

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

Official School Name Grandview Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 615 Grand Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Alliance \_\_\_\_\_ Nebraska \_\_\_\_\_ 69301-3554  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Box Butte State School Code Number\* 07-0006

Telephone (308) 762-4519 Fax 308-762-8249

Website/URL http://www.allianceps.org E-mail 1sc@aps.k12.ne.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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Larry Ross  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name #6 Tel. (308) -762-5475

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 Mrs. Cindy Bunnell  
(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:      2   Elementary schools  
  1   Middle schools  
  \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
  1   High schools  
  \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
  
  4   TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure:    \$8022.48 \_\_\_\_\_  
Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$7516.86 \_\_\_\_\_

**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.   8   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:

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

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:        70% \_\_\_ % White  
   2% \_\_\_ % Black or African American  
   21% \_\_\_ % Hispanic or Latino  
   .5% \_\_\_ % Asian/Pacific Islander  
   7% \_\_\_ % 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: \_18%\_\_\_\_\_ %

[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.	24
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	23
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	47
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	266
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	18
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17.669

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: \_6%\_\_\_\_\_ %  
   \_\_\_14\_\_\_ Total Number Limited English

Proficient

Number of languages represented: \_2\_\_\_\_\_

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: \_\_\_52\_\_\_\_\_ %

Total number students who qualify: \_\_\_130\_\_\_\_\_

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:  $\frac{15}{37}$  % 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.

___ Autism	___ Orthopedic Impairment
___ Deafness	___ 1 ___ Other Health Impaired
___ Deaf-Blindness	___ 15 ___ Specific Learning Disability
___ Emotional Disturbance	___ 16 ___ Speech or Language Impairment
___ 1 ___ Hearing Impairment	___ Traumatic Brain Injury
___ 3 ___ Mental Retardation	___ 1 ___ Visual Impairment Including Blindness
___ Multiple Disabilities	

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

**Number of Staff**

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	___ 1 ___	_____
Classroom teachers	___ 17 ___	_____
Special resource teachers/specialists	___ 3 ___	_____
Paraprofessionals	___ 10 ___	_____
Support staff	___ 4 ___	_____
Total number	___ 35 ___	_____

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers:  $\frac{15}{1}$

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	95%	95%	94%	95%	91%
Daily teacher attendance	94%	95%	96%	*	*
Teacher turnover rate	12%	5%	0%	*	*

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

---

Grandview Elementary is one of two elementary schools in Alliance, Nebraska, a rural community in the panhandle with a fluctuating population of around 9,000. From the top floor of Grandview Elementary, one can see not only the vastness of the Sand Hills, but also a sprawling railroad center surrounded by rich farmland and prairies for ranching. In addition, one catches a glimpse of a flowering, newly created butterfly garden, designed and planted by a teacher and her class after receiving a small local community service grant. It is indeed a “grand view” and reflects the proud history and creativity of this community. Alliance was once a military town. During World War I, potash was mined and used in the making of gunpowder. In World War II, Alliance served as an air force base that brought many men, women, and families to the area to stay. Farming, ranching, and the railroad provide our economic foundation. The community is also known as the “Oasis of the Sandhills” and since it was built in 1922, Grandview has been a natural oasis providing educational nourishment to all students. The students, teachers, parents, and community have always had high expectations for learning and for character development. Grandview’s mission is to develop in all students the individual skills, the desire for knowledge, and the personal commitment essential for a successful future.

Grandview Elementary was reconfigured three years ago and changed from a K-5 campus to a 2-4 campus. The school services 250 students in twelve self-contained classrooms. The reconfiguration changed the number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch from 66% to 51.6%, but the school still qualifies as a school wide Title I school. The diverse school population is 69.5% Caucasian, 21% Hispanic, 7% Native American (mainly Lakota Sioux), 2% African American and .5% Asian. To realize its mission, Grandview focuses on the needs of individual learners. On the district level all teachers have been involved in curriculum alignment and assessment development to meet state standards. Student academic learning is supported through nonacademic instruction and experiences. The students receive instruction in music, art, physical education, and library skills. Students have access to computers in the classroom and in a computer lab where they are given direct instruction in keyboarding, in power point presentation, in graphic design, and through computer assisted instruction to support reading and math. Grandview’s library offers a wide range of books and with the computer lab has offered direct support to our popular Accelerated Reader program. The local Arts Council sponsors an Artist-in-Residence program every year, which exposes students to professional fine arts activities. Grandview’s full time counselor provides weekly classroom instruction in social skills, bullying prevention, drug awareness, and character building using the Eight Keys to Success from Quantum Learning. In addition, Grandview has two full-time special education teachers, a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist, a school psychologist, Title I personnel, and a newly implemented English Language Learner program. The High Ability coordinator directs the needs of gifted students who have the opportunity to attend a High Ability Learner camp in the summer. Another summer program offering is the six-week migrant school. The school day at Grandview is extended by having a free breakfast program for all students each morning, after-school tutoring two days a week, and an Academic Academy each week to support classroom discipline. Grandview has the support of a school resource officer partially funded by the local police department. The community also provides many volunteers to help and to encourage learning. These include the Teammates Mentoring program, RSVP read-along partners, YMCA after-school programs, Community Education activities, and an energetic and generous parent association.

The reconfiguration of this school three years ago in essence created a new school family. Preserving past history and traditions while building new traditions and future successes has been important to all stakeholders. Collectively, Grandview has learned that the delivery of an exemplary standards-based instructional program is the crux for student success. The philosophy of Grandview encompasses working effectively together, respecting each other as colleagues, welcoming parents into

classrooms, and, most importantly, helping each child to reach his/her potential in a non-threatening environment. In this time of profound academic challenge and change, we are working diligently to understand the process and insure that no child is left behind at Grandview Elementary.

## **PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS.**

---

### **1. The Meaning of Assessment Results**

The reading and math criterion-referenced assessment results for the fourth grade students at Grandview school are reported to the state every year, a process which was initiated in 2000-01 for reading and in 2001-2002 for math. The results are representative of the assessments based on the Nebraska state standards, which are given at grades 2, 3, and 4 with the data accumulating at grade 4 and reported at grade 4. State of Nebraska results are included at the end of this application. More information is available on <http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us/>

Student performance on the locally developed criterion-referenced assessments is determined using a four-level performance system: beginning, progressing, proficient, and advanced. A student who scores a proficient or advanced on an assessment has met the standard. A student, who achieves a 2.5-3.2 on a 4.0 scale for all assessments, added together in each subject area --reading or math is determined to have "met" standards in that subject area. A student who achieves at or above a 3.3 is determined to have "exceeded" state standards.

Scores on the criterion-referenced assessments are encouraging. In Grandview School reading scores for all students meeting state standards increased ten percentage points from 2001 to 2005. In addition, the number of students who exceeded standards increased more dramatically, going from 21% to 76% of all students. All students maintained high scores over four of the five years with 88% to 98% of all students meeting expectations, and the lowest percent being 74% meeting expectations in 2002-03. A reading improvement goal had been implemented at Grandview School, but was revised after the 2002-03 school year.

Students who qualify for free-and-reduced lunch also increased the rate at which they met standards in reading by ten percentage points in the five-year period from 2001-2005. In addition, 0% of free-and-reduced students exceeded standards in reading 2001, while 62% exceeded standards in 2005, indicating a marked improvement.

In math all students' scores do show growth over the four-year period, with 94% meeting state standards in 2001-02 and 97% in 2004-05. A dip to 86% meeting state standards in 2002-03 led to teachers developing a math school improvement goal in the summer of 2003; however, this math improvement goal centered on problem solving and was also imbedded in our goals for improving reading. In the last two years of math assessment, all students met state standards at a rate of 98% and 97%. The percent of all students who exceeded standards during the four years for which data were available grew from 51% to 87%.

Students in the free-and-reduced lunch program also have indicated strong growth in math with an increase in the percent of students who met state standards almost every year over the last four years, the number growing from 88% to 98%. In addition, the free-and-reduced lunch students met standards at a slightly better percent two of the four years when compared to all students, in 2002-03 and 2004-05. Students in the free-and-reduced lunch program showed an increase in the percent that exceeded state

standards. In 2001-02, 38% of the students exceeded standards; four years later 91% exceeded state standards.

The final assessment, which is used to monitor and adjust our programs for better success, is the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, given each spring to the 3rd and 4th grades. The results of all these assessments and other tools used to identify gifted learners help us continue to improve learning for all students and to change our programs when needed to attain a selected goal. During our summer data curriculum meetings, Grandview staff began to notice that our reading scores on our CTBS tests were extremely weak in comprehension. Our scores show little fluctuation from year to year, but as we have learned to study the results of these norm referenced tests, we have also learned to select more strategic interventions. For example, to improve reading comprehension in the area of non-fiction, we increased the number of non-fiction AR books each student was required to read. Using graphic organizers to present new information was also required of each classroom teacher. Use of graphic organizers was also included in each teacher's performance evaluation. The tables in part VII show how Grandview students perform on the CTBS test. We chose not to chart data that we have from 5th grade when we were a K-5 school, but to concentrate on data that represents the school we are becoming. Students who scored 50% or above are labeled as having met expectations; students who scored 70% or above are labeled as exceeding expectations. The Nebraska State Report Card for Grandview Elementary is available at <http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us>

The growth that students have experienced in reading and math can be attributed to the attention teachers have given to curriculum, instruction, and assessment in relation to student achievement. Every summer since 2000, staff and administration have met to analyze the data from that school year and to analyze the patterns of the data, as the years for which they were available increased. Teachers used the information to determine areas of strength and weakness and to determine methods which student could improve learning. The reading program has been changed at Grandview and many practices have been adapted based on research available in the instruction of math and reading. Grandview is involved in the accomplishment of the schoolwide goal of improving reading in all content areas and is working on a school goal to improve student performance in math on word problems, a skill highly linked to reading so the goals are complementary. A dip in scores in 2002-2003 led teachers to seriously consider implementing practices that work for particularly needy students.

In addition, in order to provide a broader picture of student achievement, Grandview staff has initiated the use of DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment and Reading Mastery checkouts to determine student achievement in reading. Both programs are in their first year of implementation this school year.

The tables giving the percent of students who have met and exceeded standards do not include the ethnic minorities represented in Grandview School because the numbers were too small to be statistically significant several of the years (under ten students). However, the number of ethnic minorities is increasing in the Alliance area, and special attention is being given to the education of these students. Thus far, as the number of American Indians and Hispanics has grown, staff and administration have adapted methods, programs, and scheduling in order to provide success for the students. Over the five-year period 2001-2005, scores have increased in reading and math--both in meeting the standards and exceeding the standards.

**2. Using Assessment Results:** Grandview Elementary School is one of many Nebraska schools currently writing and administering assessments that not only match state standards but are written based on our own district's curriculum. Because of this school-owned approach to assessment, students in all grades are taught, tested, and then retaught according to the results of the assessments. This guarantees that skills are reviewed and new approaches tried in a timely manner. Students are retaught assessment skills not mastered during the previous year. Along with skills assessment in math, language arts, science, and



social studies Grandview also participates in the Nebraska State writing test. These tests are scored at the state level and all teachers have been trained in Six Traits as well as trained to score the tests to better enable us to improve the program as needed.

Dynamic Indicators of Elementary Literacy System tests are now administered in the fall, winter, and in the spring to identify students in need of remediation in any of the five strands of reading. Accelerated Reader is also used to record progress in the fall, midyear, and again in the spring. AR encourages students to read on their own while assuring teachers that it is at a level where they function well independently but any student can move ahead as interventions succeed in improving their reading skills. The adoption of a new direct instruction reading program this year is changing our reliance on AR data for school improvement. The staff does value the love of reading that our students have acquired with the success of AR at Grandview, but also realize that we can do more to impact student academic performance. We are increasingly more aware of our need to use assessments to build better programs.

The Language Assessment Scale and English Language Development Assessment are annually given. Scores are used to identify English language learners, place them in appropriate language classes and measure yearly gains.

Teams of teachers meet both in summer and during the school year to look at results of all these assessments and to plan a course of action for improvement and to develop action plans for NCA School Improvement.

**3. Communicating Assessment Results:** Students and teachers are the initial users of learning and performance data. Daily work is frequently sent home to families. Teachers communicate informally with parents through notes and phone calls. Formal communication consists of quarterly report cards and two parent-teacher conferences each year. Since our assessments are given scored, and recorded immediately, they are available for all parents to see in the scheduled conferences. The online database, which is utilized to record grades and other pertinent student information, can be assessed at any time so that parents can keep current on their child's progress.

The results of the State Writing assessment given in 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades are mailed to parents as soon as they are released, and end-of-the-year report cards includes the results of the national achievement test and will now also include the students' achievement on state standards.

Writing is celebrated each year with Writers' Night. Teachers save writing projects throughout the year and these are displayed at an open house for parents and the community. In addition, the students often write and perform a skit about writing and prepare a slide show production about the writing process and/or the Six-Traits of Writing. Grandview also rewards reading with an end-of-the-year assembly. The parent association provides a special picnic lunch and many reading rewards are presented. Community members are invited to participate and provide cultural and enrichment activities at a High Ability Learner camp, which is held each summer. All of these traditional events are highly publicized and well attended.

Additional communication resources include an online website ([allianceps.org](http://allianceps.org)) which is available to showcase and report important classroom events and school successes. The superintendent recognizes special events and student achievements at each regular board meeting. In addition, the director of curriculum reports at each meeting concerning both the work and the results available from each curriculum area. These reports often receive additional coverage from local media. A newsletter is prepared by the building principal each month and sent home with each student. This newsletter informs parents of upcoming events and provides assessment information on a regular basis. All parents also receive the Nebraska State Report Card.

**4. Sharing Success:** Success stories from Grandview Elementary are shared in many ways. Our district's leadership team meets each week to discuss and report their concerns and accomplishments. Participation

in our local educational service unit provides opportunities for staff to attend professional development sessions and to share our successes with other school districts. Various staff members attend conferences and seminars covering many areas of curriculum and teaching techniques. During these conferences ideas and achievements are shared with other professionals. Recently, several administrative and staff members attended the National Assessments Leadership Conference where our state assessment portfolio was shared with many districts across the nation.

After our district reconfigured our elementary schools into two buildings, one primary and the other intermediate, daily collaboration within grade level teams became possible. Team planning meetings are also scheduled throughout the year to provide an opportunity for teachers to develop curriculum, assessments, and various units of study as well as share successful teaching techniques. Same grade level teachers are encouraged (and often do) to attend specific intervention workshops as a team. Other schools in the district and the community are invited annually to Grandview's Writer's Night, which showcases our school's successful writing program.

Each teacher in the district participates on curriculum and assessment committees. These committees meet during June thus providing an opportunity for teachers to meet collegially to share ideas with the other schools in the district. Alliance Public Schools also has a web site, [www.allianceps.org](http://www.allianceps.org), where information is provided about all the schools and individual classroom projects are often highlighted.

Sharing accomplishments within our school, with other schools in the district, and with the community is and will continue to be an integral part of our academic success.

## PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

---

### 1. Curriculum:

The Nebraska Standards and Assessment System (STARS) is a framework for the Grandview Elementary curriculum. Teachers are responsible for developing local assessments based on national and state standards in the areas of mathematics, science, reading and language arts, and social studies. All Grandview students also receive weekly classroom instruction in physical education, art, music, computers, counseling, and library/media.

**Math:** The math program at Grandview is a reflection of Nebraska's math standards. Mathematical instruction and assessment addresses numeration, number sense, measurement, estimation, problem solving, geometry/spatial, algebra, data analysis, probability, and statistical concepts. All classrooms use a basal supported by a variety of supplemental activities and materials. Classroom instruction is reinforced by computer-assisted instruction in the computer lab, graphing and charting activities in science, and after-school tutorial sessions for math. The goal of math curriculum is to build a firm basic math foundation so all students can successfully solve mathematical problems.

**Science:** The inquiry-based science curriculum is a reflection of Nebraska's science standards. Assessments are given at all grade levels. The science curriculum includes standards for physical, earth, and life sciences. Hands-on exploration and discovery learning evolves into a program stressing the scientific method and processes by fourth grade. Science kits and computer software programs are utilized to enhance and supplement the program.

**Reading/Language Arts:** Grandview’s reading curriculum is aligned with the Nebraska reading standards and is written to support students who are learning both to read and to read to learn. Through the use of a direct instruction reading program in grades 2-3 and a basal series in grade 4, students develop skills in the literacy processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visual representation. All Grandview teachers incorporate the six traits of writing, organization, ideas, conventions, word choice, sentence fluency, and voice, into daily instruction. Penmanship and spelling are also taught as part of the language arts curriculum.

**Social Studies:** The core content areas of the Nebraska social studies standards are United States history, Nebraska history, geography, civics/government, and economics. The standards are met at the individual grade levels by the use of textbooks, thematic units, and a map skills program that emphasizes responsible citizenship and multicultural awareness along with essential social studies skills and concepts.

**Physical Education, Music, Art, Counseling, Library/Media:** Students receive classroom instruction three days a week from teachers specializing in physical education, art, music, computers, counseling, and library/media. The physical education program is designed to encourage healthy and active lifestyles for all children. Daily lessons include games and activities that encourage teamwork, sportsmanship, and positive interaction among peers. The art curriculum is designed to introduce students to the elements of art – color, value, shape, form, space, line, and texture. Students are encouraged to express themselves through creative original artwork that is displayed in the hallways and at annual art shows. The music curriculum is designed to promote the reading of music and the performance of a variety of musical formats instrumentally or vocally through solos or group performance. The music curriculum also crosses other curriculum areas including reading, PE, geography, library, performance, improvisation, and history. Classroom instruction in the computer lab offers a variety of programs selected to compliment the classroom curriculum while also teaching the students basic computer literacy and skill. The counseling curriculum includes “Here’s Looking at You”, a drug awareness and prevention program and “Second Step”, a conflict resolution program. This year “Steps to Respect” has been added. This program is a bullying prevention program. The counselor also uses “The Eight Keys of Success” from Quantum Learning for classroom instruction. The objective of the library/media center is to instill a desire to read for both pleasure and learning in all students. Library skills classes are taught with curriculum that focuses on learning about different genre, authors, dictionary skills, card catalog skills, and research using both printed and technology resources. The library/media classroom also includes instruction in using a five-step writing process to generate classroom reports.

### **What is different about Grandview**

Our journey toward significant school improvement initially started during the 1997-98 school year when the staff voted to begin the process of becoming a Title I Schoolwide School. At that time we had 66% of our students receiving free and reduced lunch and many of our students were not scoring well on the Terra Nova tests. The number one goal of the staff was to improve student performance in reading and math. Since that time, many changes have occurred within the district and within the school. The most significant one was the closing of one elementary school in the district, which resulted in reconfiguration of the two remaining elementary schools. Grandview went from a K-5 school to a 2-4 school. This, of course, has led to significant changes in the overall programming. In addition to programming changes and adjustments with the new configuration, a new school cultural was being formed. Blending old traditions with new ones has been also been a challenge for the school community. However, improvement of reading and math has remained a constant for the Grandview staff.

Grandview Elementary became a Schoolwide Title I school in 1999. The staff had determined that

they wanted students to read more and had chosen to implement Accelerated Reader. All staff members were trained and computer software to support the program was purchased. A building theme was established and every classroom established reading goals for the year. Reading became very important and circulation of library books that year increased to over 10,000 books. A huge celebration to celebrate reading was held in the spring. In addition, as part of the schoolwide planning, a free breakfast program was started. With the breakfast program both tardiness and absenteeism decreased. There were also fewer discipline issues. The staff also wanted Grandview to be a parent friendly place, and each grade level held a family fun night with a reading theme at different times throughout the year.

At the same time Grandview was working within to meet the standards of a Title I schoolwide, significant changes were also occurring on the district level. State standards had been adopted and the reporting of reading and math criterion-referenced assessments for all fourth grade students was initiated in 2000-2001. Therefore, on the district level, school improvement teams were established. The work of these teams started with the alignment of curriculum and the writing of assessments. All Grandview certified teachers are members of a curriculum team. Hence much of the work done in our building reflects the expectations of our district. Because of the experience gained during the process of becoming a schoolwide school, Grandview staff members have taken leadership roles on the district level. In addition to the work of aligning curriculum and writing state assessments, three years ago, the NCA school improvement process was reactivated. Every effort has been made to blend the work of the district with the NCA school improvement process. Blending processes has lead us to a point where we understand the need to personalize our data and rework initial planning to address needs more specific to our building. The staff at Grandview now has a much greater understanding of the school improvement process. We, too, are a learning community and are seeking to use our data to drive our decisions. Each June, the School Improvement Committees meet to analyze building data and rework our action plans. Data analysis prompted Grandview to begin looking at a new reading series to address our areas of weakness. During the 2004-2005 school year, we studied the reports of the National Reading Panel, attended Reading First Conferences, started DIBELS testing, and researched best practices to prepared for the adoption of a new reading series. Reading Mastery, a direct instruction approach to reading, was selected and this past year our improvement plans were directly related to the implementation of this new program.

## **2. Reading:**

In the fall of 2005, direct instruction in reading was implemented in grades K-3 students in second. Direct Instruction or Reading Mastery is a scripted, sequential model of instruction that ensures adequate time, small homogeneous group instruction, guided practice and feedback, mastery, and substantial training and materials for teachers. The model, lead, test procedure is the basic paradigm of Direct Instruction and is designed to support mastery of carefully sequenced skills. With over thirty years of scientifically based research, the Direct Instruction model uses cumulative review with sequential steps based on how students learn.

The Direct Instruction approach to reading was chosen by our teachers with the assumptions that all children can learn and can improve; that teachers can be successful with adequate training and support; and that learning progress can move at a brisk pace. Students are expected to master skills taught. Practices, lesson performance, independent work, and reading mastery tests and checkouts measure mastery. Information from this data is recorded on a Lesson Progress Chart and used to make instructional decisions for students such as reteaching a particular skill or lesson, accelerating a student or group, or reorganizing groups as needed.

Historically in our school, reading in the fourth grade changes focus from learning to read to reading to learn and offers higher-level thinking and comprehension skill development. We currently use the McGraw-Hill reading program which is literature-based instruction from the context of

thematic units that include both fiction and nonfiction stories. With the growing success of Reading Mastery in grades 2 & 3, our 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are now also considering adoption of Reading Mastery.

### **3. Mathematics, Science, Art, Etc**

The Grandview Elementary Math Curriculum reflects the Nebraska math standards. The district has developed additional “local math assessments” for use in second grade that focuses on firming up basic math knowledge and computation skills that support our state standards. Numeration, number sense, measurement, estimation, problem solving, geometry/special, algebra, data analysis, probability, and statistical concepts are addressed throughout the Grandview program.

The mission of the school is to develop in all students the individual skills and a desire for knowledge, and the personal commitment essential for a successful future. Grandview’s math textbook provides a scope and sequence that not only builds on the previous year, but also provides differentiated levels of instruction. The McGraw-Hill series has additional instructional activities that range from reteaching to extensions for each lesson concept. These materials address individual needs and provide additional concept application challenges.

Classrooms use the Otter Creek Institute math drill program to individualize mastery of math facts. In second grade, hands on activities and manipulatives give children an opportunity to be engaged in discovering and applying newly presented math concepts. In third and fourth grades, one will see math skills, such as charting/graphing, incorporated into science activities and projects. In computer classes, program software selection reinforces individual skill levels and provides enrichment opportunities for our HAAL (high ability learners) to be individually challenged. For children needing additional time to master math concepts, the Title I program and after-school tutoring program provide more opportunities for practice and mastery. The Grandview staff believes working together “Success for All Students” can be achieved.

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

Grandview Elementary promotes enthusiastic teaching by challenging all students to perform to their greatest potential. The administration and faculty have taken a progressive approach toward learning and encourage the use of a variety of instructional methods. The staff is encouraged to seek and examine new teaching strategies and given support in finding staff development opportunities to address the identified needs of students.

A Direct Instruction reading program has been implemented in grades 2 and 3. All teachers involved in the program received summer training and ongoing site visits will support the implementation of the program for three years. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills test scores and the assessments provided by the direct instruction company are used for placement of students at their instructional level according to the needs shown by these test scores. The same procedure is used to place students in a direct instruction reasoning and writing program. These are performance-based groups and each student must demonstrate mastery of taught skills on a weekly basis. Continual monitoring of each student through weekly test scores and teacher observations allow each student to participate in instruction that is engaging and challenging. If the student does not experience positive success, he/she may be moved to a level that will better meet their needs. Knowledge and skill acquisition are tested at regular intervals and retaught to individuals when necessary.

Strategies used in other content areas may include individual or small group work, cooperative learning assignments, differentiation, or supplemental work. Specialized programs such as Six-Trait Writing, Step-Up to Writing, and Otter Creek math drills assure the greatest progress toward meeting the appropriate standards. Students who have not successfully achieved mastery of state standards or curriculum goals may receive additional after-school instruction in the available tutoring program. Student performance has improved as a result of the effort and time given in after school involvement.

## **Professional Development:**

Professional development at Grandview School is truly used to give our student population that “grand view” of their future. All Grandview para-educators, counselor, administrator, teachers and support educators have received training in many ways to better understand our students and to help them develop the skills they need to become successful and responsible citizens. Such professional development activities are ongoing. Training in Ruby Payne’s Framework of Poverty has been exceptionally valuable to all Grandview staff members. Before reconfiguration of our school, Grandview had 66% of our students on free or reduced lunch and our school truly was a poor school. The work of Ruby Payne has been timely for us as we work toward preserving past traditions while building new ones. Grandview has also been fortunate in that with the reconfiguration we have been able to send grade level teams of teachers to workshops selected by the teachers to help them meet our selected school improvement goals. All teachers have attended Six-Trait training and Step-Up-to Writing training. In turn, our teachers have provided leadership teams to inservice other grade levels in the district. Our curriculum director and our grade level teams carefully select those inservice opportunities, which support the school improvement goals, and yearly roll-out plans. The local service unit is also aware of individual school improvement plans and plans meaningful inservice opportunities that have been requested. They have been especially good at providing us with information on reading strategies and data analysis. All staff members are encouraged to attend timely staff development activities when they are offered. This system of staff development within our district has created a sharing atmosphere and a great deal of collegiality within our individual building. There have also been increased opportunities for Para educator training and ELL training.

Paraprofessionals are required to take the Master Teacher Para Educator Course online. In addition, para-educators have partnered with teachers to take training from the National Institute for Direct Instruction.

To increase understanding and to work more effectively with our Native American and Hispanic student population, many staff members have attended Hispanic and Latino summits, Native American Symposiums and received ELDA training.

Special Educators, and sometimes their para-educators, have attended Nebraska Department of Education workshops on changes in special education laws, developing social skills and conferences addressing special needs such as Autism.

Our computer coordinator has attended internet safety workshops and has been assisting and training all staff where needed to provide them with the skills necessary for technology they might use in the computer lab or in the classroom. Several staff members attend the Nebraska Association of Gifted students’ conference each year and bring back to the whole school an increased awareness of technology.

We have been provided with many workshops on intervention strategies to improve reading. A Reading First workshop and Teaching Reading in Math and Science workshop each provided differentiated strategies for teachers to use to improve delivery of information and skills to students. Prior to selecting a new reading program, a yearlong evaluation process was used to research and evaluate best practices in reading. As part of the selection process for a new reading program, staff members made on-site visitations to see first hand direct instruction programs already in place. The district did choose a K-3 Direct Instruction program and educators at our school are continuing to learn how direct instruction impacts the students. Time for teachers to examine reading materials and to discuss how to provide continuity in our reading program and expand learning for higher level thinking skills in fourth grade are in process this year.

Yearly reviews of our district’s assessment pieces for math, science, Reading, writing, and now, social studies are working workshops held each summer. The work involved in the assessment process has been professional development at its best in our district. The Grandview staff feels that the countless hours spent trying to understand and develop teaching skills, which are aligned to our

own curriculum, and to Nebraska state standards can only benefit the future of educators and their students.

Grandview School: Grade 4 State Tests School Scores Alliance Public Schools

READING	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01
Testing Month	September-May	September-May	September-May	September-May	September-May
<b>School Scores</b>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	98%	96%	74%	89%	88%
% at Exceeds State Standards	76%	69%	36%	51%	21%
Number of Students Tested	92	95	39	35	42
Percent of Students Tested	100%	99%	100%	99%	99%
Number of Students Alternatively Assessed	0	2	0	1	1
Percent of Student Alternatively Assessed	0%	2%	0%	3%	2%
<b>White</b>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	98%	99%	81%	100%	96%
% At Exceeds State Standards	83%	86%	50%	48%	31%
Number of Students tested	59	70	26	21	26
<b>Free and Reduced Lunch</b>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	96%	92%	67%	88%	86%
% At Exceeds State Standards	62%	50%	17%	38%	0%
Number of Students tested	45	36	18	16	21

MATH	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01
Testing Month	September-May	September-May	September-May	September-May	September-May
<b>School Scores</b>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	97%	98%	86%	94%	
% at Exceeds State Standards	87%	88%	64%	51%	
Number of Students Tested	92	95	36	35	
Percent of Students Tested	100%	99%	95%	99%	
Number of Students Alternatively Assessed	0	2	0	1	
Percent of Student Alternatively Assessed	0%	2%	0%	3%	
<b>White</b>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	97%	100%	88%	86%	
% At Exceeds State Standards	92%	91%	71%	62%	
Number of Students tested	59	70	24	21	



<b>Free and Reduced Lunch</b>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	98%	94%	94%	88%	
% At Exceeds State Standards	91%	81%	47%	38%	
Number of Students tested	45	36	17	16	

<b>Reading 4th Grade</b>					
<b>All Students</b>	<b>00-01</b>	<b>01-02</b>	<b>02-03</b>	<b>03-04</b>	<b>04-05</b>
<b>Percent Meeting Standards</b>	79%	NA	79%	NA	85%
<b>Percent Not Meeting Standards</b>	21%	NA	21%	NA	15%

<b>Math 4th Grade</b>					
<b>All Students</b>	<b>00-01</b>	<b>01-02</b>	<b>02-03</b>	<b>03-04</b>	<b>04-05</b>
<b>Percent Meeting Standards</b>	NA	78%	NA	85%	88%
<b>Percent Not Meeting Standards</b>	NA	22%	NA	15%	12%

**PART VII-ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

3RD Grade READING CTBS-TERRA NOVA

Year	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2002-2001	2000-2001
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
Number of Students Tested	108	104	45	46	35
Number of Students Met	59	59	13	17	14
Percent of students Met	55%	57%	29%	37%	43%
Number of Students Exceeding	15	34	7	58	8
Percent of Students Exceeding	28%	33%	16%	17%	23%
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>WHITE</b>					
Number of Students Tested	76	64	20	30	19
Number of Students Met	50	43	9	15	1
Percent of students Met	0.66	0.67	0.45	0.5	0.53
Number of Students Exceeding	36	27	7	7	6
Percent of Students Exceeding	0.47	0.42	0.35	0.23	0.32
Percent of Students Exceeding	31%	24%	*	*	*
<b>FREE/REDUCED LUNCH</b>					
Number of Students Tested	61	54	23	13	16
Number of Students Met	26	24	3	4	4
Percent of students Met	43%	44%	13%	31%	25%
Number of Students Exceeding	19	13	*	*	*
Percent of Students Exceeding	31%	24%	*	*	*

## PART VII-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

3RD Grade MATH CTBS-TERRA NOVA

## PART VII-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

4<sup>TH</sup> Grade READING CTBS-TERRA NOVA

Year	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2002-2001	2000-2001
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
Number of Students Tested	104	116	42	36	42
Number of Students Met	57	64	17	13	20
Percent of students Met	55%	55%	40%	36%	48%
Number of Students Exceeding	33	39	10	8	8
Percent of Students Exceeding	36%	34%	24%	22%	19%
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>WHITE</b>					
Number of Students Tested	69	76	27	21	26
Number of Students Met	43	45	16	8	15
Percent of students Met	62%	59%	59%	38%	58%
Number of Students Exceeding	25	35	10	5	7
Percent of Students Exceeding	36%	46%	37%	24%	27%
<b>FREE/REDUCED LUNCH</b>					

Number of Students Tested	55	58	13	16	21
Number of Students Met	26	27	4	2	8
Percent of students Met	47%	47%	31%	13%	38%
Number of Students Exceeding	16	9	1	2	1
Percent of Students Exceeding	25%	16%	8%	13%	5%

## PART VII-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### 4<sup>TH</sup> Grade Math CTBS-TERRA NOVA

Year	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2002-2001	2000-2001
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
Number of Students Tested	104	107	42	36	42
Number of Students Met	56	59	17	16	16
Percent of students Met	54%	55%	40%	44%	25%
Number of Students Exceeding	37	34	8	8.22	9
Percent of Students Exceeding	36%	32%	19%	17%	21%
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>WHITE</b>					
Number of Students Tested	69	76	27	21	26
Number of Students Met	40	50	15	10	15
Percent of students Met	58%	66%	56%	48%	58%
Number of Students Exceeding	30	30	6	5	9
Percent of Students Exceeding	43%	39%	22%	24%	35%
<b>FREE/REDUCED LUNCH</b>					
Number of Students Tested	55	49	13	16	21
Number of Students Met	26	19	4	5	4
Percent of students Met	47%	39%	31%	31%	19%
Number of Students Exceeding	16	11	1	3	2
Percent of Students Exceeding	29%	22%	8%	19%	10%