U.S. Department of Education
2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) [ ] Elementary [**X**] Middle [] High [] K-12 [] Other
[] Charter [] Title I [**X**] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal: Mr. Irwin Adler

Official School Name: Herbert A. Ammons Middle

School Mailing Address:
17990 SW 142nd Ave.
Miami, FL 33177-7774

County: Miami-Dade State School Code Number*: 13-6001

Telephone: (305) 971-0158 Fax: (305) 971-0179

Web site/URL: http://www.dadeschools.net/schools/schoolinformation/school_details.asp?id=6001 E-mail: adleri@dadeschools.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. Alberto Carvalho

District Name: Miami-Dade School District Tel: (305) 995-1000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Dr. Solomon Stinson

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it 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.*
Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of 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.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.

6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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:

191	Elementary schools
61	Middle schools
	Junior high schools
49	High schools
146	Other
447	**TOTAL**

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 8594

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 8424

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

   ___ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	**7**	169	216	385
K			0	**8**	168	225	393
1			0	**9**			0
2			0	**10**			0
3			0	**11**			0
4			0	**12**			0
5			0	**Other**			0
6	155	233	388				
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL					1166

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 %	American Indian or Alaska Native
4 %	Asian
18 %	Black or African American
58 %	Hispanic or Latino
0 %	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
16 %	White
4 %	Two or more races
100 %	**Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 1 %

This rate is 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.	2
(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)].	14
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	1168
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.012
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1.199

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 1 %

Total number limited English proficient 6

Number of languages represented: 1
Specify languages:

Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45 %

Total number students who qualify: 526

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 free and reduced-price school meals 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: 3 %

Total Number of Students Served: 33

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

1	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	3	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	18	Specific Learning Disability
1	Emotional Disturbance	8	Speech or Language Impairment
3	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	0	Developmentally Delayed

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)	2	0
Classroom teachers	58	0
Special resource teachers/specialists	0	1
Paraprofessionals	0	0
Support staff	14	5
Total number	74	6

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 **21 :1**

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	97%	97%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	4%	11%	18%	18%	17%
Student dropout rate	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%

Please provide all explanations below.

Teacher turnover rate was impacted by the fact that some of our top teachers were recruited by neighboring high schools and by new middle schools opening in the district. Other teachers left Miami-Dade County due to cost of living issues to take jobs in other parts of the state and country. Several teachers left to become administrators.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

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

Recognized as a leader at the county, state and national level, Herbert A. Ammons Middle School stands out in student attendance, academic performance, parental involvement, use of instructional technology and overall program excellence. Students from diverse backgrounds explore global issues, communicate with confidence and build foundations for world citizenship. Award winning programs in the arts and athletics complement Ammons' rigorous academic offerings, challenging all students to become engaged, reasoned, responsible learners.

Ammons is a grade six through eight school located in the southwest section of Miami-Dade County, Florida, and is authorized to offer the first three years of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program. Ammons is a full magnet school without a boundary and attracts students from throughout Miami-Dade County. Students are admitted by random selection from the pool of applicants who have satisfactory progress in at least four of the following areas: academics, conduct, teacher recommendation, attendance, and standardized reading or math scores. Its 1166 students represent a multicultural mix of mostly middle class families. Of the total student population, 16 percent are white, 18 percent are black, 58 percent are Hispanic, four percent are Asian, and four percent are multi-racial. Less than one percent are English language learners (ELL), over 45 percent are on free or reduced lunch and three percent are in the special education program. Average class size is 21 students per class across the content areas. All of our Student with Disabilities (SWD) participate in an inclusion model with an average class size of 21. Ammons has a low mobility index of 6.

Ammons has a total of 74 full-time staff members and 6 part-time staff members. Two are administrators, one is a lead teacher, 53 are classroom teachers including 9 foreign language teachers, two are exceptional education teachers, and four are guidance counselors. The ethnic breakdown of the instructional staff is as follows: White 26 (41%), Black 13 (20%) Hispanic 23 (37%). Of the teaching staff, five percent are teachers new to this school and 30 teachers have advanced degrees.

The mission of Herbert A. Ammons Middle School is to engage students in developing their intellectual, emotional and social talents while promoting responsible citizenship and creating life-long learners for tomorrow's global society. Ammons students are experienced problem solvers, critical thinkers and speakers of a second language.

Ammons' program goal is to inspire creative and independent thinking by offering a balanced, theme-based curriculum with electives in the arts, technology and physical education. The program objective is to foster critical thinking and instill a love of learning in all students. Methods and activities include cooperative learning, laboratory experiments, cultural immersion, inquiry-based exploration, Socratic seminars, project-based learning, multi-media research, individual and group presentations and student performances and competitions.

Ammons meets the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program goal of offering students 8 courses per year. Students take annual courses in French or Spanish and the Arts along with semester courses in Technology and Physical Education. A course in reading and study skills called Approaches to Learning (ATL) completes the program while creating a slot for intensive instruction in reading or math if students need reinforcement in those areas.

Herbert A. Ammons Middle School is one of the most decorated schools in the nation. Some of the awards and honors bestowed on Ammons include:

• being #1 or #2 in attendance for Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) for 36 grading periods (nine years) in a row

• being recognized by the State of Florida for receiving an "A" rating based on FCAT test results for eight years in a row

• being the only M-DCPS secondary school to receive an "A" rating on the School Climate Survey from students, parents, and staff

• winning the FBI National Award for Internet Safety

• winning the State of Florida Five Star School Award for community involvement for 7 years in a row

• winning the "National PTSA Award of Excellence" (Ammons has 1,662 PTSA members and a school population of 1166.)

• being the first and only authorized, full-school International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program in M-DCPS

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

The State of Florida assesses all public school students in mathematics and reading each year from grades three through ten, and science in grades five, eight and eleven, using the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Scoring of the FCAT is on a five point scale with level one and two considered deficient, level three considered proficient or "meeting the standard", and levels four and five considered advanced or above average.

The following web sites provide information on the state assessment:

Florida Department of Education FCAT Page
http://fcat.fldoe.org/
The M-DCPS link to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test homepage
http://oada.dadeschools.net/FCAT/FCAT.asp

The most significant trend in test data for Ammons Middle over the past five years is the continuous progress made in both mathematics and reading. Looking first at eighth grade results for reading, Ammons' students registered a three to eight percent increase each year for five years. The smallest increase was from year one (2003-2004) to year two (2004-2005). The largest increase was from year three (2005-2006) to year four (2006-2007). Eighth grade results for math showed a similar trend of continuous progress with the percentage of students achieving satisfactory or above average results rising ten percentage points over the five year period. The mean score rose from a 344/500 to a 364/500 during that time frame, moving the average score from FCAT level 3 (satisfactory – "meeting the standard") to FCAT level 4 (above average).

Results of seventh graders show a similar trend of continuous improvement. Over the five years through 2007-2008, the mean reading score went from 335/500 to 353/500. During that time, the percentage of seventh graders scoring in FCAT level 3 or above (satisfactory and above average) went from 79 percent to 92 percent. In mathematics, the percentage of students in the satisfactory or above average range rose from 81 percent to 93 percent. While the mean score in 2007-2008 dropped compared to the previous seventh grade class, the seventh graders improved their mean math score by 4 points compared to their results in sixth grade.

The mean reading score for sixth graders improved from 328/500 to 343/500 over the five years through 2007-2008 with scores improving in three of the four years. In 2005-2006, the mean score was 350/500, the highest of the five year period. That year also showed the largest percentage of students scoring in FCAT level 3 or above, 93 percent, up from 79 percent in 2003-2004. Math scores for sixth grade also improved in three of four years. 75 percent of sixth graders scored at FCAT level 3 or higher in 2003-2004. This percentage improved to 87 for 2007-2008, only slightly below the five year high of 88 percent in 2005-2006.

The second significant conclusion drawn from the test data is the lack of a substantial achievement gap between the three subgroups – free and reduced lunch, Hispanic and Black students – and the total population. The trend over the five years is that in general, the achievement gap decreased.

Looking first at the number of students who performed at FCAT level 3 or higher ("making the grade") in eighth grade reading, the achievement gap between the subgroups and the overall population decreased from over four percent in 2003-2004 to two percent in 2007-2008. In math over the five year period, the achievement gap dropped from over four percent to under one percent. In seventh grade reading, the achievement gap decreased from four percent in 2003-2004 to less than two percent in 2007-2008 years. Seventh grade math results showed an achievement gap of three percent in 2007-2008, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, less than two percent in 2005-2006, and less than one percent gap in 2006-2007. Sixth grade results in reading showed a diminishing achievement gap over four years, going from four percent in 2004-2005 to less than one percent in 2007-2008

with 2003-2004 showing a gap of less than two percent. Sixth grade math results showed an initial achievement gap of less than four percent in 2003-2004 dropping to less than one percent in 2007-2008.

A remarkable observation regarding subgroup performance is that in some years, subgroups outperformed the overall population. In 2007-2008, the subgroup of black students in sixth grade outperformed the overall population by one percentage point in both reading and mathematics. In that same year, seventh graders in the subgroup of Hispanic students outperformed the overall population by one percentage point in math. The eighth grade subgroup of Hispanic students also outperformed the overall population by one percentage point in math in 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2007-2008.

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Ammons analyzes the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) results to identify students who are not making adequate progress in either reading or math and schedules them into an additional intensive class (see V 4). These students also receive invitations to attend FCAT Saturdays on two mornings in February prior to standardized testing dates. FCAT Saturdays are intensive morning review sessions on topics commonly missed by students or topics identified as being a problem to a specific student.

Students who have made adequate progress, but are at risk of failing, are identified and provided with assistance that is targeted at their specific areas of weakness. For reading, students work independently on the computer-based Reading Plus program. They complete 90 minutes of work each week at home. Results are printed out by Language Arts teachers and forwarded to the Reading Coach who does follow up activities with the students. For math, students are given a prescription of reinforcement activities using BrainPop. Students complete weekly assignments and take this computer-based work to two academic student clubs, the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) or the Math Hawks, who provide peer tutoring on areas of weakness.

Ammons also identifies those students who have made adequate progress, but can easily move further ahead with some pinpointed focus on their weaker areas. Current math and language arts teachers are given assessment results. Individual prescriptive plans are then devised to give reinforcement where needed most.

As science is now part of the state assessment program, the science department has devised a ‘crunch time’ calendar that reviews essential topics for each grade-level. These topics are covered in all science classes along with the normal course content.

Finally, FCAT Enhancement tutoring is available in the months leading up to testing. As part of the school’s Coaching and Enrichment Program, teachers are available Monday through Thursday after school for an additional hour to work on writing strategies as well as reading, science and math practice.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

Probably the most important way that Ammons communicates student performance is when the principal shares with all faculty, staff and PTSA officers at the Opening of School Breakfast the highlights and accomplishments of the past year. Emphasis is placed on progress made in the area of assessment. Reviewing school-wide and grade-level assessment results builds pride, promotes a positive environment and sets the stage for continued improvement. In a fast-paced PowerPoint presentation, everything from FCAT scores to accomplishments in the arts, athletic records and individual student successes are showcased. The emphasis is on high levels of achievement along with high expectations and high support.

A New Student Orientation is held each year where students and parents attend two, half-hour information sessions. These sessions explain the expectations of the school, the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, and the emphasis on reading, academic rigor and student involvement.

During the school year, parents are kept informed of student performance via a monthly PTSA Newsletter which has columns from the principal and magnet lead teacher. Parents also receive pre-recorded phone messages from the principal announcing upcoming events and testing dates. There is also a Parent Email Tree that disseminates news, opportunities for community service, and student accomplishments.

Monthly PTSA meetings are another venue for informing parents of all aspects of student performance. When bi-annual IB progress reports are distributed, magnet staff reviews this process with parents at a PTSA meeting. Another meeting topic is Portfolios which are a tool for formative assessment initiated and maintained by each student.

Once a week, the Miami Herald publishes the 'School Scene' in each of the regional Neighbors sections of the newspaper. Ammons is a regular contributor to the Neighbors South section. Ammons articles inform the community of student performance in assessment, the arts, athletics and other school and extra-curricular activities.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Since Ammons has an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP), the school belongs to a large, international network of IB schools that includes 1500 schools in the US alone. Should Ammons be awarded Blue Ribbon School status, this achievement will be communicated to all IB schools world-wide through the IB web site, and through the school web site as well as the district web site for Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Locally, under the auspices of the Schools of Choice office of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Ammons has and will continue to communicate with the six other MYP schools through common training and planning sessions. Ammons will also communicate with IB schools throughout the state at meetings of FLIBS, the Florida League of IB Schools, which meets quarterly to share accomplishments and best practices. Ammons will share successes nationally when school representatives attend the Magnet Schools of America's annual conference.

Ammons works collaboratively with elementary schools during the October to January recruitment process. Since Ammons is a district-wide magnet school without boundaries, students can apply to Ammons from anywhere in the county. The magnet lead teacher visits neighboring schools to encourage interested students to apply to the IB program. Additionally, applications and program information are mailed to district elementary schools. A November Magnet Recruitment Fair brings hundreds of parents and interested students to Ammons, and staff from Ammons attend recruitment functions at local elementary schools.

This year, over 1000 students have applied from over 100 different schools to enter Ammons for the 2009-2010 school year. Those 400 students randomly selected to attend will continue to send the message of Ammons successes to their home school populations.

Finally, Ammons has an award-winning PTSA. With a school enrollment of 1166 students, Ammons has a PTSA of over 1600 members. Parents are important stakeholders and continue to share Ammons' successes with other parents and school communities.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

All students participate fully in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program taking nine courses per year, seven annual (language arts, math, science, social studies, foreign language, the arts, and reading/study skills) and two semester courses (technology and physical education), in an alternating 4 X 4 block schedule. Students take four classes each day for 85 minutes.

All courses follow the expectations of the State of Florida's Sunshine State Standards and the Miami-Dade County Competency Based Curriculum. In addition, each course follows the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program subject area guide.

Students work in regular, advanced, advanced gifted, special education and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) settings. Students can accelerate in math, taking high school courses in Honors Algebra in grades 7 or 8, and Honors Geometry in grades 8. Throughout the math continuum, students learn to appreciate the power and practicality of mathematics as they solve problems in concrete and abstract settings.

Science courses are taught with an emphasis on laboratory experiments. Students develop their scientific curiosity as they build electric circuits, create chemical reactions and do dissections. They address global issues and consider the ethical implications of scientific progress. Students can earn high school credit taking Honors Earth/Space Science and Honors Biology in grades 7 or 8.

Advanced and gifted eighth grade Humanities (social studies) students use a high school text book to prepare for an Advanced Placement history course in 9th grade. All students build a Portfolio over three years which is managed through Humanities classes and includes a record of Community and Service activities. In their Portfolios, students reflect on their work and select samples for inclusion.

Language arts students learn to use their voice to express their views on issues both literary and social. Students develop an awareness of and appreciation for cultural differences as they read and respond to a variety of writings.

All students complete a three-year sequence in either French or Spanish. All students finish 8th grade with one or two high school credits in their second language. Second language learning is enriched with cultural activities and includes district competitions in poetry and theater. Students can sit for national exams in French and Spanish. As a community service activity, students interview French and Spanish speaking senior citizens in the local Fairchild Botanical Garden's Fairchild Challenge.

Annual arts elective options include art, drama, band, steel drum band, chorus and guitar. All arts classes are performance-based. Art includes drawing and painting, ceramics and photography. Ammons artists have been recognized by the Hispanic Heritage Show, the Renay Rossi Award, the Beaux Arts Show, and the Scholastic Art Awards. Band and chorus students have participated in All State and, along with guitar and steel drums, do two major performances annually. Drama students act in school and district performances and attend plays to further their appreciation of theater.

All students take a semester course in technology annually (see V 3 for details) and a semester of physical education (PE). In PE classes, students work on physical fitness activities and team sports. Ammons encourages students to compete in interscholastic sports, fielding teams in all sports offered at the middle school level. Ammons has won county championships in basketball, softball and cross country and has gone to the district playoffs in soccer, volleyball, wrestling and golf.

In all subject areas, students maintain an agenda to note assignments. The agenda contains a self-assessment log where students evaluate their progress each quarter in study skills and learning strategies. Students participate in the after school Coaching and Enrichment Program to receive individualized tutoring as needed. Tutoring is required when students' grades drop below a C.

2b. **(Secondary Schools) English:**

At Ammons, students develop their language skills in all courses. Interdisciplinary units allow proper language usage to be reinforced in all subject areas. In Language A (English) courses, students read, analyze, present, defend and argue about literature. Students learn to communicate persuasively, critically, and clearly, with sensitivity toward cultural and ethnic differences. Ammons' students compete in writing contests with entrants winning a trip to a rain forest in Panama and another winning top honors in the Fairchild Challenge for their essays on environmental issues.

Ammons takes a comprehensive approach to improving students' reading abilities school-wide. The students who score poorly on the state mandated test are placed in grade level remediation classes. These students receive instruction from a research-based reading program designed to improve reading skills. Students whose test scores are borderline receive increased support from their Language A teachers utilizing the Reading Plus online program to increase comprehension and fluency. This program is monitored by our itinerant part-time reading coach. All students not included in the intervention program are in a reading and study skills class called Approaches to Learning, which is based on the expectations of the International Baccalaureate curriculum. One program utilized in this class is called Accelerated Reader. Students are tested for their reading level. Then the software determines a goal and students take online quizzes to demonstrate their comprehension of the books they read. Students who achieve 85% of their reading goal then participate in school-wide incentives such as field trips and prizes.

All students are invited to participate in the Ammons Book Club. Students read and discuss literary works and have enjoyed meeting and talking about books with their authors. To promote reading throughout the student body, the Media Center is open before school, after school and at lunch time so students can easily check out books and find a comfortable place to read.

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

As a requirement of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, Ammons offers a technology course to students each year, grade six through eight.

In sixth grade, students take Computer Technology and become fluent in the use and operation of computers. From keyboarding to PowerPoint presentations, from on-line software applications to data bases, sixth graders learn to tap the power of the computer. They learn to create and save documents, access sites for educational purposes, and to receive and communicate information electronically. As students learn to use a spreadsheet program, they also reinforce their understanding of formulas, which helps them in mathematics and science.

In seventh grade, students take Design Technology where they build and launch bottle rockets, design and construct mouse trap cars, study bridge structures, then build and test them, and create and execute plans for building and flying kites. This hands-on course goes from the theoretical to the practical and leads many students to join the SECME Club (see Instructional Methods, V 4). Students follow the design cycle which helps them to investigate, plan, create, and evaluate their projects.

In eighth grade, students take Information Technology which encompasses research strategies, using proper citations, career exploration, Internet safety and advanced PowerPoint applications. The Media Specialist and Student Services Chairperson work closely with the technology teacher to broaden student understanding of how to optimize the computer as a productivity tool. A final project allows students to show off their abilities in these

areas as they select a topic of importance to them, research the topic, create a PowerPoint presentation, and participate in a Technology EXPO where they present to and are evaluated by their sixth and seventh grade peers.

The technology courses help to equip Ammons' students to be life-long learners, ready to contribute to and thrive in today's global society. To that end, the technology sequence reinforces the mission of the school.

4. **Instructional Methods:**

All students – regular, advanced, gifted, special education (SPED) and English language learners (ELL) – participate fully in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP).

During the Approaches to Learning (ATL) class which reinforces reading and study skills, students who test poorly in math or reading are given intensive instruction. The Ammons Intensive Math Program (AIM Program), focuses on teaching core math skills. Additional emphasis is placed on reading which is a key to understanding all subjects. The reading component is 49% of the mathematics curriculum. This year, the component of data analysis and progress monitoring via an online data management program have been added. Students who enter the class with an FCAT Level 2 (deficient) score have moved to level 3 (proficient) at a rate in excess of 65%. The Intensive Reading Program is discussed in V 2.

An after-school Coaching and Enrichment Program provides further support for students having academic difficulties. For one hour, Monday through Thursday, teachers are available in all subject areas to provide this tutoring support. Wednesday mornings before school, all teachers are available for tutoring as well.

Gifted instruction occurs in the core content courses of math, science, language arts and social studies. Gifted students work in groups, problem solve with peers, and explore curriculum at an accelerated pace working with teachers certified in teaching using gifted strategies.

Students with special needs are included in regular classes but receive additional support from certified SPED teachers using the inclusion model. When needed, students are grouped together in SPED Language Arts classes.

Students with interest in specific areas can join clubs that reinforce academic goals. Math Hawks compete in math competitions, SECME (Science Engineering Communication Mathematics Enhancement) Club enters local and regional competitions, and the Spanish and French Club, Book Club, and Chess Club provide further avenues for exploration and growth.

5. **Professional Development:**

Professional development (PD) activities at Ammons take place in a variety of settings with outcomes that vary but all contribute to improved student achievement. Five Early Release Days provide 10 hours for PD annually, two full days are designated as PD Teacher Work Days, and bimonthly Faculty Meetings yield another 10 hours. A monthly meeting schedule that supports the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP) provides another venue for PD. Each month, a series of 30-minute sessions take place: two in subject area departments, two in grade-level teams, two in common course groups, and one in Curriculum Council.

Much of Ammons PD focuses on technology which is a means for enhancing student performance in all classes. As teachers learn to use the mobile lab top lab, digital cameras, and ceiling-mounted projectors, they are helping students maximize their learning efficiency. Teachers learn software applications that provide stimulating, computer-based learning experiences for students. With training in communication software, teachers become more efficient and open avenues for professional sharing within and beyond their school community. On a recent PD Teacher Work Day, a district specialist guided teachers in the use of the Miami-Dade Public Schools

Portal which provides a wealth of information for teachers and students. The Portal allows students and teachers to communicate electronically, enhancing efficiency while equipping students with tools for success in higher education and the work place.

As an authorized IBMYP, Ammons provides teachers with IB training both in-school and at IB Teacher Training Workshops as well as through visits to other authorized IB schools. Teachers learn to navigate the IB OnLine Curriculum Center, finding resources to support their instruction and forums for discussion of educational topics with IB colleagues world-wide.

Content specialists have provided teachers with strategies for teaching reading across the curriculum, maximizing math instruction on a 4 X 4 block schedule, incorporating Advanced Placement strategies in social studies, using technology in second language instruction, and infusing technology in the science curriculum.

6. **School Leadership:**

Herbert A. Ammons Middle School utilizes a "Shared Decision Making" model to formulate its educational plans. The following stakeholder groups make recommendations on how school operation and improvement should occur:
• EESAC (Educational Excellence School Advisory Committee – parents, staff, community)
• PTSA (1662 PTSA members – student population: 1166 students)
• International Baccalaureate "Area of Interaction" Leaders
• Curriculum Council (administrators, team leaders, department chairs)

These groups meet on a regular basis and look into all aspects of school life from safety to curriculum, to community participation, to parent involvement, to academic progress. Their goal is to improve the quality of instruction at Ammons.

Hiring of personnel is of utmost importance at Ammons. The principal devotes countless hours to recruiting top-notch teachers for the school and spends much of the summer session interviewing candidates.

The school was built on the principal's vision that there are four pillars forming the foundation for all learning at Ammons.
Pillar #1 is reading. Reading is the most important student activity. Reading occurs in school for 45 minutes every other day and for 30 minutes at home each evening.
Pillar #2 is the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. We believe in the IB program. We follow it strictly and utilize all aspects of its curriculum.
Pillar #3 is technology. At Ammons, teaching and learning include technology to properly prepare students for the 21st Century.
Pillar #4 is family and community involvement. Increased involvement contributes to higher performance.

Ammons' leadership process contributed to the following awards and recognitions that make Ammons one of the most decorated schools in the district and state:
• State Department of Education 5-Star School Award (last six years)
• State of Florida "A+" School (last eight years – based on student assessment results)
• PTSA National School of Excellence (last six years)
• Florida Congress of Parent and Teachers Student Community Award
• Top middle school attendance award for Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) (last nine years)
• M-DCPS FCAT improvement award for highest level of FCAT improvement (last five years in a row)
• Top middle school sports program (M-DCPS)
• Magnet Schools of America – School of Excellence 2001-2004, 2008-2009
• United Way Goal Buster's Award 2005-2008

Additionally, the principal was runner-up for the state of Florida Principal of the Year in 2004-2005, the state of Florida Technology Principal of the Year in 2004, and Florida Music Educators Principal of the Year in 2000.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 6 Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2008 Publisher: State of Florida

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
FCAT level 3 or higher	87	82	88	83	75
FCAT level 4 or 5	44	37	56	49	37
Number of students tested	385	401	366	381	398
Percent of total students tested	99	98	99	98	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
FCAT level 3 or higher	85	77	83	78	68
FCAT level 4 or 5	38	30	47	40	27
Number of students tested	194	168	146	183	189
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
FCAT level 3 or higher	86	82	86	82	75
FCAT level 4 or 5	44	35	54	48	36
Number of students tested	206	225	185	188	200
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
FCAT level 3 or higher	88	72	84	79	70
FCAT level 4 or 5	34	27	51	38	29
Number of students tested	83	81	94	98	87
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 6 Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2008 Publisher: State of Florida

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
FCAT level 3 or higher	91	91	93	83	79
FCAT level 4 or 5	53	44	63	44	35
Number of students tested	385	401	366	380	399
Percent of total students tested	99	98	99	98	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
FCAT level 3 or higher	90	90	92	80	75
FCAT level 4 or 5	43	35	60	35	26
Number of students tested	194	168	146	182	189
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
FCAT level 3 or higher	89	89	93	82	78
FCAT level 4 or 5	51	41	60	40	35
Number of students tested	206	225	185	187	200
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
FCAT level 3 or higher	92	90	89	74	80
FCAT level 4 or 5	51	38	61	36	23
Number of students tested	83	81	94	98	87
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 6 Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2008 Publisher: State of Florida

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
FCAT level 3 or higher	91	91	93	83	79
FCAT level 4 or 5	53	44	63	44	35
Number of students tested	385	401	366	380	399
Percent of total students tested	99	98	99	98	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
FCAT level 3 or higher	90	90	92		
FCAT level 4 or 5	43	35	60		
Number of students tested	194	168	146		
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
FCAT level 3 or higher	89	89	93		
FCAT level 4 or 5	51	41	60		
Number of students tested	206	225	185		
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
FCAT level 3 or higher	92	90	89		
FCAT level 4 or 5	51	38	61		
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 7 Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2008 Publisher: State of Florida

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
FCAT level 3 or higher	93	95	92	88	81
FCAT level 4 or 5	54	66	58	48	46
Number of students tested	403	376	385	395	370
Percent of total students tested	100	99	99	100	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
FCAT level 3 or higher	90	96	92	82	76
FCAT level 4 or 5	50	60	53	41	37
Number of students tested	172	139	177	165	149
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
FCAT level 3 or higher	94	95	91	87	78
FCAT level 4 or 5	55	66	57	46	38
Number of students tested	224	196	185	197	170
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
FCAT level 3 or higher	85	93	89	85	80
FCAT level 4 or 5	38	52	46	39	40
Number of students tested	80	92	101	85	94
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 7 Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2008 Publisher: State of Florida

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
FCAT level 3 or higher	92	93	92	82	79
FCAT level 4 or 5	56	54	53	42	38
Number of students tested	403	376	385	395	369
Percent of total students tested	100	99	99	100	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
FCAT level 3 or higher	91	91	92	78	74
FCAT level 4 or 5	47	47	49	41	30
Number of students tested	172	139	177	165	149
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
FCAT level 3 or higher	90	93	92	82	79
FCAT level 4 or 5	52	50	50	44	34
Number of students tested	224	196	185	197	170
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
FCAT level 3 or higher	91	90	90	78	72
FCAT level 4 or 5	53	58	48	31	32
Number of students tested	80	92	101	85	94
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 8 Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2008 Publisher: State of Florida

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
FCAT level 3 or higher	96	96	93	89	86
FCAT level 4 or 5	72	67	60	53	46
Number of students tested	369	364	375	360	356
Percent of total students tested	100	99	98	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
FCAT level 3 or higher	96	92	93	87	78
FCAT level 4 or 5	64	63	53	47	36
Number of students tested	147	143	149	135	151
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
FCAT level 3 or higher	97	95	94	90	84
FCAT level 4 or 5	70	69	58	49	49
Number of students tested	197	177	186	167	167
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
FCAT level 3 or higher	94	95	89	84	83
FCAT level 4 or 5	65	56	49	50	36
Number of students tested	87	98	84	92	106
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 8 Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2008 Publisher: State of Florida

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
FCAT level 3 or higher	90	86	78	73	70
FCAT level 4 or 5	44	39	28	28	33
Number of students tested	369	364	375	360	356
Percent of total students tested	100	99	98	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
FCAT level 3 or higher	86	80	74	64	61
FCAT level 4 or 5	34	27	29	22	27
Number of students tested	147	143	149	135	151
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
FCAT level 3 or higher	89	84	76	71	69
FCAT level 4 or 5	38	40	29	24	33
Number of students tested	197	177	186	167	167
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
FCAT level 3 or higher	89	85	74	68	67
FCAT level 4 or 5	47	29	22	25	29
Number of students tested	87	98	84	92	106
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: