2004-2005 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet   Type of School: <u>X</u> Elementary __ Middle __ High __ K-12

Name of Principal <u>Mr. Scott E. Mato</u>
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name <u>Riverside Elementary School</u>
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address__<u>5th Street & Avenue A, PO Box 219</u>_____
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

<u>Riverside</u>   PA   <u>17868-0219</u>_____
City   State   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County _____<u>Northumberland</u>_____School Code Number*_____<u>116471803</u>_____

Telephone <u>(570)   271-3268 ext. 7000</u>   Fax <u>(570)   271-4147</u>_____

Website/URL__<u>htttp://www.danville.k12.pa.us</u>   E-mail <u>smato@danville.k12.pa.us</u>

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* <u>Mr. Steven P. Keifer</u>_____
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name___<u>Danville Area School District</u>_____ Tel. <u>(570) 271-3268</u>_____

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 _____<u>Dr. Albert Quiery, Jr.</u>_____
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

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PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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 of 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 2004-2005 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 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *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:
   - __4__ Elementary schools
   - __1__ Middle schools
   - _____ Junior high schools
   - __1__ High schools
   - _____ Other

   - __6__ TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: ___$6,971___

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: ___$8,534___

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
   - [X] Small city or town in a rural area
   - [ ] Rural

4. ___4___ Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

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

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK					7			
K	11	18	**29**		8			
1	12	11	**23**		9			
2	12	15	**27**		10			
3	19	13	**32**		11			
4	8	16	**24**		12			
5	16	22	**38**		Other			
6								
			TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →					173

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

6.   Racial/ethnic composition of   <u> 96 </u>% White
    the students in the school: <u> 2 </u>% Black or African American
                                         <u>   </u>% Hispanic or Latino
                                         <u> 2 </u>% Asian/Pacific Islander
                                         <u>   </u>% American Indian/Alaskan Native
                                        100% Total

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

7.   Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: <u> 2 </u>%

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred *to* the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	1
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	173
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

8.   Limited English Proficient students in the school: <u> 4 </u>%
                                                     <u> 8 </u>Total Number Limited English Proficient
Number of languages represented: <u> 5 </u>
Specify languages: Creole, Spanish/Arabic, Urdu, Hebrew Yiddish, Vietnamese

9.   Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: <u> 21 </u>%

       Total number students who qualify: <u> 37 </u>

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: ___17___%

                                              ___31___Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

_1__Autism	____Orthopedic Impairment
_1__Deafness	_1__Other Health Impaired
____Deaf-Blindness	_8__Specific Learning Disability
____Emotional Disturbance	_20_Speech or Language Impairment
____Hearing Impairment	____Traumatic Brain Injury
____Mental Retardation	____Visual Impairment Including Blindness
____Multiple Disabilities	

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

Number of Staff

	Full-time	Part-Time
Administrator(s)	1	
Classroom teachers	10	
Special resource teachers/specialists	2	8
Paraprofessionals		
Support staff	12	
Total number	25	8

12. Average school student-"classroom teacher" ratio: __17__

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.)

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	98%	97%	96%	99%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	%	%	%	%	%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	%	%	%	%	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Riverside Elementary School is located in the small Borough of Riverside in the Northeast corner of Northumberland County in Central Pennsylvania. We have approximately 170 students in grades K-5. Our community is a cross-section of professionals from Merck Pharmaceuticals and Geisinger Medical Center, people working in agriculture and people employed in industry. Despite our low numbers, we do have a significant number of children with a wide variety of issues. We use a Child Study Team model to screen children and to work with parents/guardians to meet the needs of the child/children and the family. We work closely with Mental Health, Children and Youth, Behavioral Specialists and the medical community to provide comprehensive services and prevent children from falling through the cracks. We also have a tradition of parents and community members being involved in the school which gives them ownership and adds to our sense of community. We are fortunate to have good children and caring parents. Our building vision is synonymous with the District's Mission Statement: Recognizing the worth and differences of all people and the equal right to educational opportunities, the Danville Area School District in partnership with the family and the community ensures that students develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to maximize individual potential for lifelong learning that is socially responsible and personally satisfying.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Explanation of Standardized Test Scores

Riverside continuously works to improve its standardized test scores. Our 5th grade students have been taking the Pennsylvania State School Assessments (PSSA's) in math and reading since the 1990's. The PSSA's are standardized tests that give us information about individual students, the grade level and the school. They also compare our performance to state averages. By all measures, we are making steady progress.

The PSSA's measure student performance on the basis of Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced. We recently received an award from the Pennsylvania Department of Education for achieving Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past two years based on our PSSA results. AYP goals are the federal guidelines set forth by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The goal is to have every child score proficient or above by the year 2014. For more information on the PSSA's, you can access the state's website at http://www.pde.state.pa.us.

To meet AYP, students have to achieve a score of Proficient or Advanced. Last year, 86% of our students were Proficient or Above in reading compared to the state average of 62%. 68% of our students scored Advanced compared to 34% at the state level. Twice as many of our students scored Advanced as compared to the state average. The previous year, 81.8% of our students scored Proficient or Above category but only 18.2% of those students scored Advanced. The number of students who scored Advanced in one year increased by 49.8%!

In math, 89% of our students scored Proficient or Above. 71% of those students scored Advanced! The previous year, 57.5% of our students scored proficient or Above and 24.2% of those students scored Advanced. In one year, we showed a 21.5% improvement in the number of students in the Proficient or Above category and a 46.8% increase in the number of students who scored in the Advanced category!

Last year, our 5th grade students showed tremendous improvement. They produced some of the highest scores in the state. They showed the most significant improvement over a one-year period for all of the schools in our category in the state. Their performance is the result of a concerted effort by the students, school community and the teachers to do the best they can to achieve academic success.

2. Data Driven Decision Making

Our school district uses standardized tests K-5 to track student performance and improve instruction. The Pennsylvania State School Assessments (PSSA's) are given in grades 3 and 5. SAT's and OLSAT's are given in grades 2 and 4. DIBELS are administered in grades K-3. The District's math CRT's are given at the beginning and the end of the year. Results are analyzed at the District level and scrutinized at the building level. We also use the Scott-Foresman benchmark tests in grades 1-5 as part of our reading series.

Once we have gathered all of our data, the teachers and I meet and go over the results. We scrutinize individual and group performance to help us determine our strengths and weaknesses. We identify areas for improvement, we brainstorm, look at research, review our materials, modify teaching techniques and put it all a plan for improvement.

Based on our test results, that model serves us well. The District is prepared to purchase database management software. That will give us more information and correlate with our own assessments. It will give us a very powerful tool to enhance instruction.

3. Sharing Results

Students and parents receive copies of standardized test results with a cover letter of explanation. We go to great lengths to educate our students and school community about the PSSA's and the value of standardized tests. We encourage the public to hold us accountable for educating children. The Director of Curriculum, the Principal and the teachers stay current with changes in the test, how results are reported and what they mean. We convey that information to our students and parents in a variety of ways.

Student performance is sent home with progress reports and report cards. Test results are shared at parent-teacher conferences. The topic is addressed at Home and School meetings and Board meetings. Test results are published in a bimonthly Principal's Newsletter and the District's quarterly newsletter and on the District's website. The local media covers standardized test scores and compares results within the District, throughout the region and state averages as well. Information is shared with the total Danville community through the district report card.

Assessment data is embedded in our school culture. The routines and lines of communication we have established have been consistent for the past several years. Sharing this information has helped raise expectations and standards in our school and the District.

4. Sharing Success

We celebrate our successes. Our School Board had a pig roast for all staff at the beginning of the year for a job well done. The Principal provided the school with a special breakfast in recognition of the school's outstanding scores. Local papers published articles about our achievements. Our 5th grade students received a certificate of achievement. The staff takes tremendous pride in the accomplishments of their students.

Principals share information with principals from other schools, at regional principals' meetings, conferences, and at meetings at Intermediate Units and throughout the state. Our Director of Curriculum and Instruction discusses our accomplishments with other Directors of C & I. The Superintendent uses every opportunity to tell people what we are doing and explain why it works.

If Riverside is selected as an NCLB/BRS school, we will make every effort to collaborate with other schools to talk about the things we have done that have made our students successful. The local papers published stories about our nomination. Our success has already become a topic of discussion. Professionals and the general public are interested to know what things we do to give our students the best opportunity to fulfill their potential. We have a lot of things we do that we are willing to share with others. If we receive the award, we can capitalize on that opportunity and help others "raise the bar" and student achievement.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Riverside was practicing multi-age grouping in grades 2 & 3 and 4 & 5 and scores were dropping when I became the principal in 2002. The next year, I implemented leveled instruction per grade level

with a reading specialist providing support in reading classes and doing remediation. We practice inclusion and make every effort to meet the needs of our children at their level of need. Our learning support teacher does a combination of in-class and pull out support per IEP. We make a concerted effort to maximize our time and stay focused on student performance and using that information to inform instruction. We now offer after school tutoring and Classroom Plus through state funding for remedial purposes. A visiting professor from Bucknell University does math enrichment a few times a month.

The Danville Area School District utilizes a three-year curriculum development and implementation cycle using data analysis, evidence based research, and professional experience to guide the curriculum development. During the first year, a task force is formed of teachers and administrators. This group assesses the strengths and needs of the program, identifies goals for curriculum improvement, researches best practices in the field, and investigates resources to meet curricular needs. This group aligns grade level goals and benchmarks to state standards, selects resources to meet the needs of diverse learners in reaching these goals, and they identify professional development needs accordingly. The second year of the curriculum cycle involves implementation of new resources to meet curricular goals, provision of professional development training, and revision of the curriculum. The third stage of the cycle includes curriculum revisions and investigation of the assessment components of the new curriculum to evaluate whether curriculum goals are being met. Each curriculum area goes through this curriculum cycle every five years.

The Danville Area School District updated its **literacy** curriculum goals and instructional model to reflect a scientifically based model to promote the success of students in becoming effective readers and writers. Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency are the core components of the elementary literacy program. The literacy model includes a 2 ½ hour literacy block for all elementary students. This block includes writing every day, whole group mixed-ability literacy instruction, and leveled group instruction. These leveled groups allow teachers to both remediate student needs and provide enrichment. Support is also provided to struggling readers through an in-class remedial reading teacher during a portion of the literacy block time. Remedial reading specialists also provide intensive intervention for struggling readers through Reading Recovery.

The **math** curriculum encourages students to reach the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. All students work with mathematical concepts and problem solving in the areas of measurement, geometry, probability and statistics, and beginning algebraic concepts. Students explain their thinking through writing. Lessons are aligned to PA Academic Standards. A math task force begins the curriculum cycle in 2005. Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. SuccessMaker software supports math and reading, Bernie's Typing teaches keyboarding skills, MyAccess teaches writing to prompts per PSSA standards, and students do research and composition on computers.

The curriculum areas of **science and social studies** are taught using a thematic approach at the primary level. These themes integrate science, social studies, mathematics and literacy. The intermediate level teaches distinct disciplines but there is still an emphasis on integrating the curriculum.
Content specialists provide all students instruction in **art, music, guidance, library sciences and physical education** at least once every six days. Regular classroom activities often integrate these topics and skills across the curriculum.

2a. **Reading**

The reading curriculum at Riverside Elementary is part of a larger literacy curriculum. Literacy development reaches all areas of reading, speaking, and listening. These goals align with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. These literacy areas are taught in an integrated fashion rather

than as discrete subjects. For example, spelling words may be drawn from the weekly reading stories, and these words will also focus on the same concepts that are being learned in grammar. Writing is done on a daily basis at all grade levels.

The reading goals within the literacy curriculum address **phonemic awareness**, **phonics**, **comprehension**, **vocabulary development**, and **fluency**. These five goal areas were selected to reflect both best practices in the field and scientifically based reading research. During the 2003-04 school year the educators of Danville drew on their extensive knowledge base, pulled information from research and best practices, and used data to drive the focus of the curriculum committee. This committee developed appropriate literacy goals, assessments, and resources to meet the varied needs of learners. The 2004-05 school year brought many changes to the instruction of reading as the new resources and curriculum were implemented. The new curriculum focuses on reaching grade level benchmarks, using evaluation to guide instruction, and meeting varied learning needs through whole group, small group and leveled instruction. Since the curriculum development and implementation plan is at least a three-year process, the educators will continue to meet and discuss the newly implemented curriculum, share successes, talk about challenges, and continually strive to improve.

3. **Mathematics**

The educators of Riverside Elementary recognized the need for change in the area of mathematics. Using past test scores to target areas of need, the educators worked collaboratively to enhance the current mathematics curriculum to better prepare students to meet high standards. One need that educators recognized was the necessity of teaching more areas of mathematics. Math instruction is not just basic arithmetic; it involves logic, problem solving and communication skills. Educators used curriculum mapping to identify areas where instruction was occurring and the timeline for this instruction. Mapping allowed teachers to use time more effectively for instruction and reach more areas of mathematics. Teachers were also cognizant of the Pennsylvania Mathematics Standards and designing instruction to meet these goals.

New expectations for mathematics also required teachers to teach math through different instructional methods. These methods involved more "hands-on" opportunities rather than paper and pencil tasks. Educators also challenged students to explain the reasoning they used in solving problems through both oral expression and in writing. Resources for meeting curriculum goals came from new areas. The Internet has provided valuable resources for teachers, and instruction has also been enhanced through the use of technology to meet varying student needs.

This continual process of change is reflected in the mission of the Danville Area School District. This mission calls for all students to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to maximize individual potential. This mission is not only applicable to the students, but also the educators of Riverside Elementary.

4. **Instructional Methods**

Instructional methods have changed over recent years to reflect the varying needs of students. A "one-size-fits-all" approach to instruction does not meet today's high standards. Instruction in

both literacy and mathematics has emerged to reflect these varying needs through small group instruction, learning centers, leveled materials, remediation opportunities and strategic intervention strategies.

The daily literacy time block has been developed to set time aside in the day to focus on reading, writing, listening and speaking goals. This instruction may occur as a whole group or in small groups chosen by interest or need. Small groups of students are given additional opportunities to achieve through Title I remediation programs that target both small groups and individuals. Because of the extra assistance provided through Title I programs, teachers are able to remediate students within the regular classroom on a daily basis. Title I services have also allowed trained reading specialists to work with students on an individual basis. The intensive intervention strategies provided through *Reading Recovery* have assisted many students in reaching grade level proficiency.

If students are unable to meet grade level expectancies, numerous assistance programs are provided which go beyond tutoring or remediation. The Instructional Support Team model is used extensively throughout Riverside Elementary. Educators from numerous areas are able to meet as a small group called a Child Study Team (CST) to collaborate in planning to meet children's needs. Extra instruction is provided to assist students, and evaluations are completed to measure the student's strengths and needs. The CST is able to make recommendations so that no child "falls through the cracks".

5. **Professional Development**

The Professional Development Program throughout the Danville Area School District strives to meet the varying needs of educators. Through a differentiated evaluation plan, teachers are encouraged to develop individualized professional development goals, obtain training toward these goals, and implement these changes into their teaching. Teachers and administrators are also encouraged to pursue graduate level college work. One such effort allowed five teachers from the district to work as a collaborative team to train in Reading Recovery intervention strategies. This team took courses together, implemented the strategies in their classes, shared their difficulties and successes, and grew professionally through their efforts.

Days throughout the school year focus on bringing instructional resources into the district. These resources may include experts in the field of technology, working in collaborative groups on professional development topics, and meeting on grade level or content area teams. "One-and-Done" workshops are not promoted in the district and teachers are encouraged to join in long term professional growth opportunities. Numerous high quality opportunities are provided for educators through both the Intermediate Units and nearby universities, such as the Bloomsburg University Reading Conference and the Bloomsburg University Inclusion Workshop. Much time has been devoted during district professional development time to train teachers in standards based instructional practices, using reading and writing skills across all content areas, and in using evaluation to make instructional change.

Table I
No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon School
Grade 5 Reading

State Tests

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Below Basic	6	30	21	15	18
% At or Above Basic	95	70	80	85	82
% At or Above Proficient	86	82	59	68	50
% At Advanced	68	18	21	21	37
Number of students tested	34	33	44	34	38
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
STATE SCORES					
% Below Basic	18	22	20	23	22
% At or Above Basic	81	78	80	77	78
% At or above Proficient	62	58	57	56	55
% At Advanced	34	27	18	20	29

Table II
No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon School
Grade 5 Math

State Tests

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Below Basic	3	18	41	21	24
% At or Above Basic	98	82	59	79	76
% At or Above Proficient	89	58	45	50	53
% At Advanced	71	24	16	21	32
Number of students tested	34	33	44	34	38
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	9
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
STATE SCORES					
% Below Basic	20	22	25	22	22
% At or Above Basic	80	78	75	78	78
% At or above Proficient	62	56	53	53	52
% At Advanced	37	28	26	23	27