

2008 No Child Left Behind–Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Public Private

Cover Sheet

Type of School (Check all that apply) Elementary Middle High K-12
 Charter Title I Magnet Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Michael McDonough

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

Official School Name Pin Oak Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4601 Glenmont

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Bellaire

Texas

77401-2328

City

State

Zip Code+4(9 digits total)

County Harris

State School Code Number* 101-912-337

Telephone (713) 295-6500

Fax (713) 295-6511

Web site/URL www.pinoak.us

E-mail mmcdonou@houstonisd.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date _____

Principal's Signature

Name of Superintendent Dr. Abelardo Saavedra

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

District Name Houston ISD

Tel. (713) 556-6000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Harvin Moore

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

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date _____

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

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

Mail by commercial carrier (FedEx, UPS) or courier original signed cover sheet to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 5E103, Washington DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school's application as page 2.

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office 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 2007-2008 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have 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 2002 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. Throughout the document, round numbers to the nearest whole number to avoid decimals, except for numbers below 1, which should be rounded to the nearest tenth.

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

1. Number of schools in the district: 184 Elementary schools
 51 Middle schools
 0 Junior High Schools
 39 High schools
 37 Other
 311 TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 9691
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 9629

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 are
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural are
 Rural
4. 3 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
Pre K			0	7	183	198	381
K			0	8	174	214	388
1			0	9			0
2			0	10			0
3			0	11			0
4			0	12			0
5			0	Other			0
6	175	194	369				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							1138

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- | | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 0 | % American Indian or Alaska Native |
| 6 | % Asian or Pacific Islander |
| 25 | % Black or African American |
| 47 | % Hispanic or Latino |
| 22 | % White |

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 2 %

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	9
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1 until the end of the year	12
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	21
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	1138
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 7 %
81 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented 5

Specify languages: Arabic, Malayalam, Mandarin Chinese, Nepali, and Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals 49 %

Total number students who qualify: 557

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: $\frac{7}{79}$ % Total Number of Students Serve

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

16	Autism	5	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	20	Other Health Impairment
1	Deaf-Blindnes	36	Specific Learning Disabilit
0	Emotional Disturbanc	30	Speech or Language Impairment
1	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
6	Mental Retardation	2	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	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)	4	0
Classroom teachers	66	0
Special resource teachers/specialist	6	0
Paraprofessionals	10	0
Support Staff	9	0
Total number	95	0

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 $\frac{17}{1}$: 1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Please explain a high teacher turnover rate. 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 in attendance, dropout or the drop-off rates. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates, and only high schools need to supply drop-off

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Daily student attendance	97 %	97 %	96 %	96 %	96 %
Daily teacher attendance	97 %	99 %	96 %	96 %	96 %
Teacher turnover rate	8 %	10 %	12 %	30 %	25 %
Student drop out rate (middle/hig	0 %	1 %	0 %	1 %	2 %
Student drop-off rate (high school	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %

Please provide all explanations below

Dropout data is generally less than one percent for our campus. Due to the inability to denote less than one percent, we rounded the number. Thus our 0.2% for 2004-05 was rounded to 0. Dropout data for 2006-07 has not been officially determined yet.

The high turnover rate for years 2002-03, and 2003-04 can be attributed to a number of things. The building opened to students in fall 2002, and the original staff was comprised largely of faculty placed by the superintendent, rather than chosen by the principal. As the first two years transpired, the needs and demands that the school necessitated were unique enough that many faculty members determined it was not a good job match for them. As the school developed its vision, hiring practices were put into place to choose strong educators who were willing to become part of the community. Since then, the teacher turnover rate has been much more stable. The growing success of the school has been both a product of the low rate, as well as an element in keeping it low.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
Total	100	%

PART III - SUMMARY

The mission statement of Pin Oak Middle School, consistent with middle school philosophy, is to create small, personalized learning environments that are safe, promote mutual respect, support project-based learning, and provide choices for informed decision-making for the success of each and every individual.

Pin Oak creates small, personalized learning environments through both building design and scheduling. Students are arranged in small learning communities in which 120-130 students are sheltered in a single hall and share the same core content teachers. By scheduling teachers so that clusters and departments have shared planning periods, teacher time is maximized so as to meet the personal learning needs of each student. Shared planning time also allows for teachers to implement hands-on, active lessons and a project-based authentic assessment system.

Another key component to the school's mission is choice. Pin Oak strives to offer opportunities for students to try new things. There is no requirement of a commitment to one interest program or another for the full three years of middle school. With more than 30 electives available each semester, students can try something new each year at a beginner level. Within that same vein, more than 50 clubs are supported on the Pin Oak campus. Inside of this choice model exists a comprehensive athletics program that allows all three grade levels to become involved. A full fine arts program has blossomed, with offerings in Vocal & Instrumental Music, Studio Art, and Theatre. Pin Oak hosts a variety of dance programs ranging from beginner to competitive levels focusing on ballet, jazz, hip hop and lyrical dance, as well as a specialty program focusing on break dance.

Through student choice, Pin Oak students are fully supported as they venture out to competitions both within the district, and in surrounding districts across Houston. Participating in academic events ranging from speech and debate to science bowl to math counts, students are supported and challenged through these activities. Believing that the adolescent years are when many students begin to develop their social circles and make decisions, Pin Oak's consistent philosophy of saturating the school with opportunity becomes even more important.

Pin Oak Middle School opened in August 2002 in the southwest quadrant of the Houston area, in the city of Bellaire. The school is a choice option for students zoned to one of three neighboring attendance zones. Pin Oak also offers a large magnet program for Foreign Languages. Currently, Pin Oak Middle School has approximately 1150 students, with one-third of those being served by the magnet program. The student population is 6% Asian, 25% African-American, 22% White, and 47% Hispanic. Pin Oak families are diverse in socio-economic levels ranging from economically-disadvantaged students who make up 49% of the school population, to students coming from affluent homes in communities around Houston.

Pin Oak Middle School serves a diverse group of students, with approximately 38% identified as gifted and talented. More than 70% of Pin Oak students are enrolled in Pre-AP classes, and approximately 50% of 8th graders are enrolled in Algebra I and Integrated Physics and Chemistry for high school credit.

The special education population is 7%, while the Limited English Proficient (LEP) students make up less than 10% of the student body. The school attendance rate is 97%. Just under one hundred employees, including seventy two professional staff members and ten paraprofessionals, make up an ethnically diverse staff. The teachers' years of experience range from two-fifths having five years or less experience, to one-third having ten or more years experience.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1 Assessment Results:

Pin Oak Middle School takes the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) each year and is held accountable for those results through a statewide system. The TAKS is a criterion-referenced test given in math and reading for grades 6-8. Pin Oak administers a Writing exam in 7th grade, as well as a Social Studies and Science exam in grade 8. The accountability rating is based on a measure of all nine tests.

Pin Oak Middle School completed its fifth year in existence this past May, and thus finally has significant longitudinal data to begin to use as a catalyst for conversation. The TAKS exam was originally phased in over a three year period, with 'meets expectation' scores set at 2 SEM in 2003, 1 SEM in 2004, and at the panel level in 2005. The data that you will later see for the five year existence of Pin Oak is all the 'meets expectation' and 'commended' levels as set at the panel level, as opposed to the previously mentioned and publicly advertised levels. Pin Oak has always used this upper line of comparison so that once this higher level became the expectation Pin Oak would not see any false drops or false rises. Using the same passing standard level throughout, Pin Oak could more clearly see where students were at all times throughout each school year.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has four ratings that are given to schools based on the scores on TAKS. The exemplary rating is given if the school passes at a 90% rate, with that same 90% standard used for each subgroup. The recognized level makes use of the same criteria, but needing to meet each at a 75% level. The acceptable rating is given if a school achieves at 60% passing in reading, and 45% passing in math. Finally, any school that fails to meet those expectations in any subgroup is rated as academically unacceptable.

The subgroups that are used to rate Pin Oak Middle School include African-American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged. To have a student population group participate in the accountability rating, the school must have administered the TAKS to at least 50 students from that group. Pin Oak Middle School has always acted responsibly toward each of these accountability groups over the last three years. This direct attention after the opening of a new school was a result of there being a clear need to address the serious achievement gap.

In the summer of 2004, faculty members began to work on this important issue. The gap in some grade levels was significantly large, with differences reaching levels as high as 31 points (8th grade Reading between Hispanics and Whites). After completion of the 2007 TAKS exam, Pin Oak is proud to state that the largest gap that exists is a four point difference in 8th grade between Whites and Economically Disadvantaged. In fact, among African-American students and whites in 6th grade, the African-American students outperformed all other groups on campus with a 99% passing rate. Thus the achievement gap among the subgroups for reading has essentially been eliminated. Equally important is the idea that the gap disappeared without a loss in success. Every subgroup in every grade level met expectations in reading at the exemplary level (90% or above).

The disparity among subgroups in the math TAKS exam is of perpetual concern. After the first two years, differences existed at levels as high as 36 points (8th grade math when comparing African-American & White groups, as well as Economically Disadvantaged and White groups). With the results of the 2007 TAKS exam complete, the gap has decreased. Sadly, it still exists with some differences in the low teens. But when examining the decrease in the gap one can see that those higher remaining numbers are at levels half the size of their 2004 counterparts. Thus the gap is shrinking, and there is still work to be done. Yet the attention to every student at Pin Oak is what compels us to action each day.

The website for all state test data, and for more specific information on the accountability system is www.tea.state.tx.us

2. Using Assessment Results:

Pin Oak Middle School has embraced the need for disaggregating data so as to impact student achievement. Realizing that student learning is the most important aspect of education, a shift from a focus on only instruction, this new resolve demands that educators make use of the most current test data from the state exam, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Faculty and staff complete item analysis of each state exam, and share that information with not only teachers, but also with

students. Working within a performance pay model inside of Houston ISD, the conversation has begun to shift from just looking at achievement to a discussion of growth. By using assessment results to look at the growth of student learning, the need for data has been enriched.

This new demand has led to us making use of common assessments three to four times a year. Looking at student progress during the school year, faculty members have been able to identify students who struggle, and offer specific, immediate intervention to improve student achievement. Pin Oak subject grade level teams (i.e. three seventh grade math teachers, three eighth grade science teachers) meet for ninety minutes every week. By coordinating the master schedule so that entire departments share a common planning period, teachers are able to have both horizontal and vertical discussions of student work and the resulting data. This commitment to provide teachers the time to use data within the school day is a sign of the importance placed on it. By fostering a culture that embraces the sharing of best practices, data has found a home at Pin Oak. It has not been easy, but within the third year of such a practice, one need only look at the new results to see the power of this practice.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

The effort Pin Oak Middle School has made toward communication with all stakeholders has continued to evolve. Making use of standard opportunities to share student performance through report cards every six weeks, Pin Oak also sends home a comprehensive individual student progress report every three weeks for each student. Technology has allowed easier communication of all types of data to students and their families in new manners. By making use of electronic grade books, teachers have been able to more easily monitor student performance, and quickly respond. Thanks to the structure of Pin Oak, each student is a member of a cluster within their grade level. Each of these four or five person teacher teams makes use of either a blog or a cluster website. Through this means they are able to communicate in new ways to all of the community. Additionally, the Texas Education Agency communicates school wide assessment data through a State Report Card that is issued to each parent as well as being available online. Couple these with the immediate reports of assessment data that we now receive, and you can see how much more effectively results are conveyed to the community.

Realizing that students are the decision makers in the classroom, faculty members have stepped up their efforts to make sure they have reliable and accurate information. The need for specific and immediate feedback is such that students now complete their own item analysis after each common assessment. This allows them to feel even more ownership of their learning, and then they are able to set new learning goals. Finally, through the use of a school wide advocacy program, Pin Oak has established a student data brochure for each student. The advocate meets with each student to review their results from the previous year, determine how far from passing or from commended they were, and then set new goals of achievement on the TAKS exam. Educators lay out what it will take to reach that expectation, and the students then have a stronger sense of just what is needed to raise their achievement level.

4. Sharing Success:

Pin Oak Middle School is halfway through its sixth year in existence, and is in many ways the 'new kid on the block'. The success Pin Oak has had over the past few years has prompted us to initiate new means of sharing success. Blessed with a confident faculty, and an expectation to work within a larger community, Pin Oak has often stepped out of its school to engage in a conversation centered on best practices. The Principal and faculty members presented at the National Middle School Association conference in November 2007. At the same conference, Pin Oak was selected to serve as an official school visit for educators from around the United States. Pin Oak was also selected to represent the Houston ISD in a middle school symposium that included member schools from ten other neighboring districts. The focus of the symposium was to bring together middle school leaders to share and discuss strategies and practices focused around math, science, and technology. At the same time, teachers continue to present their exemplars at statewide conferences, as well as professional development trainings through Rice University, the Regional Education Service Center, and through the district. For six years, Pin Oak has hosted the Rice University School Mathematics Project, a month long training of math teachers from around the entire city. Additionally, Pin Oak serves as co-facilitator for the Houston ISD middle school network. This group meets every four to six weeks with the primary focus on sharing best practices around a specific topic. Finally, Pin Oak benefits through the structure of the district in that they work closely within their feeder pattern. By aligning early dismissal dates so that the entire feeder pattern has common professional development time, Pin Oak is able to share successful strategies vertically as well.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Pin Oak Middle School follows curriculum guidelines set out by the State of Texas through the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Houston Independent School District has clarified those curriculum objectives into a horizontal and vertical alignment called CLEAR, available to teachers online. Pin Oak teachers use both documents as guidelines for creating a stream-lined curriculum that challenges students at all levels. Pin Oak Middle School offers two levels of instructional rigor, on-level classes and Pre-AP/Vanguard. Using the AP philosophy, students who are able and willing to accept the rigor of the Pre-AP classes are placed in those courses. Unlike many other campuses, eligibility for Gifted and Talented is not a precursor to receiving advanced level services.

All teachers at Pin Oak are trained in Pre-AP philosophies and utilize supplementary materials to increase rigor. Pin Oak teachers also participate in Laying the Foundation (LTF), a professional and instructional development program designed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for improving rigor in Pre-AP classes to ensure readiness for AP curriculum at the High School level. Teachers also draw from the supplemental materials of LTF to strengthen classroom instruction.

Sixth-grade students are supported in literacy development with a double block of Reading/Language Arts, organized so that students receive 90-minutes of instruction each day. All other core classes are alternated in 90-minute blocks every other day, four days per week, with a 45-minute period of all courses one day per week. Sixth grade core classes include Reading, Language Arts, World Cultures, Math and Science. Students participating in the Foreign Language Magnet Program are offered a language and cultures survey course in which they spend 6-weeks in introduction to French, Italian, Latin, Spanish, and the newest foreign language offering, Chinese. All 6th grade students participate in either band or in an elective rotation in which they participate in 6-week courses including study skills, keyboarding, art, choir and theatre.

Seventh grade core classes include English, Math, Texas History and Science. The primary focus of 7th grade science is Life Science, but by design, the curriculum spirals so that all areas of science are touched on with increasing depth each year. Eighth grade core classes include English, Math, U.S. History and Science. Students are offered Integrated Physics and Chemistry as a High School credit course to replace the standard 8th grade science offering, as well as Algebra I to replace the standard 8th grade math. In cooperation with Carnegie Mellon University and the Rand Corporation, Pin Oak serves as a pilot school for implementation of a self-paced computer-assisted method of Algebra I instruction. Nearly 50% of all 8th grade students are participating in one or both of these High School credit courses.

All 7th and 8th grade students currently have access to five foreign language course offerings, including French, Latin, Italian, Hebrew and Spanish, for one High School credit. Also available to students is Spanish for Native Speakers, offering two High School credits upon completion.

Pin Oak has a growing arts program to enhance development of the whole child, with a wide array of performing and visual arts, including theatre, stage band, concert and marching band, vocal music, dance, break dance and art. Students may participate at a beginner or advanced level at any point in their stay at Pin Oak.

Pin Oak offers more than 30 school-wide electives, some academic and some interest-based. Academic electives allow students to pursue specialty areas by adding an additional science, math or literature course to the required core program. For example, students interested in additional study in the sciences may choose to take Environmental Sciences, Science Exploration, or Biotechnology and Global Health, a class offered through a program at Rice University. The interest based electives allow for real exploration among students, as well as providing opportunities for teachers to create, develop, and teach topics for which they have great passion.

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

The English Language Arts department offers a wide range of opportunities for students to improve their reading and writing skills at all levels. Except for students requiring ESL support, all 6th and 7th grade students are placed in Pre-AP English classes. By planning together in horizontal and vertical teams weekly, all Reading and English teachers cover the required TEKS plus Pre-AP strategies extensively. A common assessment is used at each grade level, every six weeks to measure student growth. The data is used to drive instruction.

Sixth grade students are supported in their literacy development with a double block of reading/language arts. As students move to 7th grade, instructional time is reduced to a single block of reading/language arts. Students who are not ready for the reduction from two instructional blocks to one instructional block are supporting through a reading intervention class. The reading intervention class provides students a small-group, 90-minute setting of intense instruction in the foundations of reading. This class also serves as a support for students who are transitioning to English.

The Pin Oak community has made a commitment to making time for students to read each day at school by implementing a 20-minute period of silent sustained reading at the beginning of each Reading/English class. Teachers also encourage choice reading with the assignment of an Independent Reading Project each six-week period. Consistent with the project-based curriculum, students self-select a book and choose a product from a list of assessment pieces.

Pin Oak also supports students' literacy development with electives and clubs. The elective course entitled Graphic Novels allows students to explore comprehension strategies with graphic text features. Through a genre of interest, students can focus on more complex comprehension skills like inference. Clubs like Manga/Anime Club, Chic Lit, and Harry Potter Club all seek to support interest in English/Language Arts, consistent with the middle school philosophy of offering relevant and active learning opportunities.

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

The Pin Oak Science Department offers exciting opportunities for students to explore life, earth, and the physical sciences throughout their Middle School career presenting them with challenges of increasing complexity throughout the year. Grade level and Pre-AP/GT science courses are available with students being encouraged to participate in Pin Oak's Accelerated Science sequence of Pre-AP courses in grades 6 and 7. This sequence prepares students for Pre-AP Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) in Grade 8, which can lead to one high school credit.

The curriculum concentrates on directing students toward the discovery of basic scientific principles and processes. Students are encouraged to conduct field and laboratory investigations rigorously employing scientific methods for analyzing data to make informed decisions. Consistent with project-based curriculum and the need for engaging work, Pin Oak completes at least 40% of the science curriculum through hands-on experimentation and lab work, including dissection. Students bring together the content and the experience through reflection at the end of each week. These Reflection Cards go with students to the next grade to serve as a resource to link prior knowledge with new learning.

Pin Oak offers a number of courses not available at other HISD middle schools that enrich a student's love for science. Pin Oak is proud to be the one school within HISD to offer the Global Technology course which emphasizes bioengineering and world health. This highly rigorous course is taught as part of a program in conjunction with Rice University. Another unique offering for students is a service learning opportunity available to 8th graders administered through the Research class. In this course, 8th grade teams propose solutions to real problems in the community and beyond. Students are expected to enter these projects in a national, web-based Science, Math and Technology Competition entitled e-Cybermission, sponsored by the U.S. Army. Pin Oak has received regional recognition every year and has had three national winners in the last five years.

4. **Instructional Methods:**

Teachers at Pin Oak Middle School provide a blend of instructional strategies to target the needs of all learners. Teachers offer a combination of lecture-based instruction with visual displays, discussion, demonstration, and hands-on learning opportunities. Teachers incorporate video streaming and other web-based instruction, as well as some of the latest technological means of delivering information to impact student learning. By varying instructional strategies and including auditory, visual and kinesthetic opportunities, teachers can provide an approach that meets the learning styles of all children.

to learn by doing, with ownership for choosing the product. By giving students choice in the ways they demonstrate learning, they are able to express all they have learned in authentic ways. Learning is evident through the halls of Pin Oak with the display of student projects. In addition to assessment through authentic products, teachers are sure to provide instruction on test taking skills and allow students the experience of traditional testing environments. It is the balance between authentic and traditional that prepares students for the challenges ahead.

Finally, differentiation is the key to sound instructional strategies on the Pin Oak campus. Consistent with Pre-AP philosophy, Pin Oak students are provided rigorous and appropriate instruction by differentiated depth, complexity and pacing of subject matter. All Pin Oak teachers attend quarterly training through Laying the Foundation (LTF), specifically designed to enhance differentiation. Participants are shown how to differentiate through depth and complexity on individual curriculum strands. Teachers also differentiate through strong questioning strategies. Teachers have been training in and use questioning to move from lower levels of Bloom's to the highest levels of critical thinking.

Also an important factor relating to instructional methods is consistency of instruction from grade to grade and content to content. Strong instructional practices are shared through vertical and horizontal teams, meeting weekly as small professional learning communities, and monthly as larger professional learning communities.

5. Professional Development:

The focus of professional development at Pin Oak Middle School lies in three areas. The work as a professional learning community is what sets the structure for Pin Oak's work as a school. In the summer of 2005, Pin Oak began to study and align with the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) philosophy. Beginning with a group of 18 educators attending a PLC Institute in July, Pin Oak took the first step toward creating time for teachers to grow and work together by transforming the master schedule. This first action allowed for ninety minutes of common planning time every other day for grade level content teams. This has allowed Pin Oak to embark along the path toward growing as a community focused on learning for everyone.

Layered within this work is a focus on assessment. Pin Oak faculty and staff have sought and received training on what assessment looks like, as well as how to use it effectively. Making use of assessment of all types, Pin Oak continues to develop the skills and strategies that inform grading practices. Tantamount to the idea of attributing real substance to the grades issued to students, faculty and staff looked even further into what constitutes quality assessment, and how that information is communicated. All of this work is inherent in a PLC, and assists the entire community as the effort to use assessment for learning becomes more entrenched on campus.

Finally, the Pin Oak faculty and staff never lose sight of the responsibility that comes with being a middle school. Professional development that is focused on the social, emotional, physical, and academic needs of students this age is paramount. Knowing the specific strategies necessary to be an advocate for children, to create an inviting, supportive, and safe learning environment, and finally, how to make use of multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to the needs and diversity of Pin Oak students is inherent within the ideal middle school. This is a new arena for many educators, as the research and needs recognition of this particular age group is still relatively recent.

Marrying these appropriate pedagogical transformations within a PLC has been a unique challenge. But the results so far have been significant, both within the measurable components of the Texas accountability system, as well as in the perception of what kind of school Pin Oak is. The rigor and challenges offered meet the needs of the gifted and talented population, while the relationships developed meet the demands of the at-risk population. Thus faculty and staff are finding achievement of all types within their students.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Subject Reading (LA) Grade 6 Test TAKS

Edition/Publication Year TEA Publisher TEA with Pearson Assessments

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent at or above met standard	98	93	92	86	77
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	66	50	51	30	31
Number of students tested	349	357	361	373	435
Percent of total students tested	96	97	95	95	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	14	13	18	19	16
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	3	5	5	4
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	96	88	87	79	64
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	57	38	41	17	17
Number of students tested	197	215	192	203	236
2. African American					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	99	93	91	87	83
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	64	59	45	26	17
Number of students tested	74	99	93	86	88
3. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	96	89	87	79	64
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	56	34	39	18	18
Number of students tested	169	177	137	159	200
4. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	98	99	98	95	92
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	79	68	66	50	55
Number of students tested	101	74	131	124	145

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent at or above met standard	93	87	87	81	77
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	33	22	23	17	18
Number of students tested	353	383	369	403	208
Percent of total students tested	97	96	96	96	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	11	15	15	17	11
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	4	4	4	5
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	91	82	83	70	61
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	22	16	14	11	11
Number of students tested	187	178	180	209	88
2. African-American					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	91	85	92	82	64
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	31	18	22	11	11
Number of students tested	101	102	88	76	47
3. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	92	83	79	70	63
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	24	16	12	10	10
Number of students tested	172	139		192	60
4. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	94	92	92	96	91
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	46	29	37	26	28
Number of students tested	69	136	122	138	94

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent at or above met standard	97	96	89	86	77
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	61	46	40	22	22
Number of students tested	345	335	366	218	145
Percent of total students tested	96	96	97	96	92
Number of students alternatively assessed	13	14	11	8	13
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	4	3	4	8
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	95	92	82	76	59
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	50	36	28	12	13
Number of students tested	141	154	180	100	54
2. African American					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	97	98	93	91	66
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	53	40	38	10	13
Number of students tested	94	87	68	45	32
3. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	97	92	83	67	57
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	53	34	24	13	12
Number of students tested	125	122		75	42
4. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	99	100	96	98	92
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	74	58	59	28	30
Number of students tested	122	118	127	83	65

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent at or above met standard	84	80	77	70	60
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	34	29	26	18	10
Number of students tested	349	357	360	374	436
Percent of total students tested	96	96	95	95	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	13	14	19	19	21
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	4	5	5	5
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	79	72	73	61	53
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	25	19	18	13	7
Number of students tested	198	216	191	202	239
2. African American					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	85	75	60	69	55
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	33	24	13	17	5
Number of students tested	75	99	95	85	88
3. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	80	76	79	61	51
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	27	19	19	11	7
Number of students tested	168	178		161	202
4. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	87	95	87	81	73
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	43	47	40	24	11
Number of students tested	99	74	132	124	149

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent at or above met standard	80	79	70	65	39
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	16	13	6	3	1
Number of students tested	354	382	369	403	210
Percent of total students tested	97	96	96	97	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	11	16	15	19	12
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	4	4	3	5
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	73	74	62	55	17
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	11	7	3	2	1
Number of students tested	190	176	180	209	88
2. African American					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	77	64	68	57	15
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	11	7	5	2	1
Number of students tested	100	103	88	76	46
3. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	75	82	61	57	25
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	13	9	2	2	1
Number of students tested	175	138		193	61
4. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	91	86	83	81	54
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	26	18	9	3	2
Number of students tested	68	136	121	139	96

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent at or above met standard	84	73	61	56	45
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	21	15	10	8	4
Number of students tested	346	335	368	218	146
Percent of total students tested	96	96	97	97	94
Number of students alternatively assessed	15	13	12	7	9
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	4	3	3	6
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	79	70	48	36	20
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	14	9	5	1	2
Number of students tested	141	153	182	98	54
2. African American					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	73	66	54	40	28
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	11	3	4	1	1
Number of students tested	95	87	69	42	32
3. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	81	70	49	36	15
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	13	12	5	2	1
Number of students tested	124	122	169	75	40
4. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
Percent at or above met standard	94	81	79	72	58
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Percent Commended	34	22	14	12	7
Number of students tested	124	116	128	85	64