

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

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet Type of School: (Check all that apply) Elementary Middle High K-12 Charter

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

Official School Name Adolph Link Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 900 S West Glenn Trail
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Elk Grove Village IL 60007-3132
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cook State School Code Number* 14-016-0540-04-2023

Telephone (847) 357-5300 Fax (847) 357-5301

Web site/URL www.sd54.org/schools/link E-mail BarbaraSchremser@sd54.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* Mr. Edward Rafferty
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Schaumburg Community Consolidated School District 54 Tel. (847) 357-5000

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. Peggy Brothman
(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 _____

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

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 (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: 22 Elementary schools
 Middle schools
 5 Junior high schools
 High schools
 Other

 27 TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$10,933 (2005-06)

 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$9,099 (2004-05 last available)

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. 9 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK				7			
K	28	36	64	8			
1	56	48	104	9			
2	41	36	77	10			
3	41	46	87	11			
4	34	28	62	12			
5	38	30	68	Other			
6	43	35	78				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							540

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 72% White
 - 2% Black or African American
 - 5% Hispanic or Latino
 - 16% Asian/Pacific Islander
 - 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - 4% Multi-Racial
 - 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	24
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	30
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	54
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	550
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.1
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 9 %
47 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 16

Specify languages: English, Spanish, Greek, Italian, Polish, Serbian, Korean, Pilipino (Tagalog), Japanese, Lithuanian, Assyrian (Syriac and Aramaic), Urdu, Gujarati, Panjabi (Punjabi), Malayalam, Telugu (Telegu)

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %
Total number students who qualify: 14

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: _____11%
 _____58_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.

__9__Autism	____Orthopedic Impairment
____Deafness	__5__ Other Health Impaired
____Deaf-Blindness	__16__ Specific Learning Disability
__5__Emotional Disturbance	__21__ Speech or Language Impairment
____Hearing Impairment	____Traumatic Brain Injury
__2__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__	__0__
Classroom teachers	__21__	__1__
Special resource teachers/specialists	__8__	__12__
Paraprofessionals	__8__	__2__
Support staff	__5__	__2__
Total number	__43__	__17__

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 __24:1__

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. Also explain a high teacher turnover rate.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	97%	96%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	9%	14%	20%	14%	16%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	%	%	%	%	%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	%	%	%	%	%

*** The total number of teachers retiring or leaving Link School for another reason is only 2 or 3 each year.**

PART III – SUMMARY

The mission of Adolph Link School is to inspire every student, “to think, to learn, to achieve and to care.” “No Child Left Behind” is not just a mantra at Link; it’s a way of life that exists through staff interaction with students and a guaranteed, viable curriculum. Link is committed to helping students develop the capacity for learning so that they can live effectively in a complex, diverse and ever-changing world.

Link is a kindergarten through sixth-grade school in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, located 25 miles west of Chicago. The population of 540 students consistently scores above district and state averages, demonstrating high achievement on state reading and math assessments. In addition, all teachers at Link are highly qualified as defined through NCLB.

To achieve such great success, Link uses the Illinois State Standards as a guideline and follows the School District 54 Essential Outcomes, which students are expected to master by the end of each grade level.

All staff members work collaboratively as an integral part of our Professional Learning Community (PLC) and share an equal responsibility for the education of all our students. Our PLC consists of classroom teachers, members of our Child Study Team, our assistive technology facilitator, our literacy coach, our learning resource teacher, our gifted education resource teacher and district personnel.

We teach in a way that instills curiosity and promotes a reflective outlook. Link emphasizes literacy with a balanced approach to help students become effective readers, writers and speakers. We teach math through a model that demonstrates how concepts are applicable to everyday life. We believe that an inquiry-based approach is the unsurpassed way to teach science. Link teachers emphasize a diverse world and a tolerance for other cultures as students explore our social studies curriculum.

Link School provides many unique opportunities that go beyond the normal learning day to help develop well-rounded students who will become good citizens. Teachers help students to achieve their educational goals through activities both before school and during lunchtime, including reading intervention programs, student-to-student mentoring, teacher-to-student mentoring programs, and various fine art experiences. Link staff also provides opportunities for students to become inspired about their future. For example, many students participate in clubs such as Teachers of Tomorrow, Future Environmentalists, Student Council, Technology Tutors and Production Studio Crew.

We strive to teach a certain essence of globalization and the appreciation of other values in order to lower cultural conflict. Children need to learn how to view differing perspectives and develop a commitment to their morals without inhibiting others. We also teach our children to take care of each other, cooperate and be kind to all. This is accomplished not only through our participation in multicultural activities, book clubs, and the community-wide Character Counts Coalition, but exhibited daily through our inclusive special education program.

Many of Link’s great successes would not be possible without supportive parents and community members. Link has a high level of parental and community involvement. Our PTA provides a wide variety of programs, which support our school mission and the policies of the District 54 Board of Education. Volunteer speakers, readers, presenters and incentive organizers from businesses and community groups have greatly enriched our learning environment.

We promote life-long learning for all stakeholders, teach students to reflect on goals, and guide them with sensitivity to coping with problems. Above all, every time we speak to a student, we do so with an agenda of helping that child believe in himself to become a confident and competent learner. We are committed to empowering all children to learn. There is no limit to student successes.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:** Every student at Link participates in state, national and school assessments. Link students achieve at high levels on all areas of these assessments. Students in grades three through six take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in reading and math. The tables at the end of this application show the percentages of students in third and fifth grade who have met or exceeded state standards on this test. The state of Illinois only added the reading and math test for fourth- and sixth-grade students last year. We did not include the data because there is only one year worth of data. Students can score at four ISAT performance levels: Academic Warning, Below Standards, Meets Standards and Exceeds Standards. ISAT results indicate that Link students, as a whole, outperformed students from District 54 and the state (based on test score averages from the spring of 2005). More information can be found at www.isbe.net.

Over several years, the number of Link students meeting or exceeding state standards on ISAT has continued to increase. During the 2001-02 school year, 83 percent of all Link students met or exceeded state standards. During the 2005-06 school year, 92 percent of Link students met or exceeded standards. With these scores, Link School continues to meet the standards of No Child Left Behind.

Link has been tracking the performance of individual students for many years. Utilizing assessment scores, students can be targeted and measured for growth. Teachers also use the data to drive instruction. With ISATs now being taken yearly, it is possible to look at the same group of students as they move from grade to grade. During the 2005-06 school year, 92 percent of sixth-grade students met or exceeded standards in reading. Looking back, this has been an overall increase of 12 percent since these students began taking ISAT as third-graders in 2003. This increase is a direct result of our strong literacy program.

ISAT math scores have also steadily increased for this same cohort of students. During the 2002-03 school year, 96 percent of third-grade students met or exceeded math standards on the ISAT. By the 2005-06 school year, 97 percent of these sixth-grade students met or exceeded state standards.

The Asian/Pacific Islander subgroup also has shown growth. As third-graders, 92 percent of this subgroup of students met or exceeded state standards in reading, compared to 100 percent of the same group meeting or exceeding as sixth-graders during the 2005-06 school year. In math, 100 percent of our Asian/Pacific Islander population met or exceeded math standards from third grade through sixth grade.

Link does not have a significant enough number of students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to include that data in the charts at the end of this packet. However, that group's growth should also be noted. During the 2002-03 school year, only 46 percent of third-grade students with IEPs met or exceeded state reading standards. By the 2005-06 school year, 67 percent of that same group of students met or exceeded reading standards. In the 2005-06 school year, six students were alternatively assessed and 100 percent met or exceeded state reading standards and 83 percent met or exceeded state math standards.

Link staff is pleased that the State of Illinois has now begun testing students at almost every grade level, which will enable staff to draw precise conclusions about performance on a yearly basis. ISAT data coupled with other valuable formative and summative assessments provide Link staff with information to identify areas of student learning needs. Other forms of data include: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy (ISEL), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Reading and Math Extended Response, Writing Samples, Running Records, teacher observation, and other teacher-created materials. All of this information is recorded on a student data sheet and moves with work samples to new grade levels for smooth transitions and increased understanding of our students' educational needs. Each year begins with cross grade level articulation meetings to share assessment data about each group of students as well as each individual student.

2. Uses Assessment Data: Data reflection is the force behind all instructional and school improvement decisions at Link. For years we have created a School Improvement Plan using ISAT and non-standardized data. Working collaboratively, grade level and special service teachers, set SMART goals based on the data gleaned from assessments (SMART stand for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time specific). This year, we have added the MAP assessment, which pinpoints the student's achievement in reading and math. It is completed by second- through sixth-graders, three times a year. Students and teachers use the immediately available scores from MAP testing to set goals and track improvement together.

Link uses the ISEL in kindergarten, first, and second grade twice a year to assess student literacy in the areas of phonemic awareness, letter recognition, vocabulary, fluency and reading comprehension. In addition, the DRA is used in first and second grade to assess and track student reading performance at least three times a year. Using the DRA scores, we have implemented an assessment wall for first grade, which is analyzed by the grade level team and our literacy coach.

Furthermore, each grade level creates common assessments and keeps literacy portfolios, to formatively assess essential skills. Students that do not meet the criteria that the teachers have set to demonstrate proficiency are involved in an intervention group. The strongest grade-level teacher, determined by assessment results, works four times a week for 35 minutes during the school day with the intervention group until skills are mastered.

A combination of these assessments has led to choosing target students in each classroom. Teachers identify "at-risk" students and plan specific interventions through differentiation to meet the student's needs. The results of assessments also lead to grade levels choosing students for reading intervention programs that go beyond the academic day. Data from all assessments provides useful information for special education, gifted services and enrichment. Link School will continue to use all forms of data to understand and improve student and school performance.

3. Communicates Student Performance: At the onset of every school year, teachers share assessment criteria, state learning standards, district learning essentials and the goals of the School Improvement Plan during Curriculum Night with parents, usually in early September. Students, parents and teachers participate in a student-led, goal-setting conference in October, during which students share assessment data from the beginning of the school year. All involved work together to identify areas of weakness for each student, create a plan for improvement, and determine ways to track progress. Individual student performance is shared with parents through report cards three times a year and progress reports halfway through each grading period. All assessment results are also shared with parents in a timely manner. Families participate in a second conference during the month of February to evaluate goals that had been previously set. Toward the end of the school year, families attend Celebrate Learning, which is a time to reflect on the progress students have made during the school year.

The principal assumes the responsibility of sharing assessment data with the staff, parents and community. First, the principal uses the Interactive Illinois Report Card (IIRC) and ISAT data to access school, district and state data related to school performance as it relates to No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The Link staff continuously monitors targeted progress toward yearly goals and makes modifications as needed. Data is further analyzed by the School Leadership Team. Progress is shared with the community on a regular basis.

The State School Report Card is available for all constituents on the District 54 and Link School websites. A hard copy is also sent home with students. This report card shares information about the academic achievement data from state assessments, as well as demographic, financial and instructional information about the school, district and state. The local newspapers publish this data and the principal explains the report card at PTA meetings, which helps expand parental understanding of the data reported.

4. Shares its Successes: Information about Link’s successes can be found in our school and classroom newsletters and on our website (web54.sd54.k12.il.us/schools/link/default.htm). Link believes that teachers should share successes by giving back to educators and the community. Link staff presentations support future education and have taken place in myriad of forums.

In our district, Link teachers have created and led a variety of staff development courses, including “Picture Books ‘R Us,” “Get Your Hands-On Equations,” “Classroom Management,” “Literacy Block Party” and new teacher training. Staff members have been videotaped as models to be shared with staff members from other schools during district staff development. In addition, staff members serve on decision-making committees that support instruction, including Teacher Evaluation, NCLB, Literacy and Science task forces, Superintendent’s Communication Council, Literacy Cadre, Assistive Technology, Kindergarten Field Leader, District Report Card, and Targeted Assistance Reading for bilingual students.

Multiple staff members have taught and presented at universities on subjects including special education, early childhood education in literacy and educator career building. One staff member spoke at a presentation about teachers helping students cope with illness. Another staff member has been published in professional journals. The district has even recognized a staff member with its “Above and Beyond” award and hosted one of its School Board meetings at Link School, at which we shared our successes with other schools and the community.

Numerous teachers have written and received grants to purchase educational tools to differentiate instruction. Local businesses have honored teachers with awards and grants. The Japanese Cultural Center provided a grant for multicultural education. Link School was honored at the Elk Grove Village Board Meeting for its outstanding work with Character Education.

Many people observe and learn from Link teachers. Roosevelt University consistently sends students to observe our teachers and support our student progress in the areas of literacy and math. Staff has also supervised numerous student teachers from universities statewide. Staff serves as mentors to novice teachers and administrators. Link also hosted the state multiage conference.

Most importantly, we want to share our successes with our students’ families. Parents are invited to observe and participate during the school day. They are also welcomed at many evening activities throughout the year.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:** Link staff holds students to high standards to ensure student achievement. In each subject, students are actively engaged in the learning process. Literacy is integrated into all areas of our curriculum. The instructional methods by which we meet our students' needs greatly impact achievement. Aside from classroom differentiation, our gifted and special service staff meet the unique needs of our students within the general education classroom. Technology is an invaluable resource that provides assistance to all students through individual laptops, assistive technology, LCD projectors and digital imaging systems.

Balanced literacy instruction addresses the needs of all learners. At least 175 minutes a day are devoted to literacy instruction at Link School. The curriculum taught at Link is part of a comprehensive core curriculum adopted by District 54 in 2006. The research-based comprehensive literacy series, *Treasures*, from Macmillan-McGraw Hill, is the core of the balanced literacy program. This series supports instruction in the five key literacy components identified by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. A balanced literacy approach provides students with daily reading and writing activities to help them comprehend information and communicate more effectively. In a balanced literacy model, students participate in guided reading, read alouds, shared reading, independent reading, word study and writing. The curriculum includes a period of time each day for intervention or enrichment, depending on a student's individual needs.

The mathematics curriculum is based on the University of Chicago's *Everyday Mathematics* program. Teachers guide students to solve problems and form critical thinking skills. Students become proficient at using and applying number sense, estimation and measurement, algebra, geometry and data analysis, as directed by the Illinois State Standards. Other tools to encourage mathematical understanding include exemplars, hands-on equations and problem-solving. All of Link's math instruction is manipulative rich, and uses written and spoken language as a tool for understanding. Each year, families are invited to participate in a math night, which shares instructional tools in a hands-on environment.

Link's science curriculum is an inquiry-based, hands-on learning experience. Students are engaged in the work of a scientist. Therefore, the curriculum is based on engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration and evaluation. Students continue to develop their abilities to work cooperatively with others as they are taught that collaboration of ideas, along with accountability and responsibility, are essential to scientific progress. For example, fourth-graders work in teams to develop clay boats when studying buoyancy. In addition to an inquiry-based science curriculum, Link teachers integrate tradebooks and read alouds to develop background knowledge and enhance students' understanding of scientific concepts.

The social studies curriculum provides students with opportunities to understand historical, geographical, economic and political components of the world. Text materials and Interacts provide highly engaging explorations that encourage the study of cultural universals in the context of real world social science. One example is that a sixth-grade classroom is transformed into feudalistic society. All students assume a role and make decisions based on information gathered about that time period. In addition, students use technology to access current information and make connections to the world outside of the classroom.

Fine arts instruction adds to the students' cultural knowledge and skills. All students participate in music and art classes. During music instruction, students learn to read and write music, to play instruments of the past and present from a variety of countries, and to perform. Band and orchestra classes are available to intermediate grade students. Students can also participate in performance groups. During art instruction, students learn to identify the works of various artists through books; work with a variety of materials; and explore, create, and read about other cultures' traditional art forms. Talented students are able to participate in advanced art classes once a week. After school, interested students are invited to participate in an art club that creates projects to give Link School its unique atmosphere.

2a. Reading Curriculum: For six years, Link has had a balanced literacy program. Our program ensures that each student will find success at a level that is appropriate to his current ability. Guided reading occurs in small, flexible groups, led by the teacher, at the group's instructional level determined by ongoing assessment results. These groups use a variety of texts to develop fluency, skills and strategies, as well as to identify text structure, literary elements and literary techniques.

Read alouds and shared reading allow the teacher to model her thinking when comprehending text. Students are asked to reflect through meaningful conversations. Independent Reading is the bridge where all students spend a portion of each day reading independently to practice and apply reading strategies learned. The books chosen are at a reading level that students can comprehend while expanding vocabulary and instilling an intrinsic enjoyment for reading. Students confer with teachers, as they delve into these self-selected texts, about the strategies and skills they are using to gain meaning while reading.

Another crucial component to Link's balanced literacy program is word study, which helps students to achieve automaticity for words and to develop a vocabulary, both necessary for fluency and comprehension. The teacher uses instruction to introduce, teach and provide students with the opportunity to practice and apply knowledge of phonemic awareness, letter recognition, letter-sound relationships, phonics, spelling patterns and word parts. Vocabulary instruction enriches the students' oral and written language and provides opportunities to think about and use words.

Analyzing text, utilizing authentic literature, and expanding vocabulary helps students become strong writers. Teachers model writing techniques during mini-lessons and expose students to writing elements. As a result, students become proficient writers in a variety of genres, considering different audiences, as they move through the writing process. Link's balanced literacy approach ensures that all students' needs are not only met, but that students are pushed to achieve high standards.

Link provides other tiers of literacy support with Reading Recovery instruction for its lowest performing students in first grade and a gifted education resource teacher working with the highest performing students. Reading Recovery is a research-based accelerated learning program structured in a one-on-one setting. These teachers' literacy expertise is shared with and modeled for other teachers at the school and ultimately impacts teachers and students in all grade levels with these literacy supports.

3. Math Curriculum: The University of Chicago *Everyday Math* program is the primary source for mathematics instruction at Link School. Students become familiar with the cyclical nature, common vocabulary and general format of the program to ensure an effective transition through grade levels.

This math program emphasizes problem-solving, computational skills, data analysis and teamwork. Students are engaged in active, collaborative work, using manipulatives and technology. They perform calculations and devise multiple solutions to problems. Many algorithms are introduced for each mathematical operation so students may choose the most effective method.

Work in mathematics does not rely completely on this resource. Math exemplars provide excursions into real-world mathematics problems and entice students to apply their math knowledge and skills in new areas. In addition, students are introduced to Hands-On Equations, which encourages and supports algebraic thinking and problem-solving at an early age. Teachers work to differentiate instruction for struggling learners and students that are in need of a challenge. For example, the gifted resource teacher may work with a group of students to extend a topic while the classroom teacher can practice with students that may benefit from spending more time on a topic to be successful. A student that needs to reinforce basic skills may be seen using manipulatives, Touch Math, or computer programs.

All instruction in math is language rich. Student's oral language skills are enhanced as teachers prompt them to explain the process they used to arrive at solutions. In addition, written explanations are required, enhancing literacy skills.

4. **Instructional Methods Used to Improve Student Learning:** Ensuring the success of all students requires Link teachers to use a great range of instructional strategies, intervention and enrichment. Link teachers are aware that professional pedagogical toolboxes must include a depth and breadth of strategies, such as flexible and cooperative grouping and conferring with students on an individual basis, as well as small group and whole class direct instruction.

The staff at Link continues to investigate effective ways to impact student learning and achievement. Our Literacy Coach is an asset to teachers when planning, reflecting on, and enhancing effective literacy instruction. Professional Learning Communities work together to determine interesting and valuable ways to model and coach students through the learning process. Teachers and instructional assistants have also improved instruction by observing each other during the school day and having time for conversation to provide feedback.

The school day is structured with the knowledge that students receive and process information differently and at varying rates. Differentiation is imperative and is implemented by both the classroom teacher and support staff. Modifications are made for students that are “at risk” and enrichment is provided for students who benefit from extending concepts.

The classroom teacher is supported by a team of teachers. Individual Education Plans are developed for students with learning and emotional disabilities. A variety of technology, for example laptops and assistive technology, are available as educational tools for students. The Gifted Education Program challenges students both in and out of the general education classroom. Reading Recovery is offered for struggling first-grade readers. During the school day, student learning is impacted by intervention time for students that do not meet expectations on common assessments based on grade level essential skills. Outside of the school day, each grade level also has a reading intervention group that meets three times a week with a small group of students that are below grade level expectations.

Students at Link are encouraged to learn cooperatively, as well as independently, with assistance from a variety of adults during full group, small group and independent instruction.

5. **Professional Development Program and Impact on Improving Achievement:** Link’s professional staff development program is aligned with its School Improvement Plan (SIP). Link’s current improvement plan, which was developed by the entire staff, is to increase student performance in literacy as measured by the ISAT. Link has a School Leadership Team (SLT) that consists of one parent member, seven staff members, the principal and the literacy coach, each representing a different grade level and/or voice. The SLT is responsible for supporting the continued education of more than 40 staff members on the most current research into the best instructional practices. The SLT is also plans and delivers in-service training by analyzing progress toward the goal of the SIP.

The Link staff has participated in training to become a Professional Learning Community. A Professional Learning Community (PLC) framework consists of building a solid foundation of collaboratively developed instructional goals and professional values to provide an opportunity for all students to learn. The SLT utilizes staff development time to create effective and efficient PLCs. Time is devoted to working together to analyze data and research, to discuss and to improve instruction in order to make an impact on student achievement. One 90-minute staff development session occurs each week. This time is used not only for PLCs, but also for the whole staff to come together to focus on data analysis, differentiation, integrating technology and the understanding of Link’s curricular areas.

Staff also benefits from the district’s professional development program. This program begins with new teacher mentoring. It also includes in-district training in terms of in-services and Salary Lane classes, as well as opportunities to attend out-of-district workshops and conferences. Staff attending workshops outside of the school building shares new knowledge gained with colleagues.

Each staff member is valued and encouraged to share his strengths. For example, staff members observe each other during the school day to improve instructional methods and refine skills. This allows our staff to ensure the most effective and beneficial strategies are being used for instruction.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

State Criterion-Referenced Test

Subject: Math

Grade: 3

Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/publication year: Yearly

Publisher: State of Illinois

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standards	93.20%	89.80%	89.40%	96.20%	91.00%
Exceeds Standards	59.30%	50.70%	46.70%	46.20%	55.00%
Number of Students Tested	56	69	76	79	70
Percent of total students tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	97.00%
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	2	5	6	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	6.67%	2.82%	6.17%	7.06%	2.78%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White Non-Hispanic					
Meets Standards	91.10%	92.70%	90.20%	98.30%	95.00%
Exceeds Standards	53.30%	54.50%	45.10%	46.60%	60.00%
Number of Students Tested	42	55	51	59	53
2. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Meets Standards	100.00%	100.00%	94.10%	100.00%	84.00%
Exceeds Standards	75.00%	57.10%	64.70%	61.50%	67.00%
Number of Students Tested	12	7	17	13	8
STATE SCORES					
Meets Standards	85.60%	66.6%	79.1%	75.7%	74.0%
Exceeds Standards	38.50%	21.5%	33.0%	31.1%	30.0%

State Criterion-Referenced Test

Subject: Reading
Edition/publication year: Yearly

Grade: 3

Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test
Publisher: State of Illinois

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standards	84.80%	75.30%	73.00%	80.80%	83.00%
Exceeds Standards	37.30%	24.60%	36.50%	30.80%	35.00%
Number of Students Tested	56	69	76	79	72
Percent of total students tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	2	5	6	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	6.67%	2.82%	6.17%	7.06%	2.78%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White Non-Hispanic					
Meets Standards	82.20%	78.20%	72.00%	84.50%	87.00%
Exceeds Standards	33.30%	27.30%	36.00%	34.50%	39.00%
Number of Students Tested	42	55	51	59	55
2. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Meets Standards	91.70%	100.00%	82.40%	92.30%	83.00%
Exceeds Standards	50.00%	28.60%	41.20%	30.80%	50.00%
Number of Students Tested	12	7	17	13	8
STATE SCORES					
Meets Standards	70.70%	79.3%	65.1%	62.0%	63.0%
Exceeds Standards	23.40%	34.1%	22.7%	21.9%	19.0%

State Criterion-Referenced Test**Subject:** Math**Grade:** 4**Test:** Illinois Standards Achievement Test**Edition/publication year:** Yearly, starting in 2006**Publisher:** State of Illinois

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standards	98.3%	The ISAT test for reading and math was not administered at this grade level before the 2005-06 school year.			
Exceeds Standards	36.2%				
Number of Students Tested	58				
Percent of total students tested	100.0%				
Number of students alternatively assessed	2				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3.3%				
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White Non-Hispanic					
Meets Standards	97.8%				
Exceeds Standards	34.0%				
Number of Students Tested	47				
2. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Meets Standards	95.7%				
Exceeds Standards	51.9%				
Number of Students Tested	9				
STATE SCORES					
Meets Standards	82.8%				
Exceeds Standards	26.1%				

State Criterion-Referenced Test

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/publication year: Yearly, starting in 2006

Publisher: State of Illinois

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standards	89.7%	The ISAT test for reading and math was not administered at this grade level before the 2005-06 school year.			
Exceeds Standards	32.8%				
Number of Students Tested	58				
Percent of total students tested	100.0%				
Number of students alternatively assessed	2				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3.3%				
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White Non-Hispanic					
Meets Standards	89.4%				
Exceeds Standards	29.8%				
Number of Students Tested	9				
2. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Meets Standards	83.8%				
Exceeds Standards	38.3%				
Number of Students Tested	47				
STATE SCORES					
Meets Standards	74.9%				
Exceeds Standards	26.3%				

State Criterion-Referenced Test

Subject: Math **Grade:** 5
Edition/publication year: Yearly

Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test
Publisher: State of Illinois

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standards	89.50%	96.90%	90.30%	93.50%	88.00%
Exceeds Standards	26.30%	25.00%	37.50%	32.80%	28.00%
Number of Students Tested	65	96	72	61	76
Percent of total students tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	4	5	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1.52%	4.00%	6.33%	4.69%	3.80%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White Non-Hispanic					
Meets Standards	89.50%	98.70%	96.10%	83.40%	90.00%
Exceeds Standards	24.60%	23.70%	37.30%	35.60%	25.00%
Number of Students Tested	51	76	51	45	57
2. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Meets Standards	100.00%	100.00%	90.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Exceeds Standards	60.00%	40.00%	50.00%	36.40%	50.00%
Number of Students Tested	9	15	10	11	12
STATE SCORES					
Meets Standards	78.60%	73.2%	71.8%	68.3%	63.0%
Exceeds Standards	14.60%	12.4%	12.0%	9.7%	8.0%

State Criterion-Referenced Test

Subject: Reading
Edition/publication year: Yearly

Grade: 5

Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test
Publisher: State of Illinois

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standards	81.60%	74.00%	76.40%	80.30%	84.00%
Exceeds Standards	40.80%	24.00%	45.80%	42.60%	35.00%
Number of Students Tested	65	96	72	61	76
Percent of total students tested	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	99.00%
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	4	5	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1.52%	4.00%	6.33%	4.69%	3.80%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White Non-Hispanic					
Meets Standards	80.6%	76.30%	82.40%	82.20%	90.00%
Exceeds Standards	42.10%	25.00%	51.00%	44.40%	39.00%
Number of Students Tested	51	76	51	45	56
2. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Meets Standards	80.00%	96.70%	70.00%	72.80%	80.00%
Exceeds Standards	60.00%	26.70%	40.00%	45.50%	10.00%
Number of Students Tested	9	15	10	11	12
STATE SCORES					
Meets Standards	68.50%	59.8%	60.9%	60.4%	59.0%
Exceeds Standards	22.00%	19.4%	25.0%	23.1%	22.0%

State Criterion-Referenced Test

Subject: Math

Grade: 6

Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/publication year: Yearly, starting in 2006

Publisher: State of Illinois

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standards	96.5%	The ISAT was for reading and math was not administered at this grade level before the 2005-06 school year.			
Exceeds Standards	41.2%				
Number of Students Tested	85				
Percent of total students tested	100.0%				
Number of students alternatively assessed	1				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1.2%				
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White Non-Hispanic					
Meets Standards	96.9%				
Exceeds Standards	43.9%				
Number of Students Tested	66				
2. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Meets Standards	100%				
Exceeds Standards	50%				
Number of Students Tested	12				
STATE SCORES					
Meets Standards	79.1%				
Exceeds Standards	16.2%				

State Criterion-Referenced Test

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/publication year: Yearly, starting in 2006

Publisher: State of Illinois

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standards	91.6%	The ISAT test for reading and math was not administered at this grade level before the 2005-06 school year.			
Exceeds Standards	33.3%				
Number of Students Tested	84				
Percent of total students tested	100.0%				
Number of students alternatively assessed	1				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1.2%				
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. White Non-Hispanic					
Meets Standards	94.0%				
Exceeds Standards	37.9%				
Number of Students Tested	66				
2. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Meets Standards	100%				
Exceeds Standards	25%				
Number of Students Tested	12				
STATE SCORES					
Meets Standards	72.8%				
Exceeds Standards	19.4%				