

2002-2003 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program Cover Sheet

Name of Principal Mr. Richard E. Rominski (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 700 Elm Avenue East (If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Delano Minnesota 55328-9183 City State Zip code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. (763) 972-3365 Fax (763) 972-6706

Website/URL http://delano.k12.mn.us Email rrominski@delano.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.

(Principal's Signature) Date March 14, 2003

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

Name of Superintendent Dr. Howard Carlson (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Delano Public Schools Tel. (763) 972-3365

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 March 14, 2003

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Howard Glas (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 March 14, 2003

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

1. Number of schools in the district: 1 Elementary schools
 1 Middle schools
 _____ Junior high schools
 1 High schools
 3 TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$6,342
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$7,049

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. 16 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 N/A If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
K				7	79	76	155
1				8	66	84	150
2				9			
3				10			
4				11			
5	86	71	157	12			
6	77	89	165	Other			
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							627

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>95.86</u> | % White |
| <u>1.40</u> | % Black or African American |
| <u>1.25</u> | % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>1.09</u> | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <u>.40</u> | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |

100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 3.7 %

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	10
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	12
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	594
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.037
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3.7

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: $\frac{0}{0}$ %
Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: N/A

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9.53 %
61 Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method is not a reasonably 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: $\frac{12.5}{80}$ %
 Total Number of Students Served

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

<u> 3 </u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u> 13 </u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u> 25 </u> Specific Learning Disability
<u> </u> Hearing Impairment	<u> 37 </u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u> 1 </u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> 1 </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u> </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

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> -0 </u>
Classroom teachers	<u> 19 </u>	<u> -0 </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u> 15 </u>	<u> -0 </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u> 10 </u>	<u> -0 </u>
Support staff	<u> 2 </u>	<u> -0 </u>
Total number	<u> 47 </u>	<u> -0 </u>

12. Student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 29.8/1.0

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students. 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 and drop-off rates.

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Daily student attendance	98.47%	96.92%	98.02%	95.95%	97.91%
Daily teacher attendance	98.0%	98.01%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Teacher turnover rate	4.8%	3.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Student dropout rate	0	0	0	0	0
Student drop-off rate	1.67%	.59%	.90%	1.81%	0%

PART III - SUMMARY

Delano Middle School in Delano, Minnesota, is a suburban/rural community located thirty-five miles from downtown Minneapolis. Students come from a variety of backgrounds; however, most are predominately Caucasian and middle class on the socio-economic scale. Our location adjacent to the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area results in about eighty percent of our parents commuting to work. Our staff are highly trained professionals. Over forty percent possess an advanced educational degree and over fifty percent have earned college credit beyond the B.A. degree.

Delano Middle School's mission is to work in partnership with the community to create a climate of success for all learners. We believe in educating individuals to be life-long learners, who possess the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth and citizenship necessary to function and flourish in a global society. We begin by providing a strong foundation in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. In addition students are able to take advantage of learning opportunities in the social sciences, natural sciences and music. We have consistently been in the top five percent of school districts in Minnesota on the annual Basic Standards Tests in Reading and Mathematics administered in February to students in grade eight. Last year our district was the second highest scoring district in Minnesota on the mathematics test.

All students begin their day in an advisory group. When students enter the middle school, they are assigned to a middle school teacher who they stay with for their entire middle school years. As a result each student in our building has a significant adult who will be with them for four years. During that time, advisors get to know their students quite well and act as an advocate and mentor for them.

Students in grades five and six have a base room teacher who provides instruction in reading, language arts, and one additional core subject. Students are instructed by other grade level professionals in the remainder of the core areas. Specialists teach in the areas of physical education, art, music, industrial technology and family and consumer science. The schedule for students in grades seven and eight is a block schedule. The day is divided into four blocks of time, each approximately ninety minutes in length. Students take one-half of their course-load on Day One and the remainder of their courses on Day Two. The days alternate every day, hence the name Alternating Day Block Schedule. In addition to the classes listed above, students have extended learning opportunities in all of the core areas including physical education, allied arts and Spanish.

Opportunities for students who have demonstrated outstanding ability exists both within and outside the traditional classroom. Competitions occur in many programs under the auspices of our Talent Development Program. Students participate in programs such as Spelling and Geography Bees, History Day, Math Masters, DestiNation Imagination, and Science Olympiad. Our school won the state title last year in the state Science Olympiad contest and went on to compete at the national level in Connecticut. We also have had DestiNation Imagination teams place first at the state level and compete at the world level.

Our philosophy at Delano Middle School is to recognize and reward as many students as possible for their academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular performances. Students are rewarded on a monthly basis for citizenship and on a quarterly basis for academics and deportment. We also recognize students once a year for attendance and have developed this program in conjunction with the Minnesota Twins Professional Baseball Team.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Reading – Grade 5

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in Math, Reading and Writing are administered over a two-week period in March. Every student who is present on the day the test is administered participates in the test with the exception of students who have severe and/or profound mental handicaps. This would amount to one-two students. Any other student not taking the test was absent on the day it was administered and also on the make-up day. Over the last four years Delano Middle School has improved the percentage of fifth grade students reading at grade level and above (Level IIB, III and IV) from seventy-one percent (1998-99) to ninety percent (2001-02). This was accomplished despite the fact that the class tested in 2001-02 had one of the higher special education sub groups in recent years with twenty-four students or 10.5 percent of the class.

The test results demonstrate that over a four-year period, Delano Middle School fifth grade students have shown steady improvement in their test scores and a higher percentage of students appearing in the top two levels (Level III and IV) each year. (See Appendix A) The ninety percent of the fifth grade class reading above grade level (Level IIB, III and IV) in 2001-02 was one of the highest percentages in the Metropolitan Minneapolis/St. Paul Area as reported in the September 2002 issue of the Minneapolis Star Tribune. The percent of students in the top two levels at Delano Middle School is significantly higher than the percent of students in the top two levels statewide. A table showing the reading scores of Delano students compared to all students tested in the state of Minnesota appears in Appendix A.

The definition of Minnesota Comprehensive Achievement Levels I, IIA, IIB, III and IV appears in Appendix C.

Mathematics – Grade 5

Eighty-eight percent of the fifth graders tested in 2002 were at or above grade level in Math (Levels IIB, III and IV). The percentage of students in the top two levels (Level III and IV) has improved from forty-nine percent 1988-99 to seventy-seven percent in 2001-02. At the same time, we have significantly reduced the percentage of students in the lowest category (Level I) over that same time span. It is significant that only 1.28 percent of our fifth grade students score in the lowest category and our special education population comprises 10.5 percent of the class. The percent of students in the top two levels (III & IV) at Delano Middle School is significantly higher than the percent of students in the top two levels in the state of Minnesota. A table illustrating the Mathematics scores of Delano Middle School students for the past four years as compared to students' scores statewide appears in Appendix B.

The definitions of Minnesota Comprehensive Achievement Levels I, IIA, IIB, III and IV appear in Appendix C.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

2. Each teacher in our school is assigned to a curriculum group that meets on a regular basis. When test results from state and national assessments are received, the curriculum groups meet to analyze the results and make recommendations for improvement to our site-base management team. It is the responsibility of the site-base team to use a strategic planning process to analyze recommendations and other raw data such as assessment results and satisfaction, questionnaires completed by students, parents, and staff. This information is used to identify key result areas for our annual school improvement plan. Our school improvement plan must contain goals that relate to improved academic achievement. The plan is presented and results reported annually to our Board of Education. One area that has been identified for the current school year is to maintain/improve our math performance on the basic standards math test administered statewide at grade eight. The data suggested that in order to improve our scores, a higher percentage of special education students would need to score at or above the minimum passing level. Our special education curriculum group is in the process of reviewing and rewriting our special education math curriculum to insure that this goal becomes a reality.

3. Our middle school utilizes a variety of methods to communicate with parents, students, and the community. Internally we have a daily bulletin where assessment results, student accomplishments, and other information is published. We also have an area in our building that is designated as the “Wall of Recognition”. This area is accessible to the public and achievements by students and successes of our school are proudly displayed. Our school publishes a monthly electronic newsletter that is sent to all staff and families that subscribe. Student performance on standardized tests both at the national and state level and student/school accomplishments appear in this newsletter.

Externally, the Minneapolis Star Tribune annually publishes state assessment scores in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics for all school districts in the state of Minnesota. This same information also appears in our local newspaper the Delano Eagle and also on our school website. Our school district also sends an annual report on curriculum, instruction, and student performance to all school district residents. Results from all of the curriculum areas assessed, along with a narrative that describes student performance in relationship to their peers on state and national assessments is included.

4. If our district is fortunate enough to win the award, we would notify the Minnesota Middle School Association and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals. Our building principal is a member of both associations and has served as president and board director of the Minnesota Middle School Association. Both associations publish regular newsletter that are distributed statewide. The Minnesota Association of Secondary Principals also publishes a statewide directory of schools with exemplary programs so that other schools may contact them for additional information. Our middle school is already listed in the directory and we would notify the publisher to add our Blue Ribbon School status to the other information already listed about our school. The Minneapolis Star Tribune which has the largest circulation in the state would also be notified as would our local newspaper. Regionally, all schools that belong to our special education cooperative would be made aware that we were selected.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum

Each area of our curriculum is on a six-year continuous cycle. In year one, teachers assess and plan. During year two, they write and review. At year three they purchase materials. At years four and five, the staff implements the curriculum and notes areas that need revision, and in year six the research process begins anew. We have a Curriculum Advisory Committee comprised of parents, community members, and staff that meets on a regular basis to review this process and the curriculum areas(s) that are in their “write and review” year.

All of our students in grades five through eight receive daily instruction in the core areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Specialists teach classes in the areas of art, health, technology applications, keyboarding, vocal and instrumental music, physical education, Skills for Adolescents, industrial technology, family and consumer science, and Spanish. All seventh grade students are enrolled in Spanish I, and about one-half of the grade (seventy-five students) are able to take Spanish II without schedule conflicts. Prior to this year, eighth grade students were able to enroll in German I; however, due to budget reductions, this program was eliminated. We are hopeful that with the recent passage of a district excess levy referendum, we will be able to restore this program.

Students in grades seven and eight are also able to take enrichment courses in all of the core classes. The enrichment classes meet for forty-five minutes on an every-other-day basis for one quarter. Some of the classes offered are Creative Writing, Current Events, Playing the Stock Market, Logical Thinking, Civil Rights, and Poetry.

A program that we feel has contributed to the increase in our reading test scores is the Accelerated Reader Program for all students. In addition, students can join an Accelerated Reader Club administered through the Media Center. Throughout the year, students accumulate points by reading and taking (on computer) a test for the books they have read. At the end of the year, a recognition program for club members is held.

The State of Minnesota currently requires that each middle school deliver and assess nine Preparatory Standards in the following areas: Read, Listen, View; Write and Speak; The Arts; Mathematical Applications; Inquiry; Scientific Applications; Peoples and Cultures; Decision Making; Economics and Business. These standards have been embedded into our curriculum over the past six years and assigned to various courses. These standards are taught and assessed at a high level, and are designed to prepare students for the more challenging Minnesota Graduation Standards that they will need to complete in high school.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

2. Reading

Delano Middle School offers many opportunities for students to improve their reading performance. We are very proud of our efforts with all students and our reading test scores reflect this. During the regular school day, we have two paraprofessionals assigned to work with students who need extra support in reading and math. These paraprofessionals work one to one or with small groups of students who need remediation on identified skills. The paraprofessionals assist the classroom teachers by monitoring students during the guided reading process. Another important reading program at Delano Middle School is managed by our media specialist. She reports that our circulation of reading books has increased because of our Accelerated Reading Program. Middle school students enjoy reading a book and taking the ten-point quiz to check for understanding. Data is gathered on our students' reading habits and performance. Student reading progress is monitored by using the STAR reading assessment program. Teachers, students, and parents find this reading data helpful in determining what skills need to be improved. Through the Accelerated Reading Program we can monitor the reading level of books that each student reads. We can check for comprehension and move the student to the next level as reading skills increase. An after school program is offered from 3:00-4:30 P.M. daily for students who need additional help in any course work. We focus our attention on homework but also provide support for the basic skills of reading and mathematics. Students are supervised by a licensed teacher and meet in the media center where they have access to books as well as the computer banks. With the partnership of all of these programs, Delano Middle School has been able to produce strong, capable readers.

3. Other Curriculum

In the area of mathematics Delano Middle School curriculum supports the mission statement “to educate to be life-long learners, possessing the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth, and citizenship necessary to function and flourish in a rapidly changing society.” The mathematics curriculum supports this through units on number sense; space, shape and measurement; data investigations; patterns, relationships and functions; and discrete mathematics. Sci-Math endorsed textbook series form the basis of the curriculum and connect student experiences to real world math applications. In the units students have the opportunity to observe the interaction of mathematics with other school subjects and with everyday society. They use problem solving to see alternate solutions to issues, and they define more than a single solution to many mathematical questions. Such knowledge leads to development of students' creativity. Delano Middle School students are encouraged to keep pace with the rapidly changing society through their use of technology. Through this powerful medium students explore math concepts and develop their mathematical reasoning. As they experience mathematics and technology, they parallel many of their parent's experiences in the work place, building a sense of self-worth. Because of society's expanding use of data, students work with probability and statistics to help them become informed citizens, intelligent workers, and discriminating consumers for their future.

4. Instructional Methods

Delano Middle School teachers use a variety of instructional methods to improve student learning. From goal setting and regular performance monitoring to multiple intelligences, the teachers strive to meet the needs of all learners.

Delano Middle School has become one of the highest performing schools on the state writing test as measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Test given at grade five. Our school also scores consistently among the top five to ten percent of all school districts in Minnesota on the Basic Standards Test. This test assesses students in reading and math and is administered at grade eight. Teacher attention to all learning styles and other effective teaching techniques contribute to our excellent test results. For example, to improve student performance in writing, teachers use the hamburger poster as a visual strategy to help students remember what goes into a good paragraph. The top bun forms the topic sentence that holds the sandwich together. Lettuce, catsup, mustard, and pickles form good supports for the hamburger and represent the support sentence with reasons or evidence. The main idea or meat of the sandwich is the hamburger patty. Students learn that peanut butter is not appropriate for the sandwich

because its flavor does not “go with” the other flavors offered, just as some ideas do not follow certain topic sentences. Such visual posters and images help students remember how to write strong paragraphs and essays.

Delano teachers design lessons based on multiple intelligences and differentiated instruction. Some set up eight stations with a variety of activities used to teach the content. Others offer students choice with project menus that cover many of the intelligence areas. Students can select their favorite ways to study the content. With the assistance of the gifted and talented coordinator, the teachers have developed teaching techniques that offer a variety of levels of work to meet the needs of the emerging learner, the grade level learner, and the advanced learner. Teachers differentiate lessons based on learning style, interest areas, and ability levels. Delano Middle School teachers agree that no child should be left behind and their wealth of teaching strategies supports that.

5. Professional Development

Delano Middle School’s professional development program has played an important role in improving student achievement, especially in the area of writing. When the state first administered the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Test, Delano Middle School fifth graders scored very low in all four categories of writing. We contacted the three schools whose students earned the highest scores in the state. We asked them how they produced such outstanding results. They identified two things: each school had one teacher who had a passion for writing and coached the other grade level teachers, and each school had trained their staff in the Six Traits of Writing. Based on this research, our next staff development plan included hiring one of the teachers with a passion for writing from one of the top schools. She will provide in-service for our fifth through eighth grade teachers once a month over the next three months. We required all teachers to attend because we knew how important it was that all teachers acquire these skills. We hired two Six Traits trainers for two workshop days. The following year we moved to an interdisciplinary model. We formed study groups of six teachers who met regularly to discuss how students were progressing with their writing efforts. On a later workshop day, we asked teachers to attend one of three sessions on the Six Traits, either an introduction, an application, or an advanced class. Since then we have offered “booster shot” sessions on specific writing techniques. Today our writing scores match those top three schools who shared their staff development process with us.

Appendix A

Appendix A – Reading Grade 5

Testing month – March	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
SCHOOL SCORES (percent)				
Level I	3.16	7.09	3.05	9.48
Level IIA	6.96	3.94	11.45	18.97
Level IIB	7.59	10.24	11.45	18.10
Level III	41.14	48.82	40.46	43.10
Level IV	41.14	29.92	33.59	10.34
Number of Students Tested	158	133	135	116
Percent of Students Tested	98	96	97	94
Number of Students Absent/Excluded	4	6	4	7
Percent of Students Absent/Excluded	2	4	3	6
STATE SCORES (percent)				
Level I (<1259)	10.5	11.1	14.5	18.1
Level IIA (1260-1419)	14.8	15.1	18.7	22.8
Level IIB (1420-1499)	10.8	10.9	15.1	14.5
Level III (1500-1709)	38.6	38.8	35.8	33.3
Level IV (1710>)	25.4	24.1	15.9	11.3
STATE MEAN SCORE	1552.4	1545.2	1493.2	1451.4

Appendix B

Appendix B – Mathematics Grade 5

Testing month – March	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
SCHOOL SCORES (percent)				
Level I	1.28	4.72	1.55	6.09
Level IIA	10.26	11.02	15.50	28.70
Level IIB	10.90	10.24	11.63	15.65
Level III	46.79	48.62	42.64	45.22
Level IV	30.77	25.20	28.68	4.35
Number of Students Tested	156	127	129	115
Percent of Total Students Tested	96	95	96	94
Number of Students Absent/Excluded	6	6	6	8
Percent of Students Absent/Excluded	4	5	4	6
STATE SCORES (percent)				
Level I (<1239)	10.2	11.2	13.5	18.4
Level IIA (1240-1419)	14.8	21.5	24.8	30.0
Level IIB (1420-1499)	10.8	16.8	16.1	15.2
Level III (1500-1709)	38.6	37.4	33.3	30.8
Level IV (1710>)	25.4	13.1	12.3	5.6
STATE MEAN SCORE	1552.4	1492.4	1469.8	1416.8

Appendix C

Appendix C – Definitions of Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Achievement Levels

I. Gaps in knowledge and skills – Students scoring in this level have gaps in the knowledge and skills necessary for satisfactory work in the state’s content standards. Poor reading skills may impact math comprehension skills. Students at this level typically need additional instruction to progress beyond finding obvious answers and simple details. They are typically working significantly below grade-level in one or more content areas. They need supplementary instruction in math and/or reading, as early as possible, to have a good chance of passing the Basic Skills tests administered for the first time in 8th grade.

IIA. Partial knowledge and skills – Students scoring in Level IIA have partial knowledge and some of the skills necessary for achieving satisfactory work in the state’s content standards. They are typically working at, or slightly below, grade-level material in one or more content areas. Additional instruction and homework in reading comprehension may be helpful to increase math and /or reading at each grade to increase their chances of passing the Basic Skills test administered for the first time in 8th grade.

IIB. Solid grade level skills – Most students in this level are working successfully on grade-level material and are on track to achieve satisfactory work in the state’s content standards. Students scoring in Level IIB are progressing with their peers in understanding the content material at grade level. With continued steady progress between now and their taking the Basic Skills tests in 8th grade, they would have a good chance of passing these tests the first time.

III. Working above grade level – Students at this level are working above grade level. Many are proficient with challenging subject matter. Students at this level demonstrate solid performance and competence in the knowledge and skills necessary for satisfactory work in the state’s content standards. Students scoring in Level III are working above grade level; many are proficient with challenging subject matter. Students in this level are typically in the top 25% nationally. With continued educational progress, these students have a high probability of passing the 8th grade Basic Skills test the first time.

IV. Superior performance beyond grade level – Students at this level demonstrate superior performance, well beyond what is expected at the grade level. Students scoring in Level IV demonstrate advanced academic performance, knowledge, and skills that exceed the level necessary for satisfactory work in the state’s content standards. Their performance is well above grade-level expectations; they can analyze and interpret complex problems and situations. Students in this level are typically in the top 5%-10% on nationally-administered tests and have a very high probability of passing the 8th grade Basic Skills tests the first time.