

2006-2007 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet

Type of School: [X] Elementary [] Middle [] High [] K-12 [X] Charter

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

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

School Mailing Address 5801 W. Greenbriar Dr.
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Glendale AZ 85308 -3847
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Maricopa State School Code Number* 07-87-72-001

Telephone (602) 938-5411 Fax (602) 938-5393

Web site/URL www.challengecharterschool.net E-mail gmiller@challengecharterschool.net

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 CEO* Mr. Gregory A. Miller
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Challenge School, Inc: a Non-profit 501(C)3 organization Tel. (602) 938-5411

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.

(CEO's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Pamela A. Miller
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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.

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

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 for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not 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 2006-2007 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 2001 and has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. 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 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

1. Number of schools in the district: __1__ Elementary schools
 ____ Middle schools
 ____ Junior high schools
 ____ High schools
 ____ Other
 __1__ TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: __\$6,367.00__
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: __\$8,500.00__

SCHOOL

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. __11__ 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 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	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	N/A	N/A	N/A
K	47	55	102	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	47	61	108	9	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	59	49	108	10	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	45	54	99	11	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	38	41	79	12	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	41	31	72	Other	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	29	24	53				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							621

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>70</u> | % White |
| <u>6</u> | % Black or African American |
| <u>15</u> | % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>8</u> | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <u>1</u> | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| 100% | Total |

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 8 %

(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	38
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	48
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	621
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	.077
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 3 %
16 Total Number Limited English Proficient
Number of languages represented: 7
Specify languages: Arabic, Mandarin, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, & Other

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 30.4* %
Total number students who qualify: 188*

*Challenge Charter School participates in the free/reduced meals program and these numbers are based on student eligibility and participation in the program for the 2005-2006 school year in its entirety. Eligibility and students' participation in the free/reduced program fluctuates throughout the year. Therefore, our low-income student population is most accurately represented by the cumulative numbers of the most recent, complete school year.

10. Students receiving special education services: $\frac{7}{46} \times 100 = 15.2\%$
 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

___ Autism	___ 3 ___ Orthopedic Impairment
___ Deafness	___ Other Health Impaired
___ Deaf-Blindness	___ 9 ___ Specific Learning Disability
___ 1 ___ Emotional Disturbance	___ 38 ___ Speech or Language Impairment
___ Hearing Impairment	___ Traumatic Brain Injury
___ Mental Retardation	___ Visual Impairment Including Blindness
___ Multiple Disabilities	

*The total number served (46) is less than the number of conditions given (51). This is because some of the students served have more than one condition. All of these students receive all of the needed special education services to accommodate all stated conditions.

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)	___ 3 ___	___ 0 ___
Classroom teachers	___ 27 ___	___ 1 ___
Special resource teachers/specialists	___ 7 ___	___ 1 ___
Paraprofessionals	___ 2 ___	___ 1 ___
Support staff	___ 11 ___	___ 3 ___
Total number	___ 50 ___	___ 6 ___

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 23 : 1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Also explain a high teacher turnover rate.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	97%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	98%	97%	96%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	15*%	7%	10%	11%	5%

* Merit pay and contract renewals are based on accountability. Teachers are evaluated on performance each year as defined in two areas: 1.) Class-wide student academic performance that ensures no student is left behind, & 2.) Participation as a positive team member and school support. Many tools and resources are provided by Challenge to help any willing teacher reach these goals such as clear expectations, resources, mentoring and abundant on/off-site development opportunities. Some of the evaluations used to determine those teachers in need of intervention include the results of pre/post assessments for their class, classroom observations, and their own request for such assistance. Teachers who remain unresponsive to the resources provided and continue to lack student performance accountability are not asked back. There is also the normal movement of employees, i.e.: Motherhood, left state, went back to school, or took another job.

PART III – SUMMARY

Challenge Charter School (CCS) was founded in 1996 by Mr. Greg Miller and his wife, Mrs. Pam Miller, as the 1st official Core Knowledge School in Arizona. Challenge currently serves over 600 students, Kindergarten thru 6th grade, and is an *Excelling* School as defined by the Arizona Department of Education's AZ Learns Academic Profile. The school is honored to have been nominated for the *No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program*. Such outstanding student accomplishments have been facilitated under strong and consistent leadership willing to implement the School's core founding principles, philosophies, and policies each day based on a foundation of accountability as seen through student accomplishment and parent satisfaction. First and foremost, every member of the Challenge Team shares an enthusiasm, dedication, and visionary mission to put our kids first!

The school's goal is to provide the best possible education for all students in our care. This is reflected in their self-confidence, socialization abilities, citizenship and academic accomplishments. Our approach to these goals is through a hands-on strong education in the basics, well-rounded enrichments, and challenging applications of content-rich learning including a science and technology oriented academic core curriculum. The environment is structured to optimize each student's opportunities so that all students will acquire a first-class education to prepare them for success in the lifelong learning process.

Challenge follows our overall mission by pursuing several specific goals including: exciting students about learning so that they not only want to be at school but want to fully participate in their education; challenging each student to achieve his/her true potential; removing health-related obstacles which prevent children from learning (Challenge is a chemical free, environmentally friendly campus); providing a learning environment structure that strengthens each student's life with a positive role model: the teacher; a teacher selection and professional development process that provides for the highest quality of teachers; integration with parents and families, the business community, and the rest of the community; preparing students with life skills and work capabilities (including team working skills); serving as an information center for other educational environments; and reducing corrective discipline by building stronger teacher/student relationships and emphasizing self-control and self-discipline.

Challenge's relationship with parents is vital to student success. Parents are involved at every level serving on the School Advisory Council, volunteering in classrooms, eating lunch with their students on campus, attending Family Night events, or chaperoning one of 7-8 field trips attended by each class yearly. Parents have been involved in reviewing and drafting school policy, such as the uniform policy that was enacted by parents based on parent request and vote. Excellent communication is maintained with an interactive and up-to-date school webpage as well as daily, weekly, and monthly communication sent home on student performance and school happenings. Teacher's have contract time at the start/end of each day devoted to parent interaction.

Administration has an open-door policy for both staff and parents and the school's leadership meets with parents monthly at our School Advisory Council/Parent Group meeting. Prior to enrollment, as a school of choice, Challenge offers interested parents the opportunity to meet the Principal and Founder, tour the facilities, and receive information on our mission, environment, and curriculum. They are encouraged to review all school policies and provided individual time to answer all questions. Upon enrollment, the parent-school compact is signed and establishes the collaborative relationship between home and school.

Moral values held in high esteem help provide for outstanding citizenship, experienced leaders, and a structured learning environment. Our curriculum includes moral values that have been recognized as essential by all cultures, independent of age or location. The school emphasizes the role of self-discipline, honesty, integrity, faith, work ethic, and other widely accepted moral values defined by our society as essential to the survival of our culture, thereby creating a more secure and positive civic responsibly in our students.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results: Arizona uses a “dual” accountability system statewide for all public schools applying both NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements and a longitudinal examination of student performance, called AZ LEARNS based on each school’s Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) results, Measure of Academic Performance (MAP), Graduation/Dropout rates, and AYP. AZ LEARNS focuses on performance growth across all student groups for more than one year and schools are given a label annually in one of five categories: *Underperforming*, *Performing*, *Performing Plus*, *Highly Performing*, and *Excelling*. A school meets the standard with a label of *Performing* or higher. Challenge Charter School is in the top 10% of all elementary schools in Arizona based on reaching the highest achievement level possible: **Excelling**. The state data and the school report card are available at the Arizona Department of Education’s web-site: www.ade.state.az.us .

The Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) is our State’s Mastery assessment. This annual assessment is given in mid-April each year, along with a “norm-referenced” assessment tool. Challenge Charter School students have a mastery level that is between 30% and 65% above the State average in all grades and subject areas evaluated by AIMS. On the norm-referenced testing our students are all in the top third (66 percentile and above) of those taking the exams as compared to the national norm of 50%.

The assessment process here at Challenge Charter School is an integrated program of daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual assessments of several different types to ensure correct student placement; instruction; and growth. This program is used for every student and grade level starting the first day of school. With basically the same population and demographics, we have seen this approach raise student and school performance on the “norm-reference tests” by over 72% in Reading; 200% in Math; and 130% in Language Arts, since the end of our first year in 1997, and have eliminated the GAP in subgroup results.

The major tools used include:

- Northwestern Evaluation Association’s assessment tool (NWEA) that is aligned to Arizona’s standards
- DIBBLE tests are used at least three times a year, but for struggling students they are used much more frequently to assess for major mile stones in reading fluency and comprehension
- We have believed in pre & post testing since our inception and not with just the state mandated 2 thru 6 grades levels. We have been assessing our Kindergartners and 1st graders with the state norm-reference assessment tool, whether it was the SAT-9 or the current TerraNova exam, both in the beginning of the year & at the end of the year.

We now use the NWEA assessment as our 1st of the year assessment for all grades. Since 2000 we have also assessed our students with the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) as all public schools are required to do.

In addition to the above our teachers also use unit and progress testing and evaluations of major project work, presentations, and chapter testing. We utilize a portfolio assessment of student work and progress both through the year and from year to year.

2. Using Assessment Results: Challenge has an extensive assessment system allowing the availability of much data. Faculty is provided in-service training each year and mentoring on how to review and apply assessment results to improve classroom effectiveness and ensure that none of their students are left behind or left unchallenged due to advanced needs.

At the end of each year, the current grade team reviews all portfolio material, including both student work and all assessment results, to make recommendations to the following year’s grade teachers. This

commitment and expectation of constant re-evaluation of student data also led school leadership to implement a school-wide schedule that allows each grade level team a planning day together each 6 days. The grade teams use this time for many different tasks, but the primary one is to use the data of individual student performance/indicated areas of standard's weakness, to define right down to strand & performance objectives in their lesson planning for the next week. This constant review of student achievement provides for the most flexible lesson planning to ensure students get every opportunity to succeed. We have an aggressive reading program from Kindergarten thru second grade, based on assessment results, and formulated into six week, small group sessions.

Students at every grade level are identified for interventions and to work in small groups or individually with highly qualified instructional assistants, the classroom teacher, or special services staff. These groups are separate from and in addition to the high quality traditional special services being provided to those students who qualify. Students are identified for these intervention programs based on assessment results and teacher observation. These resources are focused on reading, comprehension, math, and even social skills.

All of these tools provide us with an evaluation of current year and year to year progress of each of our students and also the classroom teacher's effectiveness. The results over the last 11 years have been extraordinary.

3. Communicating Assessment Results: Challenge Charter School has always made our students, their families, and our community aware of our current school performance and what those results mean in a larger context. The way this has been done includes:

- School newsletters and *Assessment Notification Flyers* to all homes upon receipt of State Mandated assessment results
- Parent meetings held monthly during the school year.
- New parent information meetings held each year.
- Posted on our website
- Posted on our office bulletin board.
- In almost all of the informational material provided to both existing and potential new families about the school.
- Challenge has several community partners. One of which is the local McDonalds. They post our monthly newsletter on the dinning room bulletin board each month, along with any special announcements that are sent out.

Individual student results are provided and discussed during Parent/Teacher conferences. In addition to the two required for each school year, both the Teacher &/or Parent can request a conference at any time. Also, yearly state assessment results are mailed to each student's parents upon receipt.

A priority in all communication of our assessment results is that they are in a format that can be easily understood by all and gives a measure in relationship to State and national norms. For example, below is a sample of the way we share the results with our community providing our own results, the overall State Averages (State) & the statewide charter school averages (CS):

AIMS RESULTS – SPRING 2006 – THIRD GRADE

<u>3rd Grade</u>	<u>CCS</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>CS</u>
Writing	86%	52%	55%
Reading	91%	67%	72%
Math	94%	72%	74%

4. Sharing Success: Challenge is an Official Core Knowledge School. As such, we share our approach and successes in several different ways. Our teachers, in the last seven years, have applied for and been selected over 40 times to make lesson presentations to other educators at the annual conference of the Core Knowledge Foundation. When the conference was held in Phoenix in 2003, our school was a visitation site for the 2500 teachers that attended the conference.

Several of our Master Teachers have been asked and served on the Curriculum Committees formulated by the Arizona State Department of Education to establish the State Standards in both Science and Social Studies. That work lasted for nearly two years.

CCS Principal Miller, as a representative of the school, was selected by the Arizona Business and Education Coalition, Arizona State University, and the Wallace Leadership Group as one of the top 1% of all principals in the state and was one of only seventeen inducted into the *Circle of Honor*. As such, he also committed to provide significant mentoring and program development time to the Arizona education community at large. Challenge has also been asked, and accepted, opportunities to present our instructional model and curricular approach at the University level for students in Education Programs.

Principal Miller and co-founder/Executive Director, Mrs. Miller, have remained active in the Arizona political process to ensure the rights of students and parental choice are protected and fostered. Mrs. Miller served as a member of the Governing Board of Paradise Valley United School District for two four year terms, holding Board Offices of President & Clerk. Mr. Miller has been involved in initiating bills/State law, one of which provided for a charter operator to sit the State Charter School Board and eventually evoked an Arizona constitutional change allowing a charter representative to also sit on the Arizona State Board of Education. He serves on many committees and advisory councils including being invited to represent school choice on the State Superintendent of Education's District Superintendent's Advisory Committee.

Mr. & Mrs. Miller have been active in student advocacy throughout their lives and active at a national level since the inception of the school choice movement. This year, the Washington D.C. based organization, the Center for Education Reform (CER) recognized Principal Miller at their 13th Anniversary event as one of only 13 *National School Leaders Who Perform*.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum: Challenge Charter School is the first Official Core Knowledge School in Arizona, and uses the Core Knowledge Sequence as our curriculum base. It was written by hundreds of teachers concerned about the approach to literacy in our common schools, and edited by E.D. Hirsch, the author of *Cultural Literacy*, and *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*.

The Core Knowledge Sequence is:

- *Solid* - includes the basic principals of constitutional government, important events in world history, essential elements of mathematics and the oral and written expression, widely acknowledged masterpieces of art and music, and poems and stories passed down from generation to generation.
- *Sequenced* – by providing a clear outline of content to be learned grade by grade. This sequential building of knowledge helps ensure that children enter each new grade ready to learn and prevents the repetition and gaps that characterize much of current schooling.
- *Specific* – Clearly specifying important knowledge in language arts, history and geography, math science, and the fine arts the *Core Knowledge Sequence* answers the question “What do our children need to know?” Our character education program is built right into our literature used as part of our language arts program. This program *Core Virtues*, developed by Mary Beth Klee, this program includes such important virtues as Honesty, Courage, Faith, Charity, Self-Control, Forgiveness, Justice, and twenty other major virtues.
- *Shared* – Literacy depends on shared knowledge. To be literate means, in part, to be familiar with a broad range of knowledge taken for granted by society. One major goal is to provide all children, regardless of background, with the shared knowledge they need to take part in our national literate culture.

We have built from the base, aligned the *Sequence* with the Arizona State Standards, created monthly curriculum calendars and integrated a Science & Technology overlay into the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. In addition we have also integrated Spanish, Art, Technological, and Music instruction into the *Sequence*. Examples: A Civil War unit (2nd & 5th grades) would also include: presentations by students supported by Power Point (technology); could include medical practices on the battle fields (Science); review music and cultural events (fine arts); foreign support of each of the combatants would provide opportunity to use foreign language (currently Spanish). Our entire program is available for all children in every grade, Kindergarten thru sixth, which attend this school.

We also provide a full Physical Education program, and supplement our music instruction with introduction of instruments and performance support by using the Phoenix Conservatory of Music. Both of these programs have major elements that are integrated into the *Sequence*. The benefits of *Core Knowledge* include:

1. For Children:

- Provides a broad base of knowledge and a rich vocabulary
- Motivates students to learn and creates a strong desire to learn more
- Provides the knowledge necessary for higher levels of learning and helps build confidence
- Provides strong foundation of knowledge for success in high school and beyond
- Decreases learning gaps caused by mobility

2. For the School:

- Provides an academic focus and encourages consistency in instruction
- Provides a plan for coherent, sequenced learning from grade to grade
- Provides a community of learners – adults and children

- Becomes an effective tool for lesson planning and communication among teachers and with parents
- Guides thoughtful purchases of school resources
- Provides a common focus to show knowledge and expertise
- Encourages cooperation among schools to provide quality learning experiences for all students

3. *For Parents and the Community:*

- Provides a clear outline of what children are expected to learn in school
- Encourages parents to participate in their children's education both at home and in school
- Provides opportunities for community members to help obtain and provide instructional resources

2. Reading: The two main components of our school's reading instruction include the use of the Core Knowledge Sequence and the Literacy Place series from Scholastic Inc. Scholastic's Literacy Place program was chosen because it incorporates the five key components of reading including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension. These five components are practiced on a daily basis through the introduction to and reading of a variety of stories from different genres. The program helps students to develop grade level reading skills as well as incorporates writing workshops to practice writing that starts through reading. Scholastic's Literacy Place program includes weekly and end of unit tests to provide teachers with ongoing data that can be used to inform their instruction.

The Core Knowledge curriculum also has a strong emphasis on phonemic awareness and phonics instruction as well as comprehension. However, the Core Knowledge Sequence also identifies a set of specific fictional stories and poetry to be used at each grade level. This provides students with a solid foundation of literary works that have been shared from generation to generation and are considered necessary for students to be considered literate when it comes to our national and world culture. The Core Knowledge Sequence includes content rich units of study in other curriculum areas (science, social studies, etc.). These topics allow teachers to further develop reading and vocabulary skills through the use of quality, informational texts.

A final piece of our schools reading program is the use of DIBELS (The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). Teachers have been trained to use DIBELS to assess students' early literacy skills and later development of oral reading fluency. These assessments are essential and have been adopted because they provide teachers with the ability to reliably predict students' level of future reading success and intervene to help avoid reading difficulties and the development of non-readers. All of these programs provide our students with a well rounded curriculum that ensures that they are provided with the skills necessary to become literate, in every sense of the word.

3. Science and Technology: As per our charter document that was created as a part of the school's inception, a main focus of our curriculum is on Science and Technology. The world changes at a rapid pace because of new advances in these areas, and part of the school's mission is to help students learn, at an early age, the role that Science and Technology will have in their lives. Teachers use the Core Knowledge Sequence as their main curriculum guide. This sequence identifies specific science topics that are taught at each grade level. The topics are intended to provide students with a base of solid science information that will serve as a foundation to support their own science inquiries as well as develop the ground work that will ensure students can intelligently interact with a society that assumes at least a basic understanding of the information.

Topics are introduced at their basic level in one grade and then are continuously built upon through subsequent more in-depth studies at future grade levels. For example, in kindergarten, students are introduced to the parts of a plant, in second grade, students build on this knowledge through the study of a

plant's life cycle and in fifth grade, students are ready for an in depth look at plant reproduction. This curriculum encourages students to develop basic skills by providing unending opportunities for hands-on research and inquiry, investigations and problem solving as well as the development of clear communication and writing skills, which are used to verbalize questions, explain results, and defend theories.

Technology skills go hand in hand with the science piece of our curriculum. Students are taught, as early as kindergarten and first grade, basic computer skills including the parts of a computer, keyboarding skills, and how to access and use information from appropriate websites. As soon as second grade, students are taught how to use key computer programs including Microsoft Excel, to create graphs and charts to organize information they get from their own experiments and data collection, and Power Point, which they use to create presentations. By the older grades, the familiarity with technology has allowed for more complex, long term projects including creating their own web sites to share the information they have learned about specific science topics. The same integrated approach is also used to include other special areas of content to include: Fine Arts; Music; Foreign Language; and Physical Education.

4. Instructional Methods: Teachers at Challenge Charter School use a variety of instructional strategies to ensure that the content and skills that are introduced are accessible to every learner. Due to the need to differentiate instruction for a variety of learners, cooperative, group learning is one of our most important instructional strategies. In reading for example, students are provided instruction as a whole group, but they are also often placed with other students at their achievement level to create an environment that allows teachers to focus their instruction at a specific set of target skills based on each group's need.

Another instructional strategy that is used is a hands-on teaching approach. We believe that students who are actively engaged in their own learning will come away with a better understanding of the material, as well as a continued desire to further their study. This approach also provides students with the opportunities to use their knowledge in real-life circumstances and makes what they learn relevant. Some examples of this hands-on approach include science experiments, playing games, the use of manipulatives to problem solve in Math, or even the completion of projects which require students to use household objects to create models.

Teacher modeling is another strategy used to introduce and practice the use of specific skills, for example to show reading fluency. Students are provided with quality modeling through the teacher's oral reading. This helps students hear and identify the key components necessary for success, in this instance, the use of inflection, appropriate diction, and pausing, etc. Then they are given opportunities to practice what has been modeled. To further our desire to expose students to a variety of technology, another instructional strategy includes the use of videos and computer assisted instruction. The school has created a large resource library that includes quality, engaging videos that can be used as a means to add to the direct instruction of the teacher. This allows students access to information using another tool. Students are also provided with on-going opportunities to access and develop their own knowledge base through the investigation of internet based material.

5. Professional Development: Challenge has always felt that the need for professional development and career enhancement are bedrock issues for successful long term results in both teacher satisfaction and student performance. From the beginning we incorporated seven to ten days a year of In-Service inside our teachers' contracts. These are full in-service days rather than being attached to the second half of a shortened instructional day. We have always seen that time as "our time", and protected it so no teacher was sitting there thinking "I have already had the kids for the day; I'm tired; when is this 'stuff' going to be over?"

Our Master Teachers have always been a major part of the planning and agenda development as defined by staff needs to meet the goals of student achievement. These professional development days have included items such as: Special Education in their classroom; Writing across the curriculum; Six traits of writing; FERPA; Highly Qualified teacher requirements & training; How to use student data; OSHA/Stress Management; 7 traits of highly successful people; Technology: use of both hardware & software; ADE's internet resource tree: access & utilization; CPR & First Aide; and the list goes on.

As we grew and additional resources were identified we have expanded that support beyond the seven to ten days of in-service requirement. We have an Educational Reimbursement Policy that pays 50% of our teacher's tuition & books for their Master in Education degree, and we are constantly looking for business partners to help pay the other half. We have provided 22 teachers this support since we started the program in 1999.

We have sent 40 teachers to the week long Core Knowledge Foundation's annual conferences since 1999, and paid all their expenses. This conference has been held around the country including Atlanta, Boston, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Orange County - CA, Nashville, etc. We have sent 30 teachers over the last two years to a week long conference on Differentiated Instruction; and we send our Kindergarten team of seven, to the California Kindergarten Quality Conference yearly. They chose California's conference because they feel it is one of the best in the country.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math **Grade:** Third **Test:** Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)
Edition / AIMS DPA (2005 – 2006) **Publisher:** CTB/McGraw-Hill (2005 - 2006) &
Publication Year: AIMS (2004 & Prior) Harcourt Brace (2004 & Prior)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	94	85	84	79	89
% “Exceeding” State Standards	23	32	39	47	48
Number of students tested	80	75	90	86	63
Percent of total students tested	98	97	98	100	No Data
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
2. Hispanic					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	85	90	82		
% “Exceeding” State Standards	14	40	35		
Number of students tested	15	10	17	<10	<10
3. ELL					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
4. SPED					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards			50		
% “Exceeding” State Standards			20		
Number of students tested	<10	<10	10	<10	<10
5. Socioeconomic Status					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	92	88	83	No Data	No Data
% “Exceeding” State Standards	28	13	28	No Data	No Data
Number of students tested	26	17	29	No Data	No Data

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading **Grade:** Third **Test:** Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)
Edition / AIMS DPA (2005 – 2006) **Publisher:** CTB/McGraw-Hill (2005 - 2006) &
Publication Year: AIMS (2004 & Prior) Harcourt Brace (2004 & Prior)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	92	84	87	86	85
% “Exceeding” State Standards	22	11	27	16	47
Number of students tested	80	75	91	86	64
Percent of total students tested	98	97	99	100	No Data
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
2. Hispanic					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	85	80	89		
% “Exceeding” State Standards	14	10	22		
Number of students tested	15	10	18	<10	<10
3. ELL					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
4. SPED					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards			60		
% “Exceeding” State Standards			20		
Number of students tested	<10	<10	10	<10	<10
5. Socioeconomic Status					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	92	88	90	No Data	No Data
% “Exceeding” State Standards	16	19	24	No Data	No Data
Number of students tested	26	17	29	No Data	No Data

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math **Grade:** Fourth **Test:** Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)
Edition / **AIMS DPA** **Publisher:** CTB/McGraw-Hill
Publication Year:

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	April	April			
SCHOOL SCORES					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	95	94	Arizona did not begin testing 6th graders using AIMS until the 2004-2005 school year.		
% “Exceeding” State Standards	41	44			
Number of students tested	69	84			
Percent of total students tested	97	No Data			
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
2. Hispanic					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	91	100			
% “Exceeding” State Standards	36	40			
Number of students tested	11	15			
3. ELL					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
4. SPED					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards		63			
% “Exceeding” State Standards		18			
Number of students tested	<10	11			
5. Socioeconomic Status					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	100	89			
% “Exceeding” State Standards	44	26			
Number of students tested	18	27			

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading **Grade:** Fourth **Test:** Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)
Edition / **AIMS DPA** **Publisher:** CTB/McGraw-Hill
Publication Year:

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	April	April			
SCHOOL SCORES					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	88	93	Arizona did not begin testing 4th graders using AIMS until the 2004-2005 school year.		
% “Exceeding” State Standards	22	14			
Number of students tested	69	84			
Percent of total students tested	97	No Data			
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
2. Hispanic					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	91	100			
% “Exceeding” State Standards	27	7			
Number of students tested	11	15			
3. ELL					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
4. SPED					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards		64			
% “Exceeding” State Standards		9			
Number of students tested	<10	11			
5. Socioeconomic Status					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	94	89			
% “Exceeding” State Standards	22	11			
Number of students tested	18	27			

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math **Grade:** Fifth **Test:** Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)
Edition / AIMS DPA (2005 – 2006) **Publisher:** CTB/McGraw-Hill (2005 - 2006) &
Publication Year: AIMS (2004 & Prior) Harcourt Brace (2004 & Prior)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	88	92	69	66	26
% “Exceeding” State Standards	34	23	56	47	22
Number of students tested	69	48	55	47	23
Percent of total students tested	97	100	96	98	No Data
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
2. Hispanic					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	77				
% “Exceeding” State Standards	15				
Number of students tested	13	<10	<10	<10	<10
3. ELL					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
4. SPED					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
5. Socioeconomic Status					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	84	95	71	No Data	No Data
% “Exceeding” State Standards	17	30	59	No Data	No Data
Number of students tested	18	20	17	No Data	No Data

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading **Grade:** Fifth **Test:** Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)
Edition / AIMS DPA (2005 – 2006) **Publisher:** CTB/McGraw-Hill (2005 - 2006) &
Publication Year: AIMS (2004 & Prior) Harcourt Brace (2004 & Prior)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	90	86	77	60	52
% “Exceeding” State Standards	18	17	24	9	4
Number of students tested	69	48	56	47	23
Percent of total students tested	97	100	98	98	No Data
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
2. Hispanic					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	84				
% “Exceeding” State Standards	15				
Number of students tested	13	<10	<10	<10	<10
3. ELL					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
4. SPED					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
5. Socioeconomic Status					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	73	85	77	No Data	No Data
% “Exceeding” State Standards	17	25	18	No Data	No Data
Number of students tested	18	20	17	No Data	No Data

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Grade: Sixth

Test: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)

Edition /

AIMS DPA

Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

Publication Year:

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	April	April			
SCHOOL SCORES					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	95	85	Arizona did not begin testing 6th graders using AIMS until the 2004-2005 school year.		
% "Exceeding" State Standards	33	23			
Number of students tested	39	47			
Percent of total students tested	95	No Data			
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
3. ELL					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
4. SPED					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards					
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
5. Socioeconomic Status					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	100	80			
% "Exceeding" State Standards	32	20			
Number of students tested	19	15			

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reader
Edition /
Publication Year:

Grade: Sixth
 AIMS DPA

Test: Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)
Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	April	April			
SCHOOL SCORES					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	92	94	Arizona did not begin testing 6th graders using AIMS until the 2004-2005 school year.		
% “Exceeding” State Standards	5	13			
Number of students tested	39	47			
Percent of total students tested	95	No Data			
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Black					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
2. Hispanic					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
3. ELL					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
4. SPED					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards					
% “Exceeding” State Standards					
Number of students tested	<10	<10			
5. Socioeconomic Status					
% “Meeting” plus “Exceeding” State Standards	94	86			
% “Exceeding” State Standards	5	13			
Number of students tested	19	15			

