues facilitates perception, performance and response to music and generates in students an appreciation for the connection between music, history, and the inner drive for humans to create music.

Art - Students perceive, interpret and respond to ideas, experiences and the environment through art, encouraging visual problem-solving. Students organize thoughts into visual expressions that demonstrate knowledge of art elements and design principles, allowing them to develop perspectives of the visual arts as an essential aspect of history and the human experience.

Health - The purpose of the comprehensive program is students' understanding of the concept "wellness". Lesson topics to enhance physical, mental-emotional, and social well being include: self-esteem, stress, drug abuse/prevention, consumer knowledge, human development, first aid, safety and disease prevention, and nutrition and fitness.

Physical Education - A holistic approach to fitness allows students to design and participate in regular physical activity while exercising values of cooperation, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Students enhance cognitive and physical performance during academic and recreational tasks.

Special Education - Services are delivered in a variety of placements. The inclusive setting addresses needs of students as specified by IEPs in a regular education classroom through modifications and accommodations. The Behavior and Learning Support program offers small, highly structured classes for children whose academic achievement is adversely impacted by their emotional and behavioral needs with students mainstreamed whenever possible. Finally, the Functional Academic Learning Support program addresses needs of students with significant cognitive and adaptive functioning delays by exposing them to the VSC at their instructional level, emphasizing functional life skills.

Technology Education and Family Studies – Seventh and eighth grade students receive instruction in these two programs, providing meaningful content and real world applications. In addition, seventh grade students receive the CollegeEd program in these subject areas as well as guidance.

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

RMS's language arts teachers' goal is to educate students in language and reading competencies that promote success in school and prepare them to participate in society. We are conscious that what we do in our classroom affects understanding reading and writing in every discipline. Hence, our SIP includes several initiatives to guide teachers. Teachers challenge students to think about literature and non-fiction by developing constructed responses using higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This year, English teachers are piloting a holistic daily grammar program to start each class so that students can make correct choices in diction and syntax, and also adhere to the conventions of written communication. To increase students' word banks teachers in all content areas create word walls using challenging vocabulary. Our literary magazine, *The Inkling*, and other writing contests provide students with opportunities for creative expression beyond assigned compositions.

In order for all students, particularly our basic level readers, to develop proficiency in reading, the department takes the lead in teaching and developing essential strategies to unlock and create meaning from the text. Interdisciplinary teachers incorporate pre-reading, during reading and post-reading strategies within content materials. Interdisciplinary team meetings are the weekly venue for English teachers to share strategies and lead the discussion for a team focus strategy.

Seventh and eighth grade basic readers receive daily instruction in a scheduled small group reading class centered on the BCPS mandated Fast Tracks Program. This program stresses fluency to aid comprehension and vocabulary development. Leveled materials are highly engaging and allow students to

progress at an individual rate. Sixth grade students receive daily instruction in the *The Scott Foresman Reading: Great Expectations* program. Sixth grade teachers monitor student progress through formative assessments and unit tests and share ideas for remediation regularly. It is the mission of Ridgely's teachers to provide an appropriate, broad scope reading program for all students, particularly those reading below grade level in order to prepare them for a future which will require them to interpret information in all of its forms.

3. Art Education:

Art education is an integral dimension of interdisciplinary learning at Ridgely Middle School. Our students benefit from varied instruction, weaving the art elements and design principles into projects visible throughout the school. Classroom art units blend content from other subject areas to produce meaningful art. Our art education program helps students to excel academically in all subject areas. For example, math skills are reinforced through measuring, proportion and the application of symmetry. World cultures and social studies are celebrated in school-wide installations such as 2004's Tibetan Prayer (Pledge) Flags and 2005's Pinwheels for Peace. Students apply reading and writing skills in daily art lessons. Gifted and talented art is offered to exceptional seventh and eighth grade students, allowing greater personal expression and more concentrated rendering from observation.

Various extracurricular art opportunities are available to RMS students including Ceramics Club, the Artways Group, The National Junior Art Honor Society, Yearbook Staff, and the Inkling Literary Magazine. Selected student artwork is featured in the annual Greenwood Show at the Baltimore County Board of Education and in the state government buildings in Annapolis. Other shows include the "Very Special Arts Festival," which highlights the artistic accomplishments of students in our Functional and Learning Support program and exhibitions in the community, such as the library and local venues. In the 2004-05 school year, students collaborated with other participants from Baltimore County and Baltimore City schools to create a ceramic portrait of singer Billy Holiday. This mural is permanently installed in the courtyard of the Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center in Baltimore.

Our Parent Art Advisory Group provides a means for parents to get involved with after school art activities, as well as help with the annual Arts In Action night, to coincide with the celebration of Youth Art Month. The event is an invitation to the community to experience and create art of cultures throughout the world. In addition, last year's artist-in-residence was an expert in stained glass, working with students from all levels to create four award-winning panels depicting imagery from four content subject areas: math, science, English, and social studies.

4. Instructional Methods:

Ridgely teachers strive to tailor instruction to meet the needs of each student. Throughout the year, teachers use data from testing and performance to determine not only what students know but how students learn. Teachers share best practices in interdisciplinary team meetings, department meetings, professional development meetings, and on our school's shared computer drive. Special education resource teachers attend academic team meetings to help plan instruction for students who need differentiated assistance. We adopted Dr. Willard Daggett's Rigor/Relevance Framework in our instructional planning to drive instruction and learning.

Teachers select from a variety of instructional methods and assessments to motivate students. For example, guided practice, lecture, memorization, cooperative learning, demonstration, instructional technology, problem-based learning, project design, simulation/role play, Socratic seminar, inquiry, research, and teacher questions are some of the instructional strategies that are used. Assessments may include: multiple choice, brief and extended constructed responses, process and product performance, portfolio, self-reflection, and interview. Students engaged in active learning remember the information and are able to apply their knowledge.

Parents are invited to share their knowledge exemplifying real-world applications of content. The ongoing installation of televisions in each classroom allows teachers to captivate students with PowerPoint presentations and internet resources, bringing the class room in line with the business world.

Each child has his/her own user name and password which permits saving information to our school's shared drive and allows access to web-based resources while doing research either from the teacher's classroom or one of four computer labs.

Another strategy leading to student's success is our ability to heterogeneously and homogeneously group students according to individual strengths and needs. Students on interdisciplinary teams are regrouped throughout the day creating a variety of heterogeneous groupings in the academic areas. For example, in science classes, students who receive special education services can partner with students who are in the gifted and talented program for subject areas other than science. This system also allows guidance counselors flexibility to prepare a more tailored program to the individual student.

5. Professional Development:

Student achievement data is used to develop goals in our School Improvement Plan which is also aligned to the Baltimore County Blueprint for Progress. Specific strategies and activities are developed to meet the needs of individual students in all subgroups.

Professional goals and subsequent professional development evolve from our identified needs. For example, math teachers received training to implement a math software program used specifically in Algebra I comeback classes to diagnose and remediate learning gaps in student skills. All teachers learned and implemented the Cornell Note-taking method to develop crucial reading and summarization skills in alignment with high schools. Another staff development program on differentiating instruction through learning styles clearly emphasized the need for teachers to create lessons around an identified learning modality. Formally, these lessons are shared monthly through an administrative bulletin, allowing faculty members to add to their planning portfolios. Informally, teachers share best practices in small group planning sessions.

Professional development opportunities extend beyond RMS and school system boundaries. Faculty and administrators attend state and national conferences to improve their skills. For example, RMS representatives attended the Southern Regional Education Board's "High Schools That Work" Conference, allowing us to observe and integrate best practices from successful schools around the country. From this conference, English classes have adopted Daily Grammar Practice giving students a better foundation in language and writing skills. Also, faculty and administration representatives attended "Capturing Kids Hearts," developed by the Flippen Group, and the entire faculty was trained in "Building Champions" to improve how we address the emotional needs of our students, thereby positively affecting their achievement. The rich medley of professional development activities in which we are involved, as evidenced by our improving test scores, has a beneficial impact on student achievement.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for 2003, 2004, and 2005

MATHEMATICS GRADE 8

Publisher – CTB McGraw Hill

School year	2004 – 2005	2003 – 2004	2002 – 2003
Testing month	February	February	February
SCHOOL SCORES			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	82	77	66
% at Advanced	47	38	25
Number of students tested	349	370	359
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	*	*	*
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. Asian			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	86	90	85
% at Advanced	66	42	56
Number of students tested	35	31	34
2. African American			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	52	25	18
% at Advanced	24	0	0
Number of students tested	21	12	17
3. White			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	85	78	67
% at Advanced	47	39	24
Number of students tested	287	320	304
4. Free and Reduced Meals			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	44	38	26
% at Advanced	13	19	5
Number of students tested	16	16	19
5. Special Education			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	38	8	8
% at Advanced	5	0	0
Number of students tested	21	25	26
STATE SCORES			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	52	46	40
% at Advanced	19	17	13

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for 2003, 2004, and 2005

READING GRADE 8

Publisher – CTB McGraw Hill

School year	2004 – 2005	2003 – 2004	2002 – 2003
Testing month	February	February	February
SCHOOL SCORES			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	92	85	82
% at Advanced	52	41	48
Number of students tested	349	371	359
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	*	*	*
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES			
1. Asian			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	89	71	91
% at Advanced	54	42	74
Number of students tested	35	31	34
2. African American			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	67	50	35
% at Advanced	29	8	18
Number of students tested	21	12	17
3. White			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	94	88	84
% at Advanced	54	42	47
Number of students tested	287	321	304
4. Free and Reduced Meals			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	56	50	47
% at Advanced	19	6	11
Number of students tested	16	16	19
5. Special Education			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	62	28	19
% at Advanced	14	4	8
Number of students tested	21	25	26
STATE SCORES			
% at or above Basic	100	100	100
% at or above Proficient	66	64	60
% at Advanced	24	21	26