

Revised 3/23/05

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

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet

Type of School: Elementary Middle High K-12

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

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

School Mailing Address 105 Highland Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Tonawanda New York 14150-3998
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Erie School Code Number* 14-25-00-01-004

Telephone (716) 694-6801 Fax (716) 695-5556

Website/URL tona.wnyric.org E-mail rtodd@tona.wnyric.org

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

District Name Tonawanda City Schools Tel. (716) 694-7784

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 Gary Waterhouse
(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 _____

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

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 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: _____
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: _____

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. 1 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 9 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	20	15	35	8			
1	18	15	33	9			
2	18	28	46	10			
3	11	19	30	11			
4	11	18	30	12			
5	18	21	39	Other			
6							
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							213

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

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>95</u> | % White |
| <u>1</u> | % Black or African American |
| <u>1</u> | % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>3</u> | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <u>0</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: 10 %

(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.	11
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	10
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	21
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	213
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	0.1
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %
 Total number students who qualify: 84

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: _____%
 _____ Total Number of Students Served

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| _____ Autism | _____ Orthopedic Impairment |
| _____ Deafness | _____ Other Health Impaired |
| _____ Deaf-Blindness | _____ Specific Learning Disability |
| _____ Emotional Disturbance | _____ 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

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	_____1_____	_____
Classroom teachers	_____12_____	_____3_____
Special resource teachers/specialists	_____6_____	_____2_____
Paraprofessionals	_____1_____	_____
Support staff	_____5_____	_____
Total number	_____25_____	_____5_____

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: ___18___

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	89%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Teacher turnover rate	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	N/A%	%	%	%	%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	N/A%	%	%	%	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Highland School is an elementary school (K-5) within the City of Tonawanda School District. With a staff of 25 and a student population of 213, their clear, definitive and consistent commitment to learning is evident in the classroom, the building, and the community. The staff of Highland School believes all students can learn and achieve mastery of basic academic skills. Their purpose is to educate all students to the highest possible level of academic skills while nurturing positive self-esteem and personal growth. They accept the responsibility to assist all students to reach their maximum educational potential and will do all in their power to see it is reached. The staff of this school is passionate about children and learning.

Highland School is a cohesive unit of teachers, support staff, parents and administration working together for the best possible education. The staff is chronologically young, energetic and willing to work toward attaining and maintaining the best possible educational institution in the area. Teachers are present at before school, after school and at weekend events. The staff has a commitment to the education of the whole child which is evident in the Extended Day Programs, PTA initiatives, School Clubs, Safety Patrol, School Store, School Plays, Intramurals, Rocketeers, Cookie Clubs, Storytellers, Walkers Club, Homework Club, Drama Club, Service Projects and Community Partnerships.

Professionally, the teachers are masters of curriculum design, instructional practices, and assessment policies and formats. Through “Standards Time”, daily common planning time, interdisciplinary projects and grade level initiatives, student learning is enhanced.

Shared Decision Making processes guide the building committees and ownership belongs to everyone. The School Planning Team holds responsibility for the building initiatives and direction. The Student Support Team is a resource to all staff, by all staff to address specific student academic, social and emotional challenges. Faculty meetings are instructionally grounded and used as “think tanks” with a facilitator. Every member of the teaching staff represents Highland on a district level committee. These committees include, but are not limited to, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Technology, Staff Development, Grade Level, English Language Arts, Physical Education, Art, Library Media, Public Relations, Budget, Safety and Report Cards.

Highland School has a very active Parent Teacher Organization with a Board of Directors. The membership is elected and includes a teacher representative and the building administrator. The recent survey results addressed two goals: What can parents/guardians do for Highland? What can Highland do for parents/guardians? Databases of information have been generated for future use.

The support personnel, AIS teacher, Math teacher and Special Education teacher, work in very independent and successfully diverse ways to address student needs in the building. Push-in, pull-out, and a combination of these is used based on the needs of the student(s). In addition to meeting the needs of his/her targeted students, all of these teachers team-teach, model lessons, and act as consultants to the classroom teachers.

No one element of Highland School makes it worthy of being a Blue Ribbon School, the cumulative and collective efforts of everyone qualifies Highland to be considered as a Blue Ribbon School.

Critical Questions to Enable Success:

Do curriculum, instruction and assessment remain the focus of academic learning?

Do your teachers and staff have careers or jobs?

Have time, resources **and** personnel been allocated for each priority?

Are you inoculating in staff development or scaffolding support over time?

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. The meaning of the school's assessment results in reading and math....

Background:

In January of 2000, 72% of the students, at the Highland School, who took the NYS English Language Arts Assessments, passed. In the same year, 81% of the Highland School students, who took the New York State Math Assessments, passed. Unsatisfied with these results, the staff made a commitment to increasing student learning and performance.

Through internal and external professional development opportunities, the classroom teachers, special educators, and building staff participated in workshops, seminars, and classes focusing on ways to increase student learning. These opportunities focused on reading, writing and math. Critical thinking was also focused upon.

Through the work of building administrators and curriculum specialists and selected representation from each grade level, major areas of the written curriculum were scrutinized, aligned and revised. New forms of assessment were developed and implemented to help teachers monitor the individual student progress and the progress of the classroom in attaining increased learning and accountability. Databases were created and analyzed for patterns, strengths and gap analysis was completed.

2. How the school uses assessment data....

Organization:

Highland School is organized in time, resources and personnel to promote success. For at-risk learners, the Highland Student Support Team has been available as a resource for teachers and families. When a teacher has tried everything he/she knows to teach a child, and that child remains a challenge, this team works with the teacher to offer new ideas and perspectives. The success of the child remains the goal and purpose of the team and the teacher. The Parent Teacher Association actively sought for ways to support the teachers, students and community in learning.

New Program Adoption:

After careful and thorough review of research, current programs, gap analysis procedures and curriculum design, the Tonawanda City School District adopted a new math program. The new program was philosophically different from past practice, physically presented differently than past practice and assessment differently from past practice. Again, time, resources and personnel were dedicated to the implementation of this new teaching and learning.

Test Results over Time:

Highland School's New York State assessment results have become consistently higher each of the last 5 years in reading and math. On the most recent NYS Math tests, administered in spring of 2004, 100% of the students have scored at or above the New York State Math standard. On the most recent NYS Reading tests, administered in the spring of 2004, 90% of the students have scored at or above the New

York State standard. Given a high number of economically disadvantaged children and families, these results are remarkable.

Formal and Informal Measures:

The district has made a commitment to developing and using benchmark progress checks, formal and informal measures of testing in reading and writing, and databases of assessment scores to monitor student performance. Teachers are thorough in teaching test preparation strategies, using error analysis reports, recognizing strengths and secure skills of the students, and planning for instruction. If educators have the time, skill and a tool to successfully use assessment data, then instruction becomes better paced, and more diversified and focused. Teachers also have clearer criteria for evaluating and considering materials for their classrooms.

How the school communicates results...

3. Communication of Results:

Highland School has communicated student performance in a variety of ways to parents, students and the community. *Parent conferences* have been conducted a minimum of twice a year. Parents have the opportunity of coming to evening conferences at Highland. Through a monthly *building newsletter*, student performance and asset building initiatives have been realized. Through weekly classroom newsletters, parents gain information about curriculum focus' and specific ways to support their child's learning at home. Through the *district website*, information regarding the school report card, current initiatives and student performance are promoted. The building principal has been hosting "*Coffee with the Principal*" every month. This is an opportunity for parents to meet with the principal to discuss district and building expectations and current projects. *Mini-seminars* have been held for parents focusing on "How to Help with Homework" and "How and Why to Read with your Child". For high-risk learners, *weekly conferences* have been held with the parent(s). *Daily home/school journals* have been shared between the teacher and the parent. Students and teachers have created *self-evaluation techniques and peer evaluation techniques* in a written rubric approach. *Weekly telephone calls*, regular emails, before/after school meetings enable parents and teachers to communicate more effectively. Some teachers have given parents their home telephone numbers to promote communication.

Professional's Commitment:

Teachers and staff of Highland School are active members of grade level committees, building level committees, district curriculum and instruction initiatives/programs and working committees. As members and officers of multiple levels of the educational structure of the district they share and continuously learn from each other as individuals and collectively.

Assessment Perspectives:

The formal test results are used as markers of progress to the New York State Standards and to determine patterns of strengths and needs of groups of learners. The informal tests results are used to address the needs of individual learners and classroom performance. Observation of a student's learning is used to determine learning style, current processing, and a student's Zone of Proximal and Actual Development. Work samples are reflective of the student's learning and the teacher's teaching.

4. Should Highland School win this award, sharing of successes would include:

Notification of this prestigious award would include but not be limited to: the school newsletter (Highlander), district publication,(Tonawanda City School District), local paper (Tonawanda News), local newspaper (Buffalo News), BOCES 1 and BOCES 2 Bi-monthly publications, Teacher Center newsletters, District Website, specific organizations(Phi Delta Kappa, Niagara Frontier Reading Council, etc.) Blue Ribbon School Award Brochure could be added Highland Visitor's Packet, placed local real

estate offices, and Tonawanda City School District's Central Office . The building principal and several staff members could notify/share information with different audiences in the general field of education because they serve on committees outside the district.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All notifications/sharing information of this potential award would be for the primary purpose of sharing successful practices and ideas, as well as an invitation to visit/collaborate with other schools, institutions and agencies for the improvement of education and learning.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. The school's curriculum is grounded in current research-based instructional practices. The curriculum review process within the school district has been designed, implemented and continues to be regularly monitored/adjusted. The core of the English Language Arts curriculum is grounded in the research of Pinnell/Fountas, Clay, and accredited linguists promoting Literacy Instruction and Strategic Teaching. Literacy includes six strands: Independent Reading, Guided Reading, Literature Circles, Independent Writing, Guided Writing and Investigations. The core of the Mathematics instruction is grounded in a developmental approach (with the research findings of Vygotsky) and Higher Level Thinking Strategies. The students are held to high standards in reading, writing, listening and speaking through multiple genre study and experiences inclusive teaching and learning classrooms. The students are held to high standards in mathematics through diverse teaching materials and strategies of the Everyday Math program. When a school and district has validated, proven assessment tools, current and well written curriculum and teachers with a wealth of teaching "tools" to observe student learning, select meaningful materials, teach strategically success follow.

2. As a K-5 elementary school, the reading program uses the strategic teaching techniques of the teachers, connected and meaningful texts and reading materials, and sound, regular and review of formal and informal assessments. Through Guided Reading experiences in the classroom, the students are learning to read. Through Literature Circles, the students are reading to learn. The connections between reading and writing, between oral language and written language enable successful teaching and learning. Curriculum Statements:

3. English Language Arts K-5: Through a Balanced Literacy Approach (defined in the 6 strands), students are engaged in authentic reading and writing activities using multiple genre and levels of comprehension. Lesson design and assessments align with the New York State Standards.

Mathematics K-5: Through the use of technology and a specific program (Every Day Math), students are assessed in skills and concepts at regular intervals. Math instruction is aligned with the New York State Standards.

Science K-5: Through the use of Science kits and supplementary materials, speakers, field trips and research, 100% of the students at Highland scored at or above the New York State Standard on the Science Assessments.

Social Studies K-5: The district is currently working with the Social Studies curriculum within the curriculum review process of the district.

Art Education K-5: The students experience a thorough and creative art education program through classroom experiences. The Art teacher has designed and implemented Arts in Education Projects with community organizations and local artists. Collaboration with classroom teacher's initiatives, building projects and student teachers have been on-going initiatives.

4. There are a plethora of instructional methods in the teacher's repertoires. Teachers use whole group, flexible group and individual teaching models. Cooperative Learning, contract learning and individually designed home/school partnership contracts promote student learning. Teaching, using higher level thinking skills and questioning techniques, helps students to be successful. Inclusion of Special Education students, and their teachers, has promoted diversified instruction based on student population. Current lesson design models have enabled teachers to deliver instruction differently and more successfully. Thematic teaching, strategy focused teaching, and reflective teaching practices have improved student learning. Reciprocal teaching techniques, spiral teaching approaches, and grade level alignments have been instrumental in helping students to be successful.

5. The professional development program is designed in an integrated approach. The district has a complex structure of professional development. Each teacher and/or staff member of Highland School is a member of assigned building (and district) committee(s). The teacher is responsible for representing the staff of Highland in his/her work and views inside and outside of the building. There are long term and short term committees across the district. Each committee is charged with a task, resources, anticipated time. Standardized and formal Action Plans are consistently used across the district and building levels. Through the electronic use of PDP Timekeeper, the professional development participation of every teacher is documented and verified through the office of the Assistant Superintendent.

Highland School's professional development plan is embedded in the Tonawanda City School District's professional development plan. The District is committed to Balanced Literacy. Highland teachers continue to participate in developing the 6 strands within Balanced Literacy. A Professional Book Study was conducted with the Fountas/Pinnell readings. The district adopted the Every Day Math program K-6. Professional development opportunities at the district level, building level, grade level, and defined through surveys was provided.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject English Language Arts

Grade 4

Test New York State English Language Arts Assessment

Publisher CTB/McGraw Hill

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	February	February	January	January	January
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 1 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 or above	100%	100%	99%	98%	99%
Level 3 or above	90%	79%	72%	75%	72%
Level 4	21%	28%	17%	18%	13%
Number of students tested	29	39	78	97	112
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Special Education					
Level 1 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 3 or above	100%	100%	75%	40%	50%
Level 4	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Number of students tested	2	1	4	5	6
2. Low Income					
Level 1 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 or above	100%	100%	95%	100%	97%
Level 3 or above	87%	77%	67%	82%	69%
Level 4	20%	23%	10%	23%	0%
Number of students tested	15	13	21	22	32
STATE SCORES					
Level 1 or above	Data available late 2005	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 or above		94%	92%	90%	90%
Level 3 or above		64%	61%	60%	59%
Level 4		22%	21%	17%	16%

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject Mathematics

Grade 4

Test New York State Mathematics Assessment

Publisher CTB/McGraw Hill

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 1 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 3 or above	100%	98%	86%	95%	81%
Level 4	33%	33%	33%	32%	18%
Number of students tested	30	40	78	91	110
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Special Education					
Level 1 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 3 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	67%
Level 4	50%	100%	0%	20%	50%
Number of students tested	2	1	4	5	6
2. Low Income					
Level 1 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 or above	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 3 or above	100%	100%	90%	95%	84%
Level 4	44%	21%	24%	27%	13%
Number of students tested	16	14	21	22	31
STATE SCORES					
Level 1 or above	Data available late 2005	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 or above		95%	93%	91%	91%
Level 3 or above		79%	68%	69%	65%
Level 4		31%	23%	26%	19%