

**2003-2004 No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program
Cover Sheet**

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

Official School Name Challenge Center
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 315 W. 27th St.
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Sioux Falls South Dakota 57105-2906
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. (605) 367-4560 Fax (605) 367-6082

Website/URL <http://www.sf.k12.sd.us/elementary/challenge/> E-mail kemperd@sf.k12.sd.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* Dr. Jack Keegan
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Sioux Falls School District 49-5 Tel. (605) 367-7920

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. Sheri Meister
(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 II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 23 Elementary schools
 5 Middle schools
 0 Junior high schools
 4 High schools
 _____ Other (Briefly explain)

32 TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$5,044

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$4,084

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. 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 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			
1				8			
2	11	8	19	9			
3	7	10	17	10			
4	17	11	28	11			
5	17	21	38	12			
6				Other			
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							102

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school: 89% White
1% Black or African American
0% Hispanic or Latino
8% Asian/Pacific Islander
2% American Indian/Alaskan Native
100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 7.9%

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	5
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	3
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	101
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.079
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7.9

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 0%
0 Total Number Limited English Proficient
 Number of languages represented: _____
 Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6%
6 Total Number Students Who Qualify

10. Students receiving special education services: 4%
4 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> </u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u> </u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u> 4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u> </u> Hearing Impairment	<u> </u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> </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> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u> 4</u>	<u> </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u> </u>	<u> 8*</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u> </u>	<u> 1*</u>
Support staff	<u> 3*</u>	<u> 1*</u>
Total number	<u> 8</u>	<u> 10</u>

*Staff shared with the other school housed in the same building.

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 1/25
 13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage.

The teacher turnover rate is based on the four classroom teachers. As a result, the percent of turnover appears to be rather high when it is actually only one teacher in 2002-03 and one in 2000-01. One teacher transferred to another school within the district and the second moved out of state. The district assigns the special resource teachers/specialists yearly.

+ Prior to the 2000-2001 school year the Challenge Center wasn't officially considered a separate school

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Daily student attendance	95.9%	98.5%	93.4%	+	+
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate					
Student drop-off rate					

PART III - SUMMARY

The Challenge Center is a unique school within the Sioux Falls School District. It is located at the Mark Twain Elementary site, which is in the center of the city. It was developed to meet the special needs of high ability students across the district by providing an accelerated/enriched curriculum in a self-contained, full day program. Our mission is to challenge the high ability students we serve to become well-rounded independent learners. We have established a flexible curriculum based on state standards, best practice, the gifted program standards of the National Association of Gifted Children and student interests.

Interested parents may apply to have their child attend the Challenge Center if the student already qualifies for gifted services within their home school. To qualify, a matrix is developed with a minimum standard based on teacher evaluation, standardized achievement scores and a full-scale IQ test. Grade levels two through five are served within four classrooms. Students from across the district, as well as outside the district, attend. The Sioux Falls School District has been committed to this program through years of budget cuts and demonstrates this commitment by continuing to provide transportation for students from within the district to attend.

Classrooms typically have blended grades, which can vary from year to year based on enrollment at each grade level. The real challenge is for the classroom teachers who continuously provide differentiated instruction, to meet the needs of the children. Students are excited about learning, and the staff is continuously amazed at student productivity regardless of the difficulty. Staff works closely with parents to monitor both social and academic progress through meetings and e-mail. Individual plans are developed to help struggling students. Three of our classroom teachers have advanced degrees including one who has her doctorate. All four are state certified in gifted education. We are especially proud that one of our teachers received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Our classroom teachers, special teachers and educational assistant all demonstrate dedication and enjoyment in teaching the children we serve.

Students have special opportunities to participate in competitions such as Math Masters, Quiz Bowl, Knowledge Masters Open, the Geography Bee, Invent America and NASA Student Involvement Program. Basic Spanish language instruction is provided which is unique to our school. Interim provides opportunities such as community service, Destination Imagination, medical science awareness, learning through drama and invention conventions. Opportunities to have “out of classroom” experiences to expand students’ background knowledge are provided. Examples include visits to the U.S. Geological Survey’s EROS Data Center, Star Base (Science and Technology Academies Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration), a wind farm, and the Washington Pavilion of Arts and Science. Other opportunities include attending plays, off campus ecological research and working with one of the local universities in computer technology.

Parent involvement is encouraged. If you were to visit our school, you would see parents working with math groups, leading literature circles, instructing in their area of expertise, and much more. We are fortunate enough to have parents who are able to assist on a weekly basis. Parents are our greatest supporters.

Other important aspects of our curriculum include helping students to develop their social skills, becoming productive partners of learning teams, and accepting their own giftedness while allowing themselves and others to have areas of weakness. Students develop speaking skills through small and large group presentations.

In summary we have established a culture of rigor and inquiry that has helped each student reach their fullest potential. As a result, based on state testing, the Challenge Center ranks number one in the state of South Dakota.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. The 2002-2003 school year was the first year the state of South Dakota established the Dakota STEP (State test of Educational Progress) to meet the requirements of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. This test assesses individual student ability on each of the state content standards in reading and math. Students in grades 3-5 at the elementary level were tested. That same year, as well as in prior years, a state norm-reference test (SAT10 or SAT 9) was required. This test compared student scores to other students taking the same test nationally.

Student scores from the Dakota STEP present a student's level of achievement as below basic, basic, proficient or advanced. The state expectation is that students will perform at the proficient level or higher. The Challenge Center goal, as outlined in our School Improvement Plan, is that every student will perform at the advanced level. On the Dakota STEP, 67% of the Challenge Center students who were tested scored at the advanced level and 33% scored at the proficient level in reading. In math, 83% scored at the advanced level and 17% scored at the proficient level.

Although each of the subgroups did not meet minimum numbers to qualify as a subgroup for NCLB, those student who had been identified as economically disadvantaged or as minorities, each scored at or above the level of proficiency in both reading and math. These scores indicate that these students are achieving at the same level as the total population.

The state also collected data on the SAT 10 test in 2002-2003. The national percentile rank scores for the Challenge Center in reading were 92%, 94% and 96% in grades three, four and five respectfully. Math, scores were 89%, 92% and 98%. In the 2001-2002 school year the SAT 9 test was used. Again using the national percentile rank scores for grades two, four and five, students scored at the 92%, 95% and 92% respectfully in reading and 95%, 95% and 98% in math. National percentile rank scores tell us, for example, that if a student has scores at the 95%, that student is scoring at the same level or higher than 95 out of a 100 students.

Unrelated to NCLB the state also requires a writing assessment in grade five using the Stanford Writing Assessment Program. Out of 29 students in fifth grade during the 2002-03 school year, 10 students scored at the basic level, 4 scored at the proficient level and 15 scored at the advanced level. We continue to emphasize writing in our curriculum to prepare our students for advanced classes in both reading and writing.

The Challenge Center staff, students and parents take great pride in the fact that students continuously perform at high levels of achievement. At the same time, there are continuous efforts to exceed expectations for every student.

2. We are fortunate in the Sioux Falls School District to have a department of technology and assessment that provides a variety of data to assist us in improving instruction for every student. Performance levels are provided on individual classrooms, grade levels and individual students on each of the state standards in both reading and math. Although students are continuously assessed to determine instructional needs and avoid gaps in learning, the yearly assessments allow us to continuously monitor our curriculum to meet the needs of every student. This is particularly important due to the fact that each year we have approximately 35 students across the grade levels who are new to the school. With an average of 102 students each year, this accounts for 34% of our student population.

Our district assessment department proves both longevity data and a regression analysis. The longevity data details student progress in such a way that we can determine if students show greater gains the longer they are in the Challenge Center. Nationally, poverty is a significant predictor of lower student achievement. The regression analysis data compares a predicted score based on the percentage of free and reduced lunches to actual scores. This information provides additional way to assess our program's success.

3. Student success is celebrated in a variety of formats. Students develop portfolios yearly to demonstrate their learning. On an individual basis, a letter of explanation is sent out by the district with each assessment to explain scores to parents and students. Student report cards indicate if a student is

performing below basic, basic or proficient in both reading and math. Teachers and administration are available to explain test scores and performance levels at conferences and upon request. Test information is provided to the school site council and used to develop our school's School Improvement Plan. The school district publishes yearly a Data Profile Directory on every school in the district. This report is presented to the school board and available at each school for the public access. Scores are publicized in the local newspaper for the community. And finally, demographics and testing information is provided on the school's web site.

4. The Challenge Center staff and the district director of gifted education would be more than willing to answer any questions educators would have about our school. Our teachers are very comfortable with visitors to our school and would welcome individuals or teams from other schools. All new families are encouraged to visit the school and allow students to spend half a day in a classroom prior to their decision on enrollment.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. The core of the curriculum focuses on meeting state content standards while not limiting student learning to specific grade level standards. Teachers differentiate the curriculum in content, process and products.

To provide content differentiation teachers:

- Pre-test students to determine correct level of subject difficulty.
- Compact curriculum to eliminate concepts previously mastered.
- Relate content to broad-based issues, themes and /or problems.
- Integrate content into other curriculum areas.
- Provide for varied learning styles.
- Allow for in-depth study of given topics.

To provide for process differentiation, teachers:

- Develop students' independent or self-directed study skills.
- Develop students' complex, abstract, and/or higher level thinking skills.
- Focus on open-ended questions and tasks.
- Integrate basic skills into basic themes.

To provide product differentiation, teachers design assignments that ask students to:

- Analyze existing ideas and produce new ideas
- Use new techniques, materials and forms.
- Develop self-understanding.
- Show evidence based upon criteria of creating products that match expectations.
- Experience and choose format options, including oral, visual, written and kinesthetic presentations.

Differentiated instruction is woven into each curriculum area. The reading curriculum is based on Balanced Literacy with emphasis on comprehension, word study, and writing. Teachers are knowledgeable in research based "best practice" and skilled in applying their knowledge to meet the needs of their students. Yearly themes drive literature choices for students when choosing books to share, discuss and question individually, during instruction and in lit groups. Writing instruction is based on the "Six Traits of Writing". Writing is integrated into every subject area.

Math instruction is based on ability grouping across the grades. Number sense and problem solving are at the core of the math curriculum. Although students are allowed to accelerate, enrichment allows students to develop a broad base of understanding.

Students are given opportunities to investigate science through the FOSS (Full Option Science Systems). This program stresses the scientific process of inquiry, developing a hypothesis and investigation to evaluate the hypothesis. Informational texts are incorporated to develop skills required to read nonfiction, investigate areas of interest and present individual research.

Social studies instruction relies on interactive lessons, which allow students to analyze, apply and demonstrate their learning. A basic social studies text, nonfiction literature and research are also used to allow for differentiated instruction.

Spanish is taught at each grade level. The four basic skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in the Spanish language are introduced. Some emphasis is placed on pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition and basic grammatical concepts to allow the students to function in communicative situations.

Students have art, music and PE twice a week. Art instruction is often tied to instruction in the classroom. As with other areas of the curriculum, art and music is accelerated and enriched. Students may start orchestra in fourth grade and band in fifth. Many students are skilled musicians prior to their initial instruction in school and often take both band and orchestra at the Challenge Center.

2. Students entering the Challenge Center have strong comprehension, decoding and vocabulary skills. The challenge for teachers is to find age appropriate books at learners' reading levels. Students have a passion for reading that permeates all curriculum areas. Instruction in reading is based on the Balanced Literacy approach, which is research based, "best practice". Each literature genre is studied and applied to student writings. Through the assessment process teachers determine student weaknesses and focus instruction on those skills. Once teachers are assured that basics at each grade level are mastered, instruction progresses to higher levels as outlined on the district's scope and sequence. The district scope and sequence is detailed and easily transitions to middle school reading instruction, which is aligned to research-based "best practice" and South Dakota's content standards.

This approach to reading allows for differentiation, flexibility, acceleration and enrichment of the curriculum, which is the cornerstone of our instructional mission.

3. Becoming proficient in both reading and writing are key to students' success in future academic pursuits. The Challenge Center curriculum emphasizes strong writing skills. Instruction is based on the Six Traits of Writing (conventions, ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency). A writing rubric based on each of these traits is used for teacher and district evaluation of student writing and students' self-evaluation. Instructional process follows the writer's workshop model as outlined in Donald Graves' book, *The Writer's Workshop*. Teachers model good writing and use a variety of books to demonstrate writer's craft. Student writing is applied in all curricular areas.

4. For individual students who are struggling based on daily assessment as well as formal assessments parents, students and teacher meet to outline a specific plan that best meets the individual needs of the student. Classroom teachers follow the instructional strategies as outlined in the book, *Classroom Instruction that Works* by Robert Marzano. These instructional strategies are research based and demonstrate the most significant gains in student achievement.

The strategies emphasized include:

- Identifying similarities and differences
- Summarizing and note taking
- Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
- Homework and practice
- Nonlinguistic representation
- Cooperative learning
- Setting objectives and providing feedback
- Generating and testing hypotheses

5. Staff development allows our program to be most current in research based “best practices”. Our district provides extensive staff development both for building teachers and building “lit leaders”. Lit leaders have had additional opportunities to hear speakers on language arts and have extensive collaborative discussions. They then presented the information for staff at building in-services. The district focus has been on Balanced Reading and additional training in writing instruction and planning. We have been fortunate to hear such well-known speakers as Susan Finney, Becky Koesel, Isoke Nia and Debra Miller author of Reading for Meaning. Teachers are given a wide variety of professional books. At the building level we have book discussions and presentations on such books as Mosaic of Thought by Ellin Keene and Susan Zimmermann, the Differentiated Classroom by Carol Tomlinson, and Classroom Instruction that Works by Marzano. The district also provides yearly opportunities for administrators to attend conferences. This demonstrates our district’s commitment in staying abreast of current research in instruction, curriculum and assessment.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS.

Grades 3-5 Test Dakota STEP
 Edition/publication year 2003 Publisher Harcourt
 Number of students in the grades in which the test was administered 93
 Number of students who took the test 90
 What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed? None
 Number excluded 0 Percent excluded 0

2002-03 was the first year the state of South Dakota developed testing under NCLB.

	2002-2003	2002-2003
	Reading	Math
Testing month	March	March
SCHOOL SCORES		
% At or Above Basic	100%	100%
% At or Above Proficient	100%	100%
% At Advanced	67%	84%
Number of students tested	93	93
Percent of total students tested	95.80%	95.80%
Number of students excluded	0	0
Percent of students excluded	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES		
	Did not meet minimum population size	
STATE SCORES		
% At or Above Basic	97%	95%
% At or Above Proficient	71%	59%
% At Advanced	20%	10%

The state uses scaled scores to determine below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. For the purposes of this report only basic, proficient and advanced have been presented. A standard scaled score is derived from the number correct across all levels of a given subtest. South Dakota determined that the scores necessary to place a student's performance in category were:

3 rd	Reading	Basic 534-604	Proficient 605-661	Advanced 662 or above
	Math	Basic 532-589	Proficient 590-643	Advanced 644 or above
4 th	Reading	Basic 534-594	Proficient 595-647	Advanced 648 or above
	Math	Basic 546-613	Proficient 614-665	Advanced 666 or above
5 th	Reading	Basic 603-654	Proficient 655-712	Advanced 713 or above
	Math	Basic 608-645	Proficient 646-698	Advanced 699 or above

The form details percentages of success for all grade levels in both reading and math.

ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Grade 4

Test Stanford Achievement Math

Edition 9th and 10th as indicated in table

Publisher Harcourt

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed? None

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs Scaled scores Percentiles

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Test Administered	SAT 10	SAT 9	SAT 9		
Testing month	March	March	March		
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score	92	95	95		
Number of students tested	31	31	32		
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	97%		
Number of students excluded	0	0	0		
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES	Did not meet minimum population size				

ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Grade 4

Test Stanford Achievement Reading

Edition 9th and 10th as indicated in table

Publisher Harcourt

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed? None

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs Scaled scores Percentiles

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Test Administered	SAT 10	SAT 9	SAT 9		
Testing month	March	March	March		
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score	94	95	95		
Number of students tested	31	31	32		
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	97%		
Number of students excluded	0	0	0		
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES	Did not meet minimum population size				

ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Grade 5

Test Stanford Achievement Math

Edition 9th and 10th as indicated in table

Publisher Harcourt

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed? None

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs Scaled scores Percentiles

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Test Administered	SAT 10	SAT 9	SAT 9		
Testing month	March	March	March		
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score	98	98	99		
Number of students tested	30	32	28		
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	90%		
Number of students excluded	0	0	0		
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES	Did not meet minimum population size				

ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Grade 5 Test Stanford Achievement Reading

Edition 9th and 10th as indicated in table Publisher Harcourt

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed? None

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs Scaled scores Percentiles X

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Test Administered	SAT 10	SAT 9	SAT 9		
Testing month	March	March	March		
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score	96	92	92		
Number of students tested	30	32	28		
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	90%		
Number of students excluded	0	0	0		
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES	Did not meet minimum population size				

