

**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 Dr. Thomas J. Koch

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

Official School Name Birchview Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 425 Ranchview Lane

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

Plymouth

City

Minnesota

State

55447-3936

Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Hennepin County State School Code Number\* 0284-01-804

Telephone (763) 745-5310

Fax (763) 745-5391

Website/URL www.wayzata.k12.mn.us/birchview

E-mail tom.koch@wayzata.k12.mn.us

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\* Mr. Robert J. Ostlund

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

District Name Wayzata Public Schools

Tel. (763) 745-5001

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 Dr. Linda A. Cohen

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

(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)

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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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

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All data are the most recent year available.

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

1. Number of schools in the district:       7   Elementary schools  
   3   Middle schools  
   \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
   1   High schools  
   \_\_\_\_\_ Other
- 11  TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure:      \$7,834.00
- Average State Per Pupil Expenditure:  \$8,379.00

**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.   6   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 |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------|-------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| PreK   |            |              |             | 7     |            |              |             |
| K  | 42         | 41           | 83          | 8     |            |              |             |
| 1  | 39         | 44           | 83          | 9     |            |              |             |
| 2  | 35         | 45           | 80          | 10    |            |              |             |
| 3  | 43         | 53           | 96          | 11    |            |              |             |
| 4  | 40         | 31           | 71          | 12    |            |              |             |
| 5  | 40         | 49           | 89          | Other |            |              |             |
| 6  |            |              |             |       |            |              |             |
| <b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →</b> |            |              |             |       |            |              | <b>502</b>  |

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- |                   |                                  |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>82</u>         | % White                          |
| <u>9</u>          | % Black or African American      |
| <u>2</u>          | % Hispanic or Latino             |
| <u>6</u>          | % Asian/Pacific Islander         |
| <u>1</u>          | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| <b>100% Total</b> |                                  |

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: 12%

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

|            |  |     |
|------------|--|-----|
| <b>(1)</b> | Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.   | 31  |
| <b>(2)</b> | Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year. | 29  |
| <b>(3)</b> | Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]  | 60  |
| <b>(4)</b> | Total number of students in the school as of October 1   | 502 |
| <b>(5)</b> | Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)                           | .12 |
| <b>(6)</b> | Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100  | 12  |

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 1%  
7 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 3  
Specify languages: Somali, Spanish, Russian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14%

Total number students who qualify: 70

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: 7%  
33 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>2</u> Autism                | <u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment                    |
| <u>    </u> Deafness           | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                    |
| <u>    </u> Deaf-Blindness     | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability             |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment           |
| <u>    </u> Hearing Impairment | <u>    </u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>3</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>    </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>8</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>1</u>         | <u>    </u>      |
| Classroom teachers                    | <u>18</u>        | <u>5</u>         |
| Special resource teachers/specialists | <u>5</u>         | <u>10</u>        |
| Paraprofessionals                     | <u>10</u>        | <u>10</u>        |
| Support staff                         | <u>2</u>         | <u>5</u>         |
| Total number                          | <u>36</u>        | <u>30</u>        |

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 24:1

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%       | 98%       | 98%       | 97%       |
| Daily teacher attendance            | 96%       | 94%       | 94%       | 95%       | 96%       |
| Teacher turnover rate               | 3%        | 6%        | 3%        | 6%        | 6%        |
| Student dropout rate (middle/high)  | %         | %         | %         | %         | %         |
| Student drop-off rate (high school) | %         | %         | %         | %         | %         |

### **Part III – SUMMARY STATEMENT**

Birchview Elementary is a kindergarten through fifth grade school located in Plymouth, Minnesota with a student population of 502. Our school has developed as a professional learning community with a strong commitment to team organization and collegial efforts directed toward improving student learning. This community orientation enlists staff, parents, and volunteers in establishing a supportive environment where students are presented learning challenges that are embedded in a rigorous academic curriculum. The Birchview Elementary School mission statement reflects our commitment to learning by asserting that: *At Birchview, we strive for academic excellence, emotional and physical well being, and social success for our students within a safe and caring environment.*

As part of this ongoing effort to improve student learning, the Birchview Elementary School Site Council has instituted goals that focus efforts on targeted and meaningful school improvements. Using data-based decision making structures and current educational areas of emphasis to identify desired enhancements, this representative group of staff and parents developed site goals emphasizing achievement for all students in our community. Current goals are:

1. Improve student learning in mathematics skills related to number sense, fluency, and problem solving as indicated by enhanced performance on standardized assessment measures and on Everyday Mathematics unit and end of the year curriculum measures
2. Improve student vocabulary development and background knowledge across the grade levels as indicated by increases in comprehension performance outcomes on standardized literacy assessment measures, on classroom performance measures, and on literacy unit and end of the year curriculum measures
3. The Birchview Elementary staff will provide opportunities to increase science awareness, understanding, and proficiency by expanding our understanding of the Minnesota Academic Science Standards and implementing the Wayzata Public Schools aligned science curriculum

Wayzata Public School District has a vision of being *a model of excellence among learning communities*. To this end, Birchview Elementary has established an ongoing partnership with the University of St. Thomas' School of Education, a leading pre-service and continuing higher education institution in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. This relationship emphasizes an exchange of mathematics instruction ideas between the faculty from the University and Birchview Elementary to improve K-5 student learning and achievement, improve the University of St. Thomas teaching methods course by using real world examples and experiences, and support the development of school site teachers' knowledge of best practices in teaching and learning. This partnership provides Birchview Elementary teachers access to current research on high-quality mathematics instruction and supports advanced professional practice.

Additionally, Birchview Elementary School is a participating member of the West Metro Education Program (WMEP), a voluntary consortium of 11 urban and suburban school districts in the Minneapolis metropolitan area formed to cooperatively address integration issues. As part of WMEP membership, Birchview Elementary staff participates in the National Urban Alliance (NUA) literacy initiative. This comprehensive professional development program is targeted at addressing achievement gap outcomes found in performance data from students of color by emphasizing instructional strategies based on the latest research on concept and cognitive development, reasoning, and higher-order comprehension.

The professional learning community endeavors of Birchview Elementary School have resulted in a continuous emphasis on improving learning. Concern for student achievement ties our school improvement efforts to an increasingly responsive view of curriculum and instruction. A critical aim of Birchview Elementary is to support the growth of every member of our school community.

## **Part IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

### **1. Assessment Results**

Birchview Elementary School uses two standardized assessments, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) and the Northwest Achievement Levels Test (NALT) to systematically monitor student performance and program effectiveness annually. The MCAs are reading and mathematics assessments that assist schools and districts measure student progress toward the Minnesota Academic Standards. The MCAs attend to the accountability requirements set forth by the federal government in relation to No Child Left Behind legislation. All enrolled public school students must be accounted for in the MCA accountability testing system. These criterion-referenced tests are structured to provide data on the percentage of students at five levels of proficiency: Level I = below basic, Level II = basic, Level III = proficient, Level IV = advanced, and Level V = superior. Up until 2006, these tests were administered to students in the third and fifth grades at the elementary level (reported in this document). Beginning in 2006, these tests will be given in third, fourth, and fifth grades at our elementary level.

The Northwest Achievement Levels Test is a norm-referenced test that provides information on student performance in reading and mathematics over time. Teachers can consider students' current achievement level when grouping for instruction, selecting content emphasis, and providing instruction.

Positive outcomes are identified in several areas of student learning for Birchview Elementary students. Specifically, the NALT data revealed fourth and fifth grade student growth in reading and mathematics understanding and skills over a two-year period (third grade data does not report growth scores as it is the first year of standardized assessment). The MCA data also indicates very strong performance for Birchview Elementary students with a high percentage scoring at Levels 4 and 5 (trend data is found at the end of this document).

#### **2004/2005 Mathematics Data**

The average Birchview NALT score for 5th grade students was 235 (national average 215)

The average Birchview NALT score for 4th grade students was 224 (national average 208)

The average Birchview NALT score for 3rd grade students was 213 (national average 200)

92% of 3rd grade students scored at or above Level 3 on the MCA in mathematics

80% of 3rd grade students scored at Levels 4 and 5 on the MCA in mathematics

98% of 5th grade students scored at or above Level 3 on the MCA in mathematics

93% of 5th grade students scored at Levels 4 and 5 on the MCA in mathematics

#### **2004/2005 Reading Data**

The average Birchview NALT score for 5th grade students was 222 (national average 212)

The average Birchview NALT score for 4th grade students was 215 (national average 205)

The average Birchview NALT score for 3rd grade students was 206 (national average 198)

94% of 3rd grade students scored at or above Level 3 in reading

82% of 3rd grade students scored at Levels 4 and 5 on the MCA in reading

93% of 5th grade students scored at or above Level 3 in reading

92% of 5th grade students scored at Levels 4 and 5 on the MCA in reading

Although Birchview Elementary School did not have sufficient numbers to report disparity among subgroups, our school is also looking at disaggregated data and asking ourselves how best we can support all of our students. The website where information on the state assessment system may be found is <http://education.state.mn.us>.

## **2. Using Assessment Results**

Over the past four years, Birchview Elementary staff members have met to consider our professional development and student-learning focus by analyzing standardized assessment and curriculum-based data. Summer professional development efforts followed by regularly scheduled staff meetings and embedded study has provided designated time to consider student learning, plan instructional changes, and monitor progress in identified areas of focus. A significant amount of time is allocated to analyzing third through fifth grade standardized assessment outcomes and student-level work to identify patterns in performance and specific actions to assist our students in furthering their proficiency in mathematics and literacy skills. Considering program effectiveness, identifying areas of challenge, and hypothesis generation and checking are components of this staff inquiry. This data analysis provides important information from which to consider outcomes that relate to Minnesota Academic Standards. As data patterns are identified in strands, trends, and/or subgroups, staff members consider potential areas of professional development or curricular realignment using collegial learning community structures that consider promising practices and map school-wide efforts to improve instruction. These curriculum alignment processes are important opportunities for teachers to talk about expectations, teaching, and student work.

The Birchview Site Council, made up of parents and professional staff, collaborate in these data analysis efforts to develop our school improvement plan. This document, known as a Shared Decision Making Agreement, serves as an integrated endeavor to coordinate strategically focused learning goals. These goals articulate areas of concentrated action planning that inform school community members of strategies and tactics that address goal content.

Importantly, teachers use data to support instructional decisions as to next steps in student learning. Increasingly, both standardized and curriculum measures are purposefully analyzed to develop instructional plans and specific interventions. Teachers also use assessment data to change instructional groupings designed to provide intensive instruction for students in need of explicit assistance. Curriculum-based assessment data is viewed as a checkpoint for learning and what needs to happen next.

## **3. Communicating Assessment Results**

Assessment results are communicated using multiple methods in an effort to provide the Birchview Elementary community with accurate information on which to base the partnership between parents and staff. Each parent is supplied specific assessment outcomes for their child that identifies performance, proficiency, and comparative data. Additionally, school-sponsored communications, such as the monthly parent newsletter, are used to provide site-specific performance and planning information. The Birchview Elementary Site Council communicates information on standardized assessment outcomes and resulting school improvement efforts through parent forums, school newsletters, broadcasted School Board presentations, and formal planning documents.

District-wide communications are provided to all homes as a method of distributing accountability outcomes for individual schools and the entire District in standardized



assessments. Both demographic and achievement data provides citizens within the School District comparative outcome data. Both print and electronic forms of this information are available through the District Communications Office and the District's web site.

An additional level of communication is focused on providing parents with ongoing progress data using curriculum-based performance rubrics to improve the understanding of student performance and areas of targeted support. In particular, mathematics secure skills outcomes for each unit of study, and reading achievement levels using reading inventory data, are provided at regular intervals.

#### **4. Sharing Success**

Because of the collaborative environment that exists at Birchview Elementary and in Wayzata Public Schools, information as to building-based initiatives is regularly shared both locally and regionally. School improvement efforts are discussed as part of District wide curriculum and instruction review efforts, and as part of building exchange activities. School staff participates on content area committees that consider current practice and enhancements that impact learning. In addition, Birchview Elementary staff members serve as resource teachers in specific curriculum areas, acting as instructional and content specialists to promote best practice adoption across the District.

Another forum to share successes is membership in professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Statewide Network for Student Success, and the Minnesota Association of Elementary School Principals. Birchview staff members have participated and presented at local, State, and National conferences on successful practices that have been implemented at our school.

Finally, the partnership with the University of St. Thomas allows for regular interactions with faculty involved in pre-service education and university students seeking teacher licensure. In addition, Birchview Elementary staff work as adjunct faculty, guest lecturers, and supervising teachers who provide contextually-based educational experiences to future teachers. The building principal also serves as a member of the University of St. Thomas' School of Education Advisory Board.

### **Part V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

#### **1. Curriculum**

The content of the curriculum at Birchview Elementary School is a dynamic blend of content and process. The curriculum encompasses district, state, and national standards, and is designed to ensure that all students master core concepts, engage in higher-level thinking, and are well prepared for successful secondary school experiences across the breadth of the Wayzata Public Schools' curriculum. Students at Birchview Elementary School are accountable for learning the content described in the Minnesota Academic Standards for kindergarten through fifth grade demonstrating mastery through curriculum based and standardized measures. Recognizing that student experience levels vary, our teaching staff uses the Minnesota academic state standards as a basic starting point in designing a rigorous, spiraling, differentiated curriculum that is designed to engage learners in content at their instructional level, from basic and advanced levels.

Birchview Elementary School's language arts program includes reading (addressed later in the application), writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. The underpinning of this curricular area reflects an application approach that promotes the development of competent, capable, and confident writers. Primary grade students engage in written language experiences that reinforce

growing phonemic competencies, voice, and generative skills. Intermediate grade students apply secure encoding skills to multiple genres and refine writing trait competencies to both express knowledge and further learning. Birchview Elementary students receive instruction in various types of writing, including descriptive, expository, narrative, persuasive, and comparison/contrast. In addition, students learn a research process and write descriptive research reports in the third, fourth, and fifth grades. Part of the research process involves students learning to use the appropriate reference and technological tools. Additionally, students are provided with regular experiences that develop effective speaking and listening skills including informal presentations of student-selected topics to formal speeches examining defined topics.

Birchview Elementary's science curriculum is organized around the Minnesota Academic Standards for Science. These science standards investigate four areas: the history and nature of science, earth and space science, physical science, and life science. A thoughtfully organized set of units developed to engage students in developmentally appropriate interactive experiences across the elementary grade levels serves as the core of the science curriculum. The inquiry-based units are aligned with benchmarks encompassed in district, state, and national standards. A typical unit of study is made up of ten to fifteen investigations formatted around a learning cycle that supports the development of specific scientific concepts and scientific thinking skills.

The social studies curriculum at Birchview Elementary provides the foundation for citizenship. The Minnesota Academic Standards in History and Social Studies provide a strong foundation of knowledge and skills in United States history, world history, Minnesota history, geography, economics, government, and citizenship. Essential social studies skills including research, analysis, decision-making, interpersonal interactions, and place/location are key components of student learning. As a result of this course of study, our students acquire a greater understanding of cultures both locally and from around the world.

Birchview Elementary School's arts programming includes visual arts and music. The visual arts program introduces students to the elements of art, including line, color, shape, space, texture, and form. Students study cultural and historical forms and traditions of the visual arts. A variety of media are used to give students the opportunity to create works of art that communicate ideas in a variety of ways. In vocal music, students at Birchview Elementary are introduced to general music concepts. Topics such as rhythm, melody, composition, listening, music history, and the elements of music are explored through various vocal and instrumental experiences.

All fourth and fifth grade students study the Spanish language and Latino cultures. This initial experience in second language learning emphasizes spoken language and vocabulary building. Spanish is taught in a manner called Total Physical Response that mimics the way students acquired their first language by responding with actions, rhymes, songs, storytelling and games-- building the foundation for more advanced language study in the upper grades.

A comprehensive physical education and technology program are also part of the learning activities at Birchview Elementary. Students are provided with physical education instruction that emphasizes fitness-oriented exercise and recreation skill development. Technology at Birchview Elementary is viewed as both a curriculum and a method for delivering curriculum. Our students have regular instruction on how to use technology throughout their elementary experience. At the elementary level, students are introduced to basic technology operations, keyboarding, word processing, draw/paint capabilities, spreadsheets, internet usage, research tools, and basic multimedia.

## **2. Elementary Reading**

The District wide vision statement of “literacy for life” is the guiding principle for Birchview Elementary School’s reading curriculum. The underpinning of this curricular area reflects a balanced literacy approach that promotes the development of competent readers. Learning is organized around the direct instruction of skills and reading from actual texts. Supported by researched reading structures, primary grade students engage in experiences that encourage the use of multiple decoding strategies and emphasize making meaning from increasingly difficult text. The balance between direct basic skill instruction and an immersion in literature and writing are designed to ensure learners’ success. Intermediate grade students apply secure decoding skills to interact with progressively more complex material. Direct instruction in the essential components of vocabulary, fluency, and text analysis support students as they achieve the ultimate goal of reading instruction--solid comprehension. Macmillan/McGraw Hill is the publisher of the reading series used for foundational instruction. This curriculum has been carefully aligned to ensure that the Minnesota Academic Standards are met. In addition, we have many leveled and trade book sets in each grade level that teachers use to differentiate learning and reinforce specific skills. Sustained independent reading is provided regularly to improve students’ reading and background knowledge by independently applying both developing and mastered skills to material at appropriate reading levels. Students interact around reading materials regularly through discussion-based book talks and imaginatively structured book reports. Because of the reciprocal nature of reading and language arts, writing is integrated into reading experience to increase literacy skills. Writing, spelling, research, and grammar activities connect to the text being read. Our students read and write in a variety of genres, including both nonfiction and fiction. We encourage instruction that pushes all students to a higher level of thinking. In addition to the basal materials, our school has numerous sets of books for use with small groups to use for guided reading and literature circles. We use the curriculum’s assessments to inform and measure learning for our school’s standards.

## **3. Elementary Mathematics**

Students at Birchview Elementary learn mathematics concepts that include strands in operations, numeration and order, patterns, functions and algebra, data and chance, measurement and reference frames, and geometry. Every strand is addressed throughout all grade levels in a manner that builds and extends concept understanding. The Minnesota Academic Standards are embedded into each grade level’s performance expectations. The Everyday Mathematics series serves as the base for our mathematics program in kindergarten through fifth grades. Students learn the underpinnings of mathematics processes, along with computational fluency, through guided experiences, focused discussions, and regular reinforcement. Language, communication, and manipulatives all play important roles in helping students acquire skills. Mathematics instruction includes whole group, flexible small group, partner, and individual activities. Students are encouraged to discuss their mathematical thinking verbally as well as in written form. By facilitating this expression of mathematical ideas, students’ capacity to think mathematically improves. Activities are balanced between teacher-directed instruction and opportunities for hands-on explorations, along with long-term projects and ongoing practice. Particular focus and supplementary experiences are provided in the areas of number sense, computation, and problem solving to support students’ mastery of foundational concepts and proficient application. Topics spiral, and students have other chances to use their method or another one. Mathematical concepts are introduced using manipulatives and are examined in many ways including verbal, pictorial, and symbolic to address students of different experience levels. After the topic has been revisited many times, students have significant experience with efficient methods and have mastered the concept.

#### **4. Instructional Methods**

Birchview Elementary School staff use a variety of instructional methods to meet the needs of our students. Curriculum units are designed to address identified standards and corresponding benchmarks. Student performance data are evaluated to consider where instructional compacting can occur to increase time for new learning and areas of concentration. Staff stress instruction that leads students to the acquisition of secure skills identified in academic benchmarks. Re-teaching students who have not mastered requisite concepts occur in small group structures directed by classroom teachers and supported by instructional paraprofessionals. Students with strong performance are provided with academic extensions. In this way, staff considers where students are on their learning continuum and what supports will encourage next steps in learning.

Emphasizing differentiated instructional strategies as an approach to content addresses the varied learning needs of students, and allows staff to pursue a goal of maximizing the potential of Birchview Elementary School learners. Several instructional formats, including whole group, small group, partners, and individual, are utilized to provide students with appropriate structures for specific learning needs. To guide learning, teachers are reviewing student work in comparison with academic benchmarks and identifying priorities for improving instruction.

In an effort to increase the relevance of instruction and elicit from students a personal motivation to learn, staff has implemented instructional methods proven effective in diverse settings. Teachers use a set of graphic organizers known as *Thinking Maps* is consistently used across all grade levels to support critical and creative thinking, along with providing processes for applying new learning. Birchview Elementary teachers have researched options and planned methods for integrating *Thinking Maps* into background knowledge and vocabulary instructional strategies into several content areas.

#### **5. Professional Development**

Birchview Elementary School aspires to engage in professional development that is high quality, continuous, and supportive. This includes growth-promoting processes such as study groups, action research projects, and collaborative planning. Teachers are provided regular opportunities to work, plan, and learn together around instructional issues. Team-structured data analysis of student assessment results leads to the identification of professional development goals that are outcome-defined. Clear student expectation across grade levels are developed for targeted standards. Additionally, we routinely schedule opportunities to explore and implement promising practices in our school calendar. Student assessment outcomes are considered as evaluative criteria for these professional learning efforts.

Examples of this effort to engage in effective professional development includes analysis and understanding of our students' secure skill data, curriculum mapping that delineates where targeted skills are embedded into the scope and sequence of the curriculum, and expanding the instructional options to assist with differentiating mathematics to challenge all students. Additionally, our professional development efforts explore standards across grade levels to provide staff with a comprehensive knowledge of skill development. This expanded knowledge supports an understanding of expected proficiencies as students enter a grade level, and what skills will be required as they progress through an academic year. Ongoing cross-grade-level conversations provide the forum to reinforce a school wide understanding of skills required to be successful students.

Professional development activities also encompass the regular exchange of ideas with higher education partners, education community resources, and the review of professional literature that

dives into targeted topics. Collaboration with partners from the University of St. Thomas and the education community outside of Birchview Elementary provide resources aimed at helping our school meet student learning needs. Teachers are exposed to new instructional methods that strengthen their teaching repertoires and deepen subject matter learning, resulting in bolstered classroom efforts. Differentiated instruction that responds to various student needs, understanding effective strategies that support background knowledge development, the role of graphic organizers in supporting higher-level thinking, and the purpose that number sense serves in the development of mathematical thinking across the grade levels are a few examples of professional topics that Birchview Elementary staff have investigated to further their instructional expertise.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### Criterion Referenced Assessment Tables

(Please note that Birchview Elementary School did not have sufficient numbers to report disparity among subgroups)

Subject - Reading Grade 5 Test – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

Edition/Publication Year – Modified Annually

Publisher Minnesota Department of Education (Data Recognition Corporation)

|  | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 | 2002-2003 | 2001-2002 | 2000-2001 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing month                              |           |           |           |           |           |
| <b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>                      |           |           |           |           |           |
| % At or Above Meets State Standards*       | 95        | 93        | 96        | 92        | 95        |
| % At Exceeds State Standards*              | 94        | 89        | 88        | 85        | 93        |
| Number of students tested                  | 79        | 89        | 102       | 97        | 104       |
| Percent of total students tested           | 99        | 97        | 99        | 96        | 99        |
| Number of students alternatively assessed  | 1         | 2         | 1         | 3         | 1         |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed | 1         | 2         | 1         | 3         | 1         |
|  |           |           |           |           |           |

Subject – Mathematics Grade 5 Test – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

Edition/Publication Year – Modified Annually

Publisher Minnesota Department of Education (Data Recognition Corporation)

|  | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 | 2002-2003 | 2001-2002 | 2000-2001 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing month                              |           |           |           |           |           |
| <b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>                      |           |           |           |           |           |
| % At or Above Meets State Standards*       | 96        | 96        | 94        | 89        | 94        |
| % At Exceeds State Standards*              | 94        | 88        | 89        | 82        | 88        |
| Number of students tested                  | 79        | 89        | 101       | 98        | 103       |
| Percent of total students tested           | 99        | 97        | 98        | 97        | 98        |
| Number of students alternatively assessed  | 1         | 2         | 1         | 3         | 1         |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed | 1         | 2         | 1         | 3         | 1         |
|  |           |           |           |           |           |

Subject - Reading Grade 3 Test – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment  
Edition/Publication Year – Modified Annually  
Publisher Minnesota Department of Education (Data Recognition Corporation)

|  | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 | 2002-2003 | 2001-2002 | 2000-2001 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing month                              |           |           |           |           |           |
| <b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>                      |           |           |           |           |           |
| % At or Above Meets State Standards*       | 95        | 78        | 86        | 78        | 78        |
| % At Exceeds State Standards*              | 84        | 50        | 74        | 62        | 54        |
| Number of students tested                  | 70        | 83        | 90        | 83        | 99        |
| Percent of total students tested           | 99        | 99        | 100       | 93        | 99        |
| Number of students alternatively assessed  | 1         | 0         | 0         | 3         | 1         |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed | 1         | 0         | 0         | 3         | 1         |
|  |           |           |           |           |           |

Subject - Mathematics Grade 3 Test – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment  
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|  | 2004-2005 | 2003-2004 | 2002-2003 | 2001-2002 | 2000-2001 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing month                              |           |           |           |           |           |
| <b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>                      |           |           |           |           |           |
| % At or Above Meets State Standards*       | 91        | 75        | 91        | 84        | 81        |
| % At Exceeds State Standards*              | 80        | 53        | 76        | 62        | 70        |
| Number of students tested                  | 70        | 84        | 90        | 81        | 98        |
| Percent of total students tested           | 99        | 100       | 100       | 91        | 97        |
| Number of students alternatively assessed  | 1         | 0         | 0         | 3         | 1         |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed | 1         | 0         | 0         | 3         | 1         |
|  |           |           |           |           |           |