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

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet Type of School: __ Elementary __ Middle _X_ High __ K-12

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

Official School Name River Hill High School .
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 12101 Route 108 .
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Clarksville | Maryland | 21029-1232 .
City | State | Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Howard School Code Number* 0524 .

Telephone (410) 313-7120 Fax (410) 313-7406 .

Website/URL http://www2.hcpss.org/rhhs/ E-mail wryan@hcpss.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.

_____ Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Sydney Cousin .
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Howard County Tel. (410) 313-7050 .

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.

_____ Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms. Diane Mikulis .
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

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

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

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2004-2005 school year.

3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award.*

5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

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

1. Number of schools in the district:

38	Elementary schools
18	Middle schools
NA	Junior high schools
12	High schools
4	Other
72	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: $11,496.00

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: $9,661.00

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
   [X] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

4. 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

   7 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					**8**			
1					**9**	207	176	383
2					**10**	168	158	326
3					**11**	160	176	336
4					**12**	177	185	362
5					**Other**			
6								
			TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →					1407

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:

68 % White
7 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
22 % Asian/Pacific Islander
.1 % American Indian/Alaskan Native
0 % Unidentified
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: 4 %

(This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	26
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	37
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	63
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	1407
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.04
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 5 %

67 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 11 . (19 Countries)
Specify languages: Spanish, Korean, Portuguese, English/French, Putonghua, Amheric, Gujarati, Hindi, Farsi, Urdu, Sinhalese

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %

Total number students who qualify: 50

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: 5 %
73 Total Number of Students Served

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

3 Autism	1 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	25 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	22 Specific Learning Disability
4 Emotional Disturbance	3 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	1 Traumatic Brain Injury
6 Mental Retardation	1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
2 Multiple Disabilities	

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	4	0
Classroom teachers	105	1
Special resource teachers/specialists	6	3
Paraprofessionals	12	0
Support staff	32	0
Total number	159	0

12. Average school student-"classroom teacher" ratio: 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.)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	96%	97%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	6%	7%	8%	8%	7%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%

Graduation Data:

Graduating class size	386	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	77	%
Enrolled in a community college	16	%
Enrolled in vocational training	1	%
Found employment	2	%
Military Service	2	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	2	%
Total	**100**	**%**

PART III-SUMMARY

River Hill, population 1400, is a ten-year old high school nestled in the attractive suburban and somewhat rural setting of Howard County, Maryland. A rich history and a vibrant economy are sources of pride and confidence to the students, staff, and families residing in the area. Often referred to as the "Heart of the Baltimore-Washington Common Market," Howard County is an emerging business center. Easy access to major arteries of transportation, attractive businesses, and industrial parks all contribute to its economic future and give credence to its ranking among the nation's wealthiest counties. Local educational institutions also benefit from this economic vitality. A recent three billion dollar investment in universities provides dramatic evidence of the region's commitment to higher education which, in turn, offers extraordinary career opportunities for River Hill's post secondary students.

River Hill High School is a charter member of the National Alliance of High Schools and embraces the design principles in *Breaking Ranks II*, a report of the Carnegie Foundation for the National Association of Secondary School Principals. River Hill has been recognized as one of few high schools in Maryland to receive outstanding ratings in all areas in the educational state report card. The school's rich course offerings are complemented by a well-prepared, dedicated teaching staff, adequate support materials and equipments, clearly defined educational objectives, and a belief that school, family, and community are partners in the educational process. River Hill instructors deem themselves most fortunate to be working in a school that has a vision of the future. Indeed, the entire staff has recently put that vision in writing and constructed a plan of action, a blueprint for the future. The newly written mission statement, proudly displayed throughout the school, emphasizes the staff's collaborative desire to ". . . provide students with a personalized, high-quality education that connects academic excellence to real-life experiences." This mission and its corresponding forty-five page school improvement plan and analysis of assessment data serve as the underpinning for the school's philosophy and objectives. These objectives carefully guide curriculum decisions and staff development. Comprised of three major sections that are aligned with the school system's major goals, River Hill's improvement plan describes each department's objectives and evaluation strategies to achieve the school's mission of personalizing both the learning community and school environment.

"Making learning personal" is therefore the lynchpin to the school's success. The administration, teachers, and staff collaboratively hone a comprehensive program that meets the educational needs and interests of a diverse student body while demonstrating a keen sensitivity to the rich cultural diversity among students. Nowhere is the planning more evident than in River Hill's enriched curriculum that is aligned with the county essential curriculum and state core learning goals. Precise assessment goals assure the on-going evaluation of the school's educational programs.

The school is also proud of the required and elective courses that accommodate the educational, emotional, physical, and social needs of individual students. The implementation of unique program offerings such as career academies, academic literacy classes, mentor programs, independent research opportunities, reading resource labs, and a variety of electives, enables students to develop creative and complex thinking skills. State, county, and local assessment instruments extend beyond needs-assessment to evaluations of student achievement in the respective disciplines and reflect ongoing examinations of professional expectations and standards. Indeed, River Hill touts top scores in state proficiency exams, PSAT assessments, and AP tests. This same visionary planning is applied to the related arts, physical education, and extracurricular activities; these offerings contribute directly and forcefully to River Hill's positive school climate.

The educational program at River Hill gains strength through strong collaborative planning and decision-making, project-oriented instruction, portfolio design, and the use of state-of-the-art technology to

enhance the instructional program. As a result, teachers are committed to professional development on a variety of topics across many academic subject areas. The administrative team provides ample and multifaceted opportunities for staff to improve their educational program, strengthen the instructional process, explore new and different educational initiatives, and study ways to enrich weekly advisory initiatives that teach core values such as integrity, motivation, and decision-making. The River Hill community believes that these initiatives will help all students become responsible citizens in today's world.

PART IV- INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment results:

Until the 2005 – 2006 school year, tenth grade students participated in the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in addition to the Maryland High School Assessments (HSA). The Maryland School Assessments (MSA) were administered in the spring for NCLB purposes and assessed student performance in Reading and Mathematics. That practice changed in 2005 -2006 as students were assessed in these areas through the Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) Program.

The MSA tested tenth grade students in Reading from 2002-2005 and in Geometry from 2001-2005. Although we are no longer assessed in these areas, we have attached data charts 2001-2005 for the years 2001-2005 in order to emphasize our consistent and exemplary improvement in the areas of English and mathematics.

Currently students are assessed in Reading and Mathematics through the HSA Program. The HSAs are comprised of criterion-referenced end-of-course assessments in Algebra/Data Analysis, English II, as well as Government and Biology. In order to pass the tests (earn a proficient score), students must earn a scaled score of at least 396 for English II, 412 for Algebra/Data Analysis, 394 for Government, and 400 for Biology. If a student does not pass one or more of these tests, he or she can still fulfill the HSA requirement for a Maryland diploma by earning at least the minimum score for each test (386 for English II, 402 for Algebra/Data Analysis, 387 for Government, and 391 for Biology) and a combined score of 1602. The combined score is the total of all HSA scores. In order for students to perform at the advanced level, they must earn a scaled score of at least 429 for English II and 450 for Algebra/Data Analysis. Additional information on Maryland's assessment system can be found on: www.mdreportcard.org and www.mdk12.org. Beginning with the Class of 2009, all students are required to pass the assessments to meet one of the requirements for a Maryland diploma.

In the 2004-2005 administration of the English II HSA, 86.3% of River Hill students passed the test and 53.4% scored at the advanced level. That same year, 57.3% of students in the state of Maryland passed the test and only 22.6% of the students tested in the state scored at the advanced level. In the 2005-2006 administration, RHHS students increased the pass rate by 6.6% for a total pass rate of 92.9% as well as improving by 4.2% in the advanced category; the state pass rate was 60.1% with only 24% achieving advanced status. We are particularly proud of the performance of the students in our three reported subgroups (Asian, African-American, and Special Education). Asian students' scores surpassed River Hill's overall pass rate by 1.1%, African-American students surpassed the state's proficient pass rate by 20.9%, and our Special Education students surpassed the state proficient or advanced pass rate by 9.9%. Our overall scores earned us the title of first in the state of Maryland for English in 2005-2006.

In the 2003-2004 administration of the Algebra/Data Analysis HSA, 79.1% of River Hill students passed the test, compared to 58.8% of the state. In the 2004-2005 administration, 85.1% of the students passed, compared to 53.8% of the state. In the 2005-2006 school year, the year this test counted as a graduation requirement, 96.6% of students passed the test and 61.6% scored at the advanced level, compared to 66.6% of students in the state earning a passing score and 25.9% earning an advanced score. The advanced score for the Algebra High School Assessment was only established for the 2005-2006 administration and beyond. From 2003-2005, our Asian students have shown an 18.2% increase in passing. Our African-American student pass rate increased by 11.5% and our Special Education student pass rate showed a significant gain of 32.3%. Each of these subgroups surpassed the Maryland proficient

pass rate by at least 20.1%. Our overall scores earned us the title of first in the state of Maryland for Algebra/Data Analysis in 2005-2006.

Beginning in 2003-2004, state superintendent Nancy Grasmick financially supported the PSAT testing of all 10th and 11th grade students. Although we have reported PSAT data from 2001, we will only address scores from 2003-2006. On average, both our 10th and 11th grade students surpass the state mean by at least 5.8% in Critical Reading, 7.9% in Math, and 6.5% in Writing. Whereas our Asian students are outperforming our general population, we are consistently making efforts to improve the performance of our African-American students. Although they are performing above the state average, African-American students are not yet performing at the same level as the general school population.

River Hill offers three Advanced Placement courses in Mathematics and two Advanced Placement courses in English. We are very proud that at least 90% of the students enrolled in these courses take the AP test and in 2006 83.6% in Mathematics and 79.9% in English earned a 3 or higher.

2. Using assessment data.

Assessment data is used extensively to improve student performance, guide instruction, and create the annual School Improvement Plan (SIP). Departments are professional learning communities and instructional leaders facilitate ongoing data-driven dialogue. In English and mathematics, content teaming is vital to the development of differentiated activities to help close any achievement gaps. Instructional leaders report their findings directly to the principal who facilitates the discussion of data on a school-wide level. Our SIP guides instruction and where applicable reflects the co-teaching model between our general education and special education teachers. Our active School Improvement Team meets bimonthly to review assessment data, examine intervention strategies that are in place, and suggest future interventions.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) has developed discipline-specific quarterly assessments that are aligned with the core learning goals and the state high school assessments. Teachers examine reports that detail whole class and individual student progress. Departments use this assessment data to monitor student gains, to establish consistency in assessment within departments, and to address gaps in achievement or content. For example, teachers of individual courses meet regularly to plan and review assessment data, coordinate and modify instruction, and identify students in need of remediation. Because the local assessment system is used district-wide, assessment data at all levels (K-12) is available to aid in student placement recommendations. Instructional leaders have easy access to more detailed reports from a building-level assessment coordinator.

Once a definitive listing of students who need intervention is identified, a variety of actions are implemented throughout the school, both within the classroom and after school hours. For example, our most needy students in the 9th and 10th grades often include our African-American and Special Education subgroups. Our ninth grade team, comprised of all 9th grade teachers in all disciplines, examines this listing and weekly provides one-on-one mentoring opportunities for these targeted students. In addition, an innovative peer mentoring program matches targeted students with upperclassmen who receive training in tutoring and mentoring. For Algebra/Data Analysis, students are given a mock HSA modeled after public release test items, which is designed to give an initial prediction of how students will perform on the state test. From this test, we identify students needing specific remediation intervention. The HCPSS also provides funding for after-school intervention programs which are taught by trained River Hill teachers.

3. Communicating Assessment Results.

The River Hill SIP states, "Teachers will communicate and collaborate with parents to establish a strong partnership to foster each student's growth." Clear and public communication about school performance promotes quality learning. For this reason all individual test results are communicated directly to parents, and aggregated data are reported annually and publicly to the District's Board of Education. In addition, parents receive classroom performance information about their children through report cards at nine-week intervals as well as through interim progress reports delivered every four and a half weeks. Formal parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year; however, there are informal conferences, e-mails, and telephone communications that foster positive home-school relationships. 90% of River Hill teachers utilize online grade reporting software accessible to parents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (i.e. Teacherease, Easy Grade Pro via Teacherweb); these are updated on a regular basis. Grade reporting may be coupled with a teacher's personal website (i.e. Teacherweb.com, www2.hcpss.org/rhhs/) giving parents access to instructional materials, links to tutorials, animations, and HSA review games. Monthly and annual school-wide ceremonies recognize student achievement at all academic and performance levels.

Communication is a priority for all school personnel. Data and student achievements (both curricular and extra-curricular) are shared publicly through the media, the principal's e-school newsletter, PTSA publications, the student-produced newspaper, and the school website. Administrators communicate student performance information to parents through assembly programs, interest group discussions, monthly informal chats with the principal, and PTSA meetings. All 10th and 11th grade parents receive a full College Board report and the guidance department provides evening PSAT workshops to help parents interpret individual assessment results. Lastly, the School Improvement Team, comprised of administrators, staff, parents, students, and representatives of other school organizations meets bimonthly to ensure that the school progress and climate data are used to improve the school community.

Individual student progress measured by local assessments produces quarterly data. Parents of students who score less than 60% on each quarterly assessment are sent a letter given specific remediation activities, i.e. dates of after-school study sessions, and online remediation activities which may include HSA games, simulations, virtual labs, and tutorials.

4. Sharing success.

All Howard County principals, instructional team leaders, teachers, and parents receive local assessment data from each of the twelve high schools in our county. Copies of River Hill's annual school improvement plan are filed at the Board of Education and are kept in a public room where any other school district personnel can review them. Instructional leaders attend monthly content-area meetings to share successes, and discuss intervention strategies and areas of concern in each school. Instructional leaders then bring information about best practices back to their departments and to the School Improvement Team. In addition, our principal meets monthly with assistant superintendents to discuss school-wide student performance. Content-area supervisors attend at least three major conferences a year to share strategies and receive high school assessment updates from the Maryland State Department of Education. At these conferences, information, ideas, research, instructional strategies, and successes are shared and discussed. The Maryland State website, www.mdreportcard.org, contains individual school results, including subgroup data for the last five years.

River Hill is well known in our county and state for the extensive number of teachers who present best practices at principal meetings, county in-services, and new teacher trainings. This past year, our

faculty members served on state standard-setting committees and presented at national conferences. For example one of our English teachers received the National Award for incorporating technology in the classroom and was asked to present at the National Teachers of Technology conference. As a result of our outstanding high school assessment results, our math Instructional Team leader also recently presented to the Board of Education highlighting teaching and program strategies that led to our earning the highest pass rate for high schools in the state of Maryland. This meeting was televised so that parents and community members also were able to stay informed.

PART V- CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The River Hill High School faculty provides personalized, high-quality instruction that connects academic excellence to real-life experiences. It is our goal for each child, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or socio-economic status to meet rigorous performance standards and to perform on or above grade level in all measured content areas. River Hill teachers work to eliminate all achievement gaps by ensuring that all student subgroups meet state standards.

RHHS offers a rich curriculum that meets the needs of our diverse student body, from special needs students to the Gifted and Talented. This includes electives as well as required courses. Students have access to a wide variety of advanced placement and elective offerings in English, fine arts and physical education, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, and career technology education. All content areas embrace a co-teaching model with special educators, as most of our special education students are mainstreamed into general education classes. In every class in all subject areas, students maintain portfolios that contain individual or group projects. These projects are an integral part of assessment and are constructed to reflect real-life experiences. In order to personalize instruction, teachers differentiate by addressing multiple intelligences, learning styles, and student interest and readiness. Technology, including streaming videos, LCD projectors, portable laptop labs, smart boards, and interactive software, is widely used to facilitate and enhance instruction. Increased enrollment in advanced placement courses and improved student performance on AP exams resulted in River Hill's receiving the prestigious SIEMENS award and being recognized by *Newsweek* as one of the top 300 AP institutions in the country.

The River Hill Mathematics Department offers a strong program for all skill levels, which emphasizes algebraic, geometric, and statistical concepts. Students develop mathematical reasoning, communicate mathematical ideas, connect mathematics with other disciplines, and problem-solve. Graphing calculators are widely used to explore applications. The success of the program is evident in our students' scoring first in the state in the Algebra High School Assessment, in our large participation rate for the American Mathematics Competition-12 exam, and in the numerous math awards our students receive each year.

All Science courses provide hands-on, laboratory-based learning experiences for students taught by certified discipline-specific faculty. High student achievement is evidenced by a variety of indicators including success on standardized tests. Many students take courses beyond the state requirements or opt to take multiple science courses simultaneously, which may include Forensics, Astronomy, or Marine Science as electives. The optional Math, Science and Technology (MST) Research Program provides students with the opportunity to work in professional scientific laboratories in industry, medicine, and some of the finest academic institutions in the country. The efforts of AP and MST Research students are consistently recognized at the local, state and national levels, including the most highly regarded pre-college science contest, the Intel Science Talent Search, where River Hill students were recognized in the past seven consecutive years.

The goal of the Social Studies Department is to teach content while developing enhanced reading analysis and writing skills that will benefit students and prepare them to be responsible citizens who critically assess current events from an historical perspective. Reading, analysis and writing skills (using the *6+1 Trait Model*© and *Reading Apprenticeship*©) are incorporated in the social studies classroom. Collaborating with English teachers, content area social studies' teams engage in intra-departmental vertical articulation conversations to discuss best practices and to address individual student needs. Social

studies teachers use programs such as *History Alive*© to provide educational experiences that emphasize multiple intelligences, cooperative interaction, experiential exercises, and spiraling of the curriculum while developing problem-solving skills.

The River Hill English Department offers a four-year sequence of courses and electives appealing to the needs and interests of all students. Course offerings also include diverse electives such as Speech, Journalism, Advanced Composition, SAT preparation, HSA Mastery, and Standardized Assessment Review Class. In order to serve the unique needs of individual students, River Hill's English teachers continuously review student performance in an effort to accelerate students and place them in courses appropriate to their skills and abilities.

World Languages are an integral part of instruction at River Hill. Students are offered four years of Latin and German and five years of Spanish and French, the first year of the latter two languages being offered in the middle school. Four AP language courses are offered as well as an AP literature course in French. Assessment of progress in Level 1 is measured by a county-wide examination in reading, writing, listening and speaking. The curriculum is based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' standards of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. French students compete annually in the National French Contest (le Grand Concours). Outstanding students in French, German, and Spanish are invited to join the local chapters of the National Honor Societies for those languages.

The ESOL Department provides a safe, nurturing environment with high academic expectations for a diverse population of English language learners (ELL). The ESOL staff provides instruction to English language learners to promote their development of English language, basic math proficiency, practical life skills, and knowledge of American history and culture. River Hill hosts the Newcomer's program which services new ELL students from all parts of the county.

In the Fine Arts, students are encouraged to creatively express life experiences through drama, photography, art, dance, and music. Faculty members in these departments emphasize critical thinking to help students individually explore essential skills. Students are required to take a minimum of one Fine Arts credit to meet the graduation requirement.

In Physical Education classes, students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity. In Lifetime Fitness, a required class for graduation, students design a personal fitness program where flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, healthy body composition, and muscular strength and endurance are emphasized. Weight training classes are tailored to students' personal health-related fitness needs.

Students in the Mentorship and Gifted and Talented Research Programs design original research studies or create original projects in self-selected, real-life areas of interest. Students move from being consumers to creators of knowledge. Students learn advanced level methodologies and demonstrate college-level writing and oral presentations. Working under the direction of advisors at school or with experts in the field, on-site student researchers identify problems, answer research questions, and communicate the results to appropriate audiences. For example, last school year our students produced nationally published neuroscience research, a mid-Atlantic jazz clinic, a one-man theatrical show, a county-wide film festival, and significant educational and public health research.

In the Career Technology Education Department, students develop skills that provide them with the background to continue their study at the university level or to enter the work force directly. Students use industry-related technology extensively, develop strong interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships,

complete internships, attend leadership conferences, and compete for recognition at the local, state, and national levels. Career Academies are a strong component of this department.

2. English.

River Hill English students are challenged to meet specific local and state standards, use a variety of strategies in writing, and read for an array of purposes. Students are required to pass four years of English and are placed in one of four language arts ability levels─review, regular, honors or gifted and talented/ advanced placement.

Through its focus on the interpretation, analysis, and production of literary and other texts, the English Department teaches students how those texts are shaped by and in turn shape the world around them. In addition, English teachers' professional development and research in literature, creative writing, and composition/rhetoric foster excellence in critical reading, creative thinking, and effective writing.

For all students in grades 9-12, the River Hill English teachers provide essential composition skills using the *6+1 Trait Model*©. Students are continuously scored on writing traits (ideas and content, organization, sentence fluency, voice, word choice, and conventions.) Creative and critical thinking is encouraged when teachers work assiduously to help students extend their sights beyond the existing county and state requirements. They are exposed to the cultural diversity and historical breadth of British, American, and world literatures. Advanced English students learn critical strategies needed for intensive study in creative writing, timed writing, and diverse literatures.

Students who struggle with literacy and/or reading skills study English in smaller classes and receive remediation through a variety of methods, including a unique peer mentoring program developed and managed by one of our administrators. Continual analysis of data from local assessments allows teachers to isolate students' reading and writing needs; regular data conversations drive remediation decisions. River Hill offers four reading courses (Resource Reading, Academic Literacy, HSA Mastery, and Assessment Review) to help our below-grade level students. In addition, nine of our thirteen English teachers have received academic literacy training using the National Reading Apprenticeship Program.

Another keynote initiative managed by the English Department is the school-wide Portfolio project where students collect projects generated from all of their classes, write a series of reflective essays that assess various performance skills, and then use the portfolio in the 11th and 12th grades during formal interviews and exhibition evenings. English teachers thereby focus on career planning, job seeking skills and interviewing processes while teaching essential reflective writing skills. The use of various technologies in the RHHS English classroom also helps students build on their oral presentations and interpersonal communications. LCD projectors, smartboards, and hand-held computers improve writing instruction, and software applications such as turnitin, APEX, and unitedstreaming inspire the development of creative and interactive lessons.

With a tradition of innovation, the English department is also proud of its AP vertical articulation efforts. Indeed this program is heralded as a model in our county and state. Instructors on the vertical articulation team regularly meet to explore new methods of teaching difficult text to prepare large numbers of students to take both the AP Language and Composition and AP Literature tests. Examining fundamental shifts in knowledge and language created within our multi-cultural community, our teachers continually collaborate to understand critical skills necessary for understanding and assessing difficult text. As a result of our eight year effort to increase the numbers and scores of students taking AP tests, River Hill is ranked by *Newsweek* magazine as one of the top schools in the country.

3. Additional Curriculum Area.

The Howard County Public School System offers a unique program for students interested in studying specific career areas while in high school. **Career Academies** allow students to enroll in sets of courses associated with a designated career. Career Academies are established based on a need for qualified, trained employees in various careers in our society. The Career Academies are clustered in the following areas: Architecture & Engineering, Biotechnology & Health Services, Business & Entrepreneurship, Culinary Arts & Hotel Management, Education, Energy, Power & Transportation, and Multimedia Arts & Technology. Students participating in a Career Academy have a clear path for graduation. For some of our academies, local colleges award students college credit for completion of the program. However, the strength of this program lies in the business-school partnerships, which grow each year.

Any high school student can participate in a Career Academy. Advisors and business mentors are available to answer questions and help each student succeed in his/her chosen area of study. In addition to specific courses in each Career Academy, each program requires:

- A capstone project, which can either be a work site experience, a research project studying careers in the academy area, or some other experience in which students learn more about the career cluster with which the academy is affiliated, and
- An advisory board consisting of business leaders in the Career Cluster.

Career Clusters encompass a range of related career fields and provide a way to organize teaching and learning.

4. Instructional Methods.

The strength of our courses lies in the variety of instructional methods teachers use to improve student learning. Among these are cooperative learning, inquiry-based science, flexible small group instruction, standards-based instruction, integrated technology, web-based accredited courses, career development across all curricular areas, portfolio assessment review, project-based learning, academic literacy strategies, writers' workshops, and cross-disciplinary projects that emphasize real-world applications.

Technology plays an important part in designing our daily lessons. With three, thirty-station computer labs, two portable laptop labs, smartboards, LCD projection devices, and a laptop for each teacher, our instructors enhance their lessons with technology-rich software applications. Students have computer and Internet access before, during, and after-school, with an intent to provide all students with technology and equal learning opportunities. Teacher and student research efforts are supported by our comprehensive media center. This center serves as a clearinghouse for many online research materials and offers inter-library loans and university and public library connections. In addition, media used for classroom instruction is housed in the information center and is delivered via an all-school media retrieval system that saves teachers valuable preparatory and classroom management time.

For our inclusion classes, students have access to two trained educators who collaboratively plan lessons and assessments. When possible, administrators provide these teachers with shared planning periods. If students are struggling in a traditional learning environment, River Hill provides assistance through the ninth grade team, the student support team, and the school-wide assistance program.

5. Professional Development.

Since River Hill opened in 1995, *Breaking Ranks II* has been the foundational document from which the school's curriculum and major initiatives have been established. Last year, during the mission statement revision process, the School Improvement Team again confirmed *Breaking Ranks II* as the major focus for improvement in the future. The school improvement planning process, incorporating Deming's PDSA Cycle, has created strategies that focus on three key areas: Making Learning Personal in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Collaborative Leadership in the Learning Community, and Personalization of the School Environment. Supporting these areas is River Hill's strong Professional Development Plan.

The school has planned and conducted Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment workshops addressing differentiation, project-based learning, and academic literacy. This has contributed to outstanding school performance on standardized assessments. Monthly department meetings also provide professional development in the area of instructional pacing and data analysis. These meetings have helped teachers use assessments to target interventions for at-risk student learners. Department and county technology workshops help teachers support instruction.

A focus on collaborative leadership and its impact on the learning community allows River Hill teachers to work together to achieve success. Members of the leadership team receive professional development on facilitative leadership and the Comer process, resulting in a stable and cohesive team of decision-makers.

"Making Learning Personal" is the school's motto. An excellent student advisory program using *Developmental Assets* as its core and a strong ninth-grade team support students' development as young adults. These professional development programs help teachers make learning personal for each student at River Hill.

PART VII- ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject English/Reading Grade 10 Test Maryland English II High School Assessment .

Edition/Publication Year __ Publisher _____.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	May	May	January/May		
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	NA*		
% At or Above Proficient	93	86	NA*		
% At Advanced	58	53	NA*		
Number of students tested	340	380	NA*		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	NA*		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	NA*		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	NA*		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1._ Asian					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	NA*		
% At or Above Proficient	94	84	NA*		
% At Advanced	51	54	NA*		
Number of students tested	78	91	NA*		
2._ African-American					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	NA*		
% At or Above Proficient	81	86	NA*		
% At Advanced	47.6	25	NA*		
Number of students tested	21	28	NA*		
3._ Special Ed					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	NA*		
% At or Above Proficient	70	48	NA*		
% At Advanced	20	14	NA*		
Number of students tested	10	29	NA*		

Notes:

* The English II exam has only been administered for the last two years.

** The Reading exam had been the Maryland State Assessment prior to the 2004-2005 school year.

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject Mathematics Grade 9 Test Maryland Algebra High School Assessment .

Edition/Publication Year __ Publisher _____.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	May	May	January/May	January/May	January/May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	97	85	79	78	74
% At Advanced	62	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*
Number of students tested	146	168	191	210	314
Percent of total students tested	100**	100**	100**	100**	100**
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1._ Asian					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	100	85	82	77	69
% At Advanced	79	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*
Number of students tested	14	26	22	26	26
2._ African-American					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	95	60	83	71	55
% At Advanced	40	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*
Number of students tested	20	20	24	24	29
3._ Special Ed					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	87	55	47	66	44
% At Advanced	27	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*
Number of students tested	15	11	36	41	45

Notes:

* The Advanced Score for the Algebra High School Assessment was only established for 2006 exam and beyond.

** The Algebra High School Assessment scores shown above only account for students taking the High School assessment while in attendance at River Hill High School. All students that are above grade level in mathematics take the exam in middle school.

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject Reading Grade 10 Test Maryland School Assessment .

Edition/Publication Year __ Publisher _____.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month			January/May	January/May	January/May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	NA*	NA*	100	100	
% At or Above Proficient	NA*	NA*	91	90	
% At Advanced	NA*	NA*	63	60	
Number of students tested	NA*	NA*	398	424	
Percent of total students tested	NA*	NA*	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	NA*	NA*	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	NA*	NA*	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1._ Asian					
% At or Above Basic	NA*	NA*	100	100	
% At or Above Proficient	NA*	NA*	95	88	
% At Advanced	NA*	NA*	67	61	
Number of students tested	NA*	NA*	73	88	
2._ African-American					
% At or Above Basic	NA*	NA*	100	100	
% At or Above Proficient	NA*	NA*	88	91	
% At Advanced	NA*	NA*	46	71	
Number of students tested	NA*	NA*	41	21	
3._ Special Ed					
% At or Above Basic	NA*	NA*	100	100	
% At or Above Proficient	NA*	NA*	56	71	
% At Advanced	NA*	NA*	22	29	
Number of students tested	NA*	NA*	32	38	

Notes:

* The Reading exam had been the Maryland State Assessment prior to the 2004-2005 school year.

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject Mathematics Grade 10 Test Maryland Geometry High School Assessment .

Edition/Publication Year __ Publisher _____.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month		May	January/May	January/May	January/May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	NA*	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	NA*	90	85	79	68
% At Advanced	NA*	39	24	19	6
Number of students tested	NA*	244	313	385	405
Percent of total students tested	NA*	100**	100**	100**	100**
Number of students alternatively assessed	NA*	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	NA*	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1._ Asian					
% At or Above Basic	NA*	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	NA*	92	92	86	
% At Advanced	NA*	50	33	14	
Number of students tested	NA*	38	60	56	60
2._ African-American					
% At or Above Basic	NA*	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	NA*	89	66	79	
% At Advanced	NA*	28	30	9	
Number of students tested	NA*	18	35	33	37
3._ Special Ed					
% At or Above Basic	NA*	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	NA*	55	60	34	
% At Advanced	NA*	7	10	6	
Number of students tested	NA*	31	30	35	42

Notes:

* The Geometry exam had been the Maryland State Assessment prior to the 2005-2006 school year.

** The Algebra High School Assessment scores shown above only account for students taking the High School assessment while in attendance at River Hill High School. All students that are above grade level in mathematics take the exam in middle school.

NATIONAL CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject Critical Reading/Math/Writing Grade 10 Test PSAT .

Edition/Publication Year __ Publisher _____.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	October	October	October	October	October
SCHOOL SCORES					
10th grade Critical Reading Mean	48	46	47	50	50
10th grade Math Mean	51	5	48	52	52
10th grade Writing Mean	51	50	50	50	50
Number of 10th grade students tested	331	364	379	264	291
Percent of total 10th grade students tested	100	100	100	62	69
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Asian					
10th grade Critical Reading Mean	48	48	48	51	50
10th grade Math Mean	54	56	53	57	58
10th grade Writing Mean	51	53	51	53	50
Number of students tested	71	74	64	60	43
2. African-American					
10th grade Critical Reading Mean	40	44	43	49	48
10th grade Math Mean	44	42	43	44	45
10th grade Writing Mean	44	46	46	48	48
Number of students tested	17	24	34	9	17

NATIONAL CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject Critical Reading/Math/Writing Grade 11 Test PSAT .

Edition/Publication Year __ Publisher _____.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	October	October	October	October	October
SCHOOL SCORES					
11th grade Critical Reading Mean	51	51	50	52	53
11th grade Math Mean	55	54	52	55	55
11th grade Writing Mean	55	55	53	52	52
Number of 11th grade students tested	358	366	389	326	286
Percent of total 11th grade students tested	100	100	100	81.5	81.7
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Asian					
11th grade Critical Reading Mean	54	53	52	54	54
11th grade Math Mean	61	60	61	62	61
11th grade Writing Mean	58	58	55	54	52
Number of students tested	80	63	79	54	41
2. African-American					
11th grade Critical Reading Mean	49	46	46	47	53
11th grade Math Mean	48	49	42	48	52
11th grade Writing Mean	52	52	48	48	52
Number of students tested	22	23	16	26	13