

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

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

Name of Principal: Ms. Melanie Horowitz

Official School Name: Central Elem School

School Mailing Address:
900 Central
Wilmette, IL 60091

County: Cook State School Code Number*: 14-016-0390-02-2002

Telephone: (847) 251-3252 Fax: (847) 251-4086

Web site/URL: www.wilmette39.org/Central/ E-mail: horowitm@wilmette39.org

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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Raymond Lechner

District Name: Wilmette SD 39 Tel: (847) 256-2450

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Alan Dolinko

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.

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

**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:
- | | |
|----------|---------------------|
| 4 | Elementary schools |
| 1 | Middle schools |
| 1 | Junior high schools |
| 0 | High schools |
| | Other |
| 6 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 18762

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 15715

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural area
 Rural

4. 6 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	0	0	7	0	0	0
K	39	44	83	8	0	0	0
1	65	73	138	9	0	0	0
2	62	37	99	10	0	0	0
3	52	49	101	11	0	0	0
4	65	65	130	12	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	Other	0	0	0
6	0	0	0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							551

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
6 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
85 % White
7 % 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: 4 %

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	9
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	11
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	20
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	570
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.035
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3.509

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

Total number limited English proficient 5

Number of languages represented: 5

Specify languages:

Bulgarian, Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, and Swedish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 2

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: 14 %

Total Number of Students Served: 75

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

<u>5</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>19</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>9</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>33</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>7</u> Developmentally Delayed

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)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>27</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>21</u>	<u>7</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>23</u>	<u>5</u>
Support staff	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>83</u>	<u>13</u>

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 20 :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	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	95%	96%	96%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	17%	14%	12%	12%	9%

Please provide all explanations below.

For 2007-2008, our teacher turnover rate includes: 2 teachers on maternity leaves, 1 teacher replacing a teacher who retired, and 2 teachers who took different positions in other districts.

For 2006-2007, our teacher turnover rate includes: 3 teachers on maternity leaves, 3 teachers replacing 3 teachers who retired, 1 teacher taking the place of a teacher on sick leave, and 1 teacher replacing a staff member who moved out-of-state.

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	<u>0</u> %
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u> %
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u> %
Found employment	<u>0</u> %
Military service	<u>0</u> %
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u> %
Unknown	<u>0</u> %
Total	<u>100</u> %

PART III - SUMMARY

Central School serves a population of approximately 551 children who reside in the eastern part of Wilmette, a North Shore suburb of Chicago. Students are friendly, respectful, and enthusiastic about learning. Most enter kindergarten with two years of pre-school and demonstrate high levels of “readiness” to learn.

The parents of our students expect quality education for their children, and they value the school's commitment to meeting the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs of children. Parent loyalty toward Central is reflected through very low mobility and high student attendance rates. Embracing the school's mission to, “prepare students for a rapidly changing and challenging future by developing intelligence that is both academic and character-centered,” students and parents join with teachers and administrators to form strong home-school partnerships. Most parents support the school in some of the following ways: PTA activities/fund raising; volunteerism; attendance at school events; publishing weekly and quarterly newsletters; and enrichment programs.

Parents are knowledgeable advocates for their children; they show interest in curriculum and methodology, and they participate in school improvement planning. Central parents monitor their children's progress and communicate openly with school personnel.

Our teaching staff at Central is highly educated, most with advanced degrees and several who have achieved National Board Certification. We strive to develop teacher leadership from within our building. As a learning community, our teachers continually participate in focused professional development opportunities, often serving as presenters in local, regional, or national venues.

The Central School community provides experiences for children that will help them develop sensitivity to and appreciation of diversity in the global community. This is done through enrichment programs, school-wide themes, and service projects. Central School's greatest diversity, however, is in the area of learning differences. A full continuum of special services is provided at Central School so that their “home school” meets student needs.

Among our school's strengths and accomplishments are the following:

- The Central School Garden has become the prototype for other area schools wishing to create an outdoor classroom.
- By embracing the brain research about gender-based learning differences, a math lesson for a group of third grade boys evolved in the building of the Central School Fort. The boys were guided in applying for, presenting, and securing a grant through our District's Educational Foundation.
- Our Online Virtual Museum expands yearly with student research projects focusing on Wilmette, Chicago, and Illinois.
- Our yearly book selection, “One Book, One Central,” fosters buddy-class literacy and writing projects emphasizing desirable character traits.
- “First Class Central,” our school “brand” guides respectful interactions and creative problem solving.
- “Disability Awareness” promotes understanding and inclusion of all abilities and the differences that make each person unique.
- “Habits of Mind” characteristics are promoted for developing 21st-century skills.
- Instructional practices are guided by assessment for learning to meet the needs of all learners.
- “Book Banter,” a book club venue for parents and teachers, centers on topics of mutual interest.

In summarizing the schools strengths and accomplishments, we are drawn to a remark made by a parent during a school improvement planning session. To paraphrase, “If someone asked me why Central is such an unique, successful, and amazing place, it would never occur to me to base my response on the high-stakes test

scores. While these certainly speak to our school's success, I would also talk about the incredible levels of teaching expertise, the commitment our teachers have to their students, the value put on enriching learning experiences, the partnerships between home and school, the high level of parent involvement, and the attention that is given to making our children better people."

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Central Elementary uses state and national tests, in computer and paper based formats, to assess individual student performance and school-wide trends. Over the past five years, test results have been consistently strong for the school as a whole and within individual sub-groups.

Each year, third and fourth grade students are required to take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in math and reading. State test information may be found at www.isbe.net. The state requirement to test fourth grade reading and math began with the 2005 – 2006 school year. These criterion-referenced tests measure the extent to which students are meeting Illinois learning standards. Terminology for performance levels is divided into four categories: “Exceeds Standards,” “Meet Standards,” “Below Standards,” and “Academic Warning.”

Central students consistently excelled on the ISAT over the last five years. In reading, 92% or more of our third and fourth grade students scored in the “meets and exceeds” category for all five years. Furthermore, fourth grade scores improved from 39.8% in 2007 to 67.8% in 2008 in the “exceeds” category in reading. Central’s students with special needs scored consistently high with 79% or more “meeting and exceeding” state standards for reading and math over the last five years. We are especially proud that 100% of our third and fourth grade students with special needs “met and exceeded” standards in reading and math in 2008.

In addition to the ISAT, Central’s students have historically excelled on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). From 2004 through 2007 all Central students in grades three and four took the ITBS in the areas of reading and math. Over four year’s time, our third and fourth graders performed consistently at the 99th percentile nationally in reading. In math, both third and fourth grade students have consistently performed above 96th percentile over the same four-year period.

Beginning in 2007, District 39 discontinued the yearly ITBS in favor of multiple yearly assessment measures to better guide instruction for individuals and groups of students. The intent was to create stretch goals that could help us extend beyond the solid performance we realized on the ITBS and other standard assessments. Additionally, Central’s study of findings by Dr. Rick Stiggins, founder of the Assessment Training Institute, helped us to rethink our use of assessments, focusing on “assessment for learning.”

Therefore, over the past eighteen months, all District 39 students are taking multiple assessments to guide instructional decisions. Scantron Performance Series is an online test given three times yearly. Performance Series automatically identifies each student’s readiness level in reading and math, generating more difficult questions if the student is answering correctly and easier questions if the student is responding incorrectly. A report of student gains, corresponding to Illinois State Learning Standards, is generated to inform instructional practice. Central does not have sufficient annual data to identify trends at this time as we are only in our second year of administering the Performance Series assessments. We also require our students to take curriculum-based measurements (CBMs) in reading and math three times yearly as part of a universal screening process. The reading CBM determines words read correctly in one minute. Central’s second, third, and fourth graders read above the national average. In math, the CBM assesses accurate math computation in two or four minutes. Central does not have sufficient annual data to identify math CBM trends at this time as we are only in the second year administering this assessment. Performance Series and CBM assessments enable teachers to identify “at-risk” students and those requiring more challenging opportunities, and to track progress over time. These assessments provide almost instantaneous results and allow teachers to immediately differentiate instruction.

Central teachers are proud of consistently high student performance on state and national tests, but we take even greater pride in the impact we are having as we address each student's learning strengths and challenges.

2. Using Assessment Results:

At Central School, we have devised a methodology for analyzing and reviewing test results so that instruction can be tailored to the individual student. This process is repeated three times yearly as we track the progress of each student and respond accordingly. The process begins at the start of each school year when the principal, assistant principal, psychologist, reading teacher, and differentiation support teacher analyze the previous spring's test results. This team meets with each classroom teacher to review these findings so that the teacher can identify appropriate instructional strategies, paying special attention to students determined to be "at risk." Moreover, the classroom teachers also consult with the previous year's teacher to get historical information about successful learning accommodations for each child.

Throughout the year, student progress is formally monitored and recorded at three intervals: Fall, winter, and spring. In September, Central students take the first of three Scantron Performance Series assessments in reading and math. Performance Series assessments are on the web, so educators can view the results immediately. This enables tailored instruction to occur in a timely fashion. Also in October, Central students take curriculum-based measurements (CBMs) in reading and math. Once the tests are completed and their results are interpreted, Central holds "data days" with grade level teams. At these data day meetings, the administrators, psychologist, differentiation support teacher, and special education professionals meet with classroom teachers at each grade level to determine how to best tailor instruction, create flexible groupings of children to meet needs, and utilize other differentiated teaching strategies. During each review, we also look for macro trends in the assessment data. If such trends are discovered, we discuss them with administrators and teachers during School Improvement Planning meetings. These processes are repeated in the winter and spring and are keystones for communicating information to teachers and tailoring instruction as part of Central's plan for Response to Intervention (RTI).

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

At Central School, we utilize a variety of media to provide regular feedback about assessment results to parents, students, and the community-at-large. The School Improvement Team—comprised of parents and staff—reviews assessment data and analyzes trends, formulating school improvement goals that are formally presented each fall at building meetings and grade level collaborations, at a PTA meeting, and to the Board of Education. These presentations at School Board meetings are televised so that the greater community is informed about school successes and targeted areas for improvement. Moreover, aggregated test results are also posted on the district and school websites, and can be found in local newspapers. Individual detailed student results are also mailed home to parents and are discussed with parents during parent-teacher conferences. An additional yearly presentation to our PTA, "Interpreting Test Results," includes information about how the school actually uses testing results to guide instructional decision-making.

We have recently implemented a new philosophy and format for report cards and conferencing in Wilmette Public Schools based on the work of Dr. Thomas Guskey (University of Kentucky, Georgetown University, and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Design [ASCD]). Our Central School principal and one of our fourth grade teachers co-chair the District committee behind this initiative, which emphasizes reporting distinctions between "process, product, and progress" and promotes a standards-based grading system. We believe this new system helps teachers to communicate student strengths and challenge areas more accurately to parents and students. A benefit of the staff training for this initiative has been the emphasis on providing specific and frequent feedback to students about their school performances. Student-led conferences, student goal-setting, student-friendly rubrics, and student self-assessment are strategies being explored by many staff members as ways to help students become more aware of their strengths and challenges and to become

stronger self-advocates. We are even experimenting with selective student participation in portions of IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings, using simple graphs that reflect their own progress monitoring and identifying benchmarking goals they wish to pursue.

4. Sharing Success:

The numerous nominations and awards our teachers receive afford us with opportunities to share our successes. Each year, several of Central's teachers receive nominations for a Golden Apple Award, an award that honors superior Chicago-area teachers; three of our teachers have been awarded Golden Apples within the last ten years. In addition, three teachers achieved National Board Certification. Our Library Media Specialist received the first Sarah Jaffarian Award in 2007 for exemplary humanities programming; and has been invited through People to People Ambassador Programs to join a United States delegation of librarians to South Africa next October for a mutual exchange of best practices.

In the last five years, teachers and administrators from Central have shared their successes and expertise through presentations made at local, state, and national venues including the following: The Lake County Curriculum Resource Council, the Midwest Principals' Center, the Annual Conference for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Illinois Association for Gifted Children (IAGC), National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), Staff Development for Educators (SDE), World Book Encyclopedia Corporate Office - Research in the 21st Century, Illinois State Library Media Association (ISLMA), and Active Learning Systems - IIM training. Our administrators are members of a township consortium of elementary principals whose schools feed into the local high school district. With similar demographics in the township schools, there is high applicability of successes that are shared.

Our school website, www.wilmette39.org/central/, provides a wealth of information within and beyond our community. Our "Virtual Museum," accessed by people from around the world, presents student research about our state and local community. Major school initiatives, such as "One Book, One Central," "Disability Awareness," The Central "Fox Newsroom," and "First Class Central" are among the online links that highlight our work at Central. Additionally, web browsers will find resources for students, parents, and teachers on our site.

Our successes have also been shared in national media. Among our recent recognitions, Peg Tyre, author of *The Trouble with Boys: A Surprising Report Card on Our Sons, Their Problems at School, and What Parents and Educators Must Do* (2008), profiled District 39 and highlighted two of Central's teachers for closing the gender gap in learning. Last November, *The Today Show* included Central in their coverage of ways in which gender gaps in reading and writing achievement are addressed.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Wilmette District 39 provides a comprehensive and rigorous curriculum based on research of best practices and district and state standards. Our curriculum maps feature essential questions based on the big ideas in each curricular area. Central teachers are committed to differentiated instructional practice and providing support for all learners.

Mathematics: We embrace a problem solving approach that is consistent with skills emphasized by the Partnership for 21st-Century Learning. Our core curriculum includes number sense and facts, patterns, relations, algebraic thinking, geometry, measurement, data analysis, and reasoning. Connections to authentic applications and use of manipulative tools engage our students in meaningful activities. Our parents value a strong home-school component; skills taught during the school day are reinforced through math games that are played at home. Additionally, our curriculum emphasizes mastery in math fact automaticity.

Science: Thematic science units present principals and content in life, physical, and earth sciences. Instruction emphasizes big ideas such as Systems and Change. Responsibility, respect, and ethical behaviors are embedded within all inquiry. Children frequently complete research projects that provide an opportunity to practice information literacy skills using primary sources. The Central School Garden, our outdoor classroom, is used as a prototype at other area schools. We frequently consult and use resources and experts in the Chicago area, such as museums, nature centers, and university personnel. We are fortunate to have a “Scientist-in-Residence” provided through PTA funds that provide enrichment activities to supplement our curriculum.

Social Studies: The over-arching goals of our Social Studies curriculum are designed to build global citizens who recognize the interrelatedness and interdependence of mankind and the world. Students learn about local and world communities, the history of their home state and village, the interactions of humans with each other and their environments, and the impact of regional characteristics on these interactions. Students build reference skills, map skills, and geographical knowledge. Higher level thinking skills are emphasized through investigations of cause and effect relationships, understandings about political and economic diversity, and problem solving present and hypothetical challenges.

Physical Education: Children participate in daily Physical Education classes, which contribute to the development of the individual through physical movement. Learning experiences develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for efficient body management. Our goal is to develop lifetime physical-activity habits through a wide variety of units such as soccer, football, basketball, team building, floor hockey, aerobics, volleyball, dance and rhythmic activities, rope jumping, locomotors and non-loco motor activities, ball and object handling, manipulative skills, body control, rope climbing, kicking skills, and track and field activities.

Health: Students study dental health, substance abuse prevention, family life, human growth and development, nutrition, mental health, hygiene, environmental health, disease prevention, consumer health, and household safety.

Art: Students acquire basic skills to produce works of art using a variety of processes, tools, and materials. Instruction includes design principles and familiarity with artworks representing historical periods and artistic movements. Students investigate the function of the arts in society today through the study of art forms important to diverse cultural traditions.

Music: Students study the subject of music in a very active manner. Elements of music are explored through singing, movement, improvisation, and the use of Orff instruments and other varied percussion instruments. The history and culture of music is experienced through literature, storytelling, and dramatization. Monthly assemblies provide a performance venue for children to combine dramatizations and music as we share patriotic music and emphasize the positive character traits that are part of “First Class Central.”

Foreign Language: Spanish is taught daily in first through fourth grades, and in kindergarten twice weekly. All of these classes are conducted completely in Spanish—using music, physical movement, pictures, and technology—to facilitate skill fluency and proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Core classroom content is supported with corresponding Spanish vocabulary to reinforce the curriculum and provide a venue for successful Spanish acquisition by building on previous knowledge. Students also acquire an understanding and appreciation of another culture.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

Central School implements a balanced literacy approach to teach reading. Our early literacy instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, high frequency words, reading strategies, comprehension, and vocabulary. For the intermediate grades, instruction focuses on comprehension strategies; making text connections to self, other texts, and the world; and higher order thinking skills. Fluency instruction is also implemented throughout the grades with the help of choral readings and repeated readings. Connecting reading to writing begins early with shared reading, modeled and interactive writing experiences, and independent reading and writing opportunities. “Read aloud” sessions and reading buddies are integrated through all grades to build fluency and foster a life-long enjoyment of reading. “Text coding” is an important skill that is emphasized with non-fiction reading.

In the classroom, teachers facilitate guided-reading groups using a balance of fiction and non-fiction texts. The books are leveled to provide appropriate scaffolding of skills. Our guided reading groups are fluid throughout the year; teachers use progress-monitoring data, informal reading inventories, and running records to make informed decisions about group composition. Flexible grouping helps teachers differentiate instruction as children’s needs evolve throughout the year. Our tri-annual benchmarking process informs us of each child’s progress. Targeted students are assisted with research-based programs in the Reading Intervention Program and Response to Intervention (RTI) groups in and out of the classroom; these students are progress monitored frequently to ensure each child’s growth. Our staff and building data team review benchmarking data to monitor fluency, review local and state expectations, and for goal-setting purposes. This data is also used to identify teacher-training needs (i.e. phonemic awareness or fluency instruction).

And finally, our library media specialist plays a major role in developing a love of reading through a variety of reading programs. Our year is enriched with Children’s Book Week, a school-wide celebration of children’s literature; participation in “Read Across America;” and “One Book, One Central,” an in-depth book study by the entire school community; and individual grade level programs that introduce students to quality literature in a variety of genres.

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

This question is for secondary schools only

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

Additional Curriculum Area - Information Literacy:

Our Library Media curriculum is designed for students around three essential questions: How does my understanding of library organization affect how I access, evaluate, and use information? How does information literacy help me become an independent lifelong learner? What are my responsibilities as a user of information?

At Central School, we put these essential questions into practice by training children in a research process to prepare them for 21st-century learning. All students from grades K – 4 are trained to use the Independent Investigation Method (IIM). This process applies information literacy skills and creates a meaningful and manageable research process for all students. We chose this process because it naturally differentiates assignments based on students' needs, interests and abilities. This process also provides a common vocabulary and continuity for all our students. The process has seven steps: Creating a topic, setting goals, researching the topic, organizing information and resources, evaluating work, creating a product, and presenting findings. Through this process students learn to: Use graphic organizers to structure their research; to write questions that guide their research; to choose, organize, and evaluate resources; practice note taking without plagiarizing; self-evaluate for the purpose of improving research skills; and increase communication skills in listening, reading, and speaking.

This research method is taught collaboratively and purposefully between our Library Media Specialist (LMS) and the classroom teacher. The LMS guides students through the research process by infusing the information literacy skills into classroom curriculum. These skills include teaching students to use a wide variety of reference materials—print and electronic—such as atlases, almanacs, encyclopedias, or websites. Other staff members are recruited as needed to assist with the process. As examples, our technology teacher facilitates safe web searches or projects utilizing technology; our differentiation support teacher assists students with creating meaningful essential questions for their topics or brainstorming different projects and products to support individual learning styles.

4. Instructional Methods:

Central teachers are expected to differentiate instruction to match the varying needs, abilities, and interests within the classroom. Teachers at Central draw from a wide repertoire of strategies to provide continuous learning opportunities that are appropriate and challenging for all students. In addition, we are attending to the learning needs of 21st-century learners by providing opportunities for student collaboration and problem solving opportunities, and by investigating flexible learning environments and innovative technologies.

We distinguish between assessment of instruction and assessment for instruction; our school improvement plan emphasizes the latter as our common practice for guiding instructional decisions. Using the Problem Solving Method and Response to Intervention (RTI) models, Central teachers deliver evidence-based instruction and interventions that match students' academic and behavioral needs. Student strengths and weaknesses are progress monitored so that teachers continually diagnose deficiencies, identify strengths, and tailor instruction. Classroom teachers regularly consult and team-teach with the Differentiation Support Teacher (DST) and Learning Behavior Specialists (LBSs) to provide additional support for students. Guided reading and math, flexible grouping, tiered-instruction, teacher modeling, text-connections, and higher-level thinking skills are among the typical instructional methods used by Central teachers.

Additionally, Central School teachers have studied the brain research that addresses various learning styles and intelligences, along with gender differences impacting learning. Through professional development, this information has been shared among our staff and teachers apply this knowledge through their instructional practices. Examples of these applications are evident in lessons that include multiple presentation modalities, selections of materials and activities based on generalized gender preferences, flexible groupings based on learning styles or gender preferences, and thoughtful balances of sedentary and active activities.

With a focus on “process skills,” we emphasize strategies used by successful learners, evident in Habits of Mind, by Costa and Kallick, such as transferring knowledge to new situations, taking responsible risks, thinking interdependently, and demonstrating perseverance. We provide many opportunities for teacher-modeled demonstrations, “hands-on” experimentation, brainstorming, guided student practice, and simulations. Whenever possible, teacher emphasize authentic activities with “real life” connections.

5. Professional Development:

Our teachers and administrators participate in meaningful professional development venues that positively impact student learning:

- **Continuing Education Initiatives:** District classes are self-selected by teachers in areas they feel they need more information or training. Many of these are attended or taught by Central staff. One of these, “Book Banter,” is an especially successful book club led by our principal and three teachers to foster home-school partnerships as staff and parents study and discuss topics of mutual interest.
- **Faculty Meetings:** These focus on school improvement goals, new materials, initiatives, instructional strategies, or programs. Presenters include building or district leaders, outside consultants, or expert staff.
- **Faculty Study Groups:** Faculty interest and school improvement initiatives drive building learning communities to explore topics such as gender differences, information literacy, bullying and teasing, creativity, assessment, writing, and disability awareness. Teachers do extensive reading about topics, identify applications to our learning environment, and create and present action plans to the entire faculty.
- **Collaborations:** Each grade level is allotted five half-day collaborations per year. At these meetings, teachers address SIP goals, such as examining student work to ensure assessment consistency. They also plan and coordinate integrated projects that address curricular goals. Our principal, library media specialist, reading specialist, differentiation support teacher, and technology teacher serve as resources at these meetings.
- **Mentoring:** Beginning teachers receive support from a building mentor and a district mentor. The mentees also attend workshops for training in procedures, curricular materials, and district resources sponsored by our Departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Student Services.
- **Professional Workshops and Conferences:** Teachers seek approval of the building principal to attend professional workshops and conferences. Additionally, many of our teacher-leaders and administrators are presenters in areas such as differentiated instruction, information literacy skills, home-school communication, special education, and technology. With a building principal who serves as the Vice President of the Midwest Principals Center and a school library media specialist who was awarded the first Jaffarian Award, Central is in a unique position to receive current information on important educational research, educational consultants, and innovations, and trends.
- **Institute Days, Professional Development Days, and “SIP” Days:** These days are built in our district’s yearly calendar to provide training, collaboration, and opportunities to prepare for reporting and grading student achievement.

6. School Leadership:

Central School has both formal and informal leadership structures. Formally, our building leadership includes a Principal, a part-time Assistant Principal, and a part-time Student Services Coordinator. This trio ensures that school/district policies, programs, and resources focus on improving student achievement, assuring legal rights to parents and students, developing desirable character habits in students, and ensuring school safety.

Informally however, we promote a shared leadership model, which embraces natural leadership ability and leadership born out of expertise in school staff. Leadership opportunities are available to all members of the staff. We support internships of teachers seeking advanced degrees and in doing so, provide a training ground for “growing our own” leaders. Each team of teachers selects their representative to the Principal’s Advisory

Committee, which acts as an advisory and problem solving board. Our School Improvement Committee, composed of teachers, parents, and the building administrators, acts as a leadership group in our school improvement planning process. Building Faculty Study Groups—such as the Disability Awareness Committee, the Writing Study Group, and the Gender Study Group—arise out of our school improvement initiatives and building needs; the Principal assumes initial leadership of these groups, but the expectation is that leadership evolves from within each group. Our Differentiation Support Teacher, Library Media Specialist, and Technology Teacher play major roles in facilitating our regular cycle of grade-level collaborations. Some leadership roles earn extra-duty district stipends for teachers, such as our Intervention Team leaders. Leadership of district-wide committees is typically shared between members of the administration and the teaching staff, as is the case in our district’s Progress Reporting Committee. And finally, our Central School staff and principal have played major roles on the District’s Community Review Committee. This advisory group to our Board of Education—comprised of parents, teachers, community members, and administrators—researches topics leading to school improvements and makes action recommendations.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Illinois State Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008 Publisher: Illinois State Board of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	99	98	96	97	99
%Exceeds	65	71	63	63	59
Number of students tested	123	116	100	140	99
Percent of total students tested	96	98	95	97	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	1	1	5	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	1	1	3	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	99	98	97	97	99
%Exceeds	66	71	62	65	57
Number of students tested	108	103	100	134	94
3. (specify subgroup): Students with Disabilities					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	100	94	0	88	93
%Exceeds	37	50	0	44	14
Number of students tested	19	18	0	17	17
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Illinois State Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Illinois State Board of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	93	96	92	92	96
%Exceeds	48	46	51	47	58
Number of students tested	124	116	100	140	99
Percent of total students tested	97	98	95	97	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	1	1	5	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	1	1	3	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	94	95	92	92	96
%Exceeds	50	46	51	47	56
Number of students tested	109	103	100	134	94
3. (specify subgroup): Students with Disabilities					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	79	89	0	75	79
%Exceeds	21	28	0	19	21
Number of students tested	19	18	0	17	17
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Illinois State Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Illinois State Board of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	100	96	97	0	0
%Exceeds	59	45	50	0	0
Number of students tested	117	112	142	0	0
Percent of total students tested	97	97	99	0	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	2	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	100	99	96	0	0
%Exceeds	59	45	51	0	0
Number of students tested	105	103	133	0	0
3. (specify subgroup): Students with Disabilities					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	100	0	89	0	0
%Exceeds	35	0	17	0	0
Number of students tested	17	0	18	0	0
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Fourth Grade was not tested in math by the State in 2003-2005.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Illinois State Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Illinois State Board of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	98	96	93	0	0
%Exceeds	68	40	54	0	0
Number of students tested	118	113	143	0	0
Percent of total students tested	98	97	99	0	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	98	98	93	0	0
%Exceeds	67	71	54	0	0
Number of students tested	106	104	134	0	0
3. (specify subgroup): Students with Disabilities					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	89	0	90	0	0
%Exceeds	33	0	26	0	0
Number of students tested	18	0	19	0	0
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Fourth Grade was not tested in reading by the State in 2003-2005.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Illinois State Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Illinois State Board of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	98	96	93	0	0
%Exceeds	68	40	54	0	0
Number of students tested	118	113	143	0	0
Percent of total students tested	98	97	99	0	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	98	98	93	0	0
%Exceeds	67	71	54	0	0
Number of students tested	106	104	134	0	0
3. (specify subgroup): Students with Disabilities					
%Meets plus %Exceeds	89	0	90	0	0
%Exceeds	33	0	26	0	0
Number of students tested	18	0	19	0	0
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Fourth Grade was not tested in reading by the State in 2003-2005.

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