

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: Dr. Timothy Rusnak

Official School Name: Benjamin Franklin High School

School Mailing Address:
2001 Leon C. Simon Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70122-3524

County: Orleans State School Code Number*: 036043

Telephone: (504) 286-2600 Fax: (504) 286-2642

Web site/URL: benfranklinhighschool.org E-mail: timothy_rusnak@benfranklinhighschool.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*: Mr. Darryl Kilbert

District Name: Orleans Tel: (504) 304-3520

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. Duris Holmes

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:
- | | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 3 | Elementary schools |
| 0 | Middle schools |
| 0 | Junior high schools |
| 2 | High schools |
| 12 | Other |
| 17 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 7887

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 8402

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

1 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	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	9	60	100	160
2	0	0	0	10	46	84	130
3	0	0	0	11	42	79	121
4	0	0	0	12	71	81	152
5	0	0	0	Other	0	0	0
6	0	0	0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							563

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
23 % Asian
28 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
46 % White
0 % 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 <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	0
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	8
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	8
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	548
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.015
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1.460

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0
Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 25 %

Total number students who qualify: 143

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: 5 %

Total Number of Students Served: 26

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>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>19</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</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>0</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>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>42</u>	<u>7</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>22</u>	<u>4</u>
Total number	<u>73</u>	<u>15</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 12 :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	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	96%	95%	96%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	9%	10%	12%	17%	6%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

2004-2005 teacher turnover rate: four teachers retired.

2005-06: These numbers reflects the turnover rate as of August 05. The school reopened in January 2006 with reduced numbers.

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	161
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>99</u> %
Enrolled in a community college	<u>1</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

Founded in 1957, Benjamin Franklin High School, located on the University of New Orleans campus, serves a multi-ethnic population of students of high academic potential. Its mission is to promote excellence among New Orleans high school students. Members of the Franklin community believe that instructional time needs to be given the highest priority and all students should become lifelong learners; 99+% of each graduating class enter college, winning acceptance to universities throughout the country.

Originally part of the New Orleans Public School System, Franklin became a Type 3 Charter School post-Katrina. In the face of changing demographics and devastating natural disasters, it has sustained its commitment to its founding purpose, encouraging an increasingly diverse population of students “to reach their maximum potential as scholars and productive, creative citizens of a technology-rich global community” (School Mission Statement). With a multi-racial student population, it is one of the few ethnically diverse high schools in the area. Franklin’s targeted population is students with “high academic potential;” to be admitted students must achieve the required score on an admissions matrix, which includes test results and academic records. Once admitted, however, they enter an individualized learning environment which enables students of varying backgrounds to overcome deficits in educational experiences and develop a communal work ethic that promotes academic success.

Compared to high schools across the nation, Franklin produces an outstanding number of National Merit Semi-Finalists, boasting twenty-six National Merit Semi-finalists this year, with 8 National Achievement Semi-Finalists and 2 National Hispanic Semi-Finalists. Last year almost 30% of the graduating seniors were honored with one or more of these designations. For the past ten years, 100% of Franklin students have passed the Graduate Exit Exam in all areas. Franklin is the top school in Louisiana, based on School Performance Scores determined by attendance rates, dropout and graduation rates and performance on state mandated tests. It is among the top 3% of the schools in our nation, recently named 16th in the country in a national *U. S. News & World Report* study (3rd among magnet schools).

There is school-wide acknowledgement of the importance of academics along with a deeply entrenched respect for instructional time among faculty members and students, most of whom have consistently high attendance rates. Students routinely opt for difficult courses when they could choose easier ones as demonstrated by high enrollment in AP courses. There are 19 college-level AP courses available at Franklin, and students test in 23 subject areas. The total number of AP tests taken by our students has risen from 66 in 1986 to 754 in 2008. All students can participate in the AP program—not only those excelling in a particular subject area and not only upper-class students—last year over fifty Franklin ninth-graders took the Human Geography exam, with 60% scoring 3 or above. Despite deliberate attempts to make the program available to all members of the student body, the number of Franklin students scoring 3 or above on AP tests has stayed consistently high (with 97.5% of our graduating seniors earning a 3 or above on at least one of their AP tests taken while at Franklin). Last year 123 Franklin students were named AP Scholars by the College Board.

Student successes are not limited to the classroom. Our school sees our extracurricular program as an integral part of our overall curriculum. Franklin fields 20 athletic teams, with a record of 22 state championships, and two-thirds of our student body compete in a sports event; in 2007-08 Franklin earned three district championships and 11 teams qualified for state competitions. We currently have 33 clubs at our school. Franklin students receive local, state and national recognition in extracurricular programs, including Key Club, Speech Club, Mu Alpha Theta (mathematics), and science fair competitions, as well as regional and state literary rallies. Franklin writers and artists publish in regional journals (*Southern Voices*, *The Louisiana State Poetry Journal*, etc.) as well as the school’s own *Riverbend Review*, which regularly wins the highest awards given by Columbia University Scholastic Press Association; student musicians collect “Superior” ratings from the Louisiana Music Educators Association and drama students stage high-quality plays.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

In November 2008, Louisiana announced its bi-annual School Performance Scores (SPS). Again, Benjamin Franklin High School is the highest ranked school in the state, with an assessment index of 165.2, nearly double the state average SPS of 87.2 (<http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/12877.xls>). The school is a “Five Star School,” an honor shared with only five high schools statewide (<http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/comm/pressrelease.aspx?PR=1183>).

Louisiana’s assessment index is based on scores on tests mandated for all freshmen, sophomores, and juniors (70%) and the difficulty of course of study (30%); the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program/ Graduate Exit Examinations (LEAP/GEE) uses labels of Advanced, Mastery, Basic, Approaching Basic, and Unsatisfactory to identify student performance (<http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/1703.pdf>). Our most recent SPS, announced before Hurricane Katrina decimated the city, was 200.5, the highest in the state (<http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/pair/ReportCards05pa/Principals/S036043.pdf>), again eclipsing the Louisiana average of 86.2. Based on test scores (and other components), Franklin was recognized as the 16th ranked high school in the country in December 2008 by *U.S. News and World Report* (<http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/comm/pressrelease.aspx?PR=1231>).

Franklin achieved these remarkable successes in spite of serious challenges faced in the past five years. Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and shut down our school in August 2005. Though we reopened in January 2006 (thanks to the herculean efforts of students, parents and staff), assessment results that year were so sporadic that the Louisiana Department of Education eliminated criterion-referenced testing as a component for determining school assessment indices in affected areas. By the time testing time arrived the next year we were dealing with a completely changed student body—30% smaller, ethnically different, and composed of students who in many cases were displaced from their homes and still struggling with recovery issues. Yet we continued to surpass all other schools in Louisiana with our results.

Not satisfied with 100% pass rates, in the past few years we have worked to increase the percentage of our students scoring at the top level. We have had outstanding success in Math, with 73% scoring Advanced on the 2007/08 test (up 15% from 2006/07) and an even more impressive 92% scoring above “Basic” competency level. Though scores in English have also been excellent (with 77% of our students scoring above Basic and a modest but ever-increasing percentage scoring at the Advanced level), we are working to increase “Advanced” levels in Social Studies and Science. Complicating these efforts are the lingering effects of Katrina recovery—many students are still living in hurricane-damaged homes, and an increasing number are entering Franklin at the tenth grade rather than the ninth, giving us less time for skills development than we had when virtually all incoming students were ninth graders. We are also studying in depth the effects of demographic shifts on our test results. All subgroups continue to achieve at well above minimal competency levels, and any disparities among them are being continuously and systematically monitored, analyzed and addressed by our teachers, administration and counseling staff.

One resource we have in our efforts to assess our students’ achievement levels is the amount of additional normative assessment data we have at our disposal, much of it disaggregated. In addition to PLAN, ACT and SAT tests, our students take the PSAT at the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade, providing us with a longitudinal growth record-- these results are supplemented by a yearly deluge of AP test data. Since instituting in-class preparation for the PSAT a few years ago we have had impressive numbers of National Merit/Achievement/Hispanic semi-finalists (though slighter lower test scores on the this year’s test might signal a post-Katrina slump which will need to be addressed), and AP scores have remained consistently high despite the availability of AP courses to a wider range of students.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Members of the Franklin teaching community use test data to address skills deficits and to make planning decisions. For example, a perceived decline in the number of students achieving National Merit recognition in 2001 and 2002 triggered a school-wide campaign to better prepare our students for yearly PSAT testing, by focusing on test-taking techniques and skills areas traditionally weighed heavily on these tests (vocabulary, problem-solving, and close reading skills). A supplemental workbook is now required for all freshmen, sophomores, and juniors; targeted topics are integrated into class work in each content area. This campaign successfully raised the number of National Merit semi-finalists from a two year-average of 16 (2002, 2003) to a two-year average of 30 (2004, 2005).

Testing information can identify for us students who need additional assistance. Once these students are identified, Franklin teachers have numerous remediation options, including online tutorials, a Saturday Tutoring Program run by our teachers, and peer tutoring through Mu Alpha Theta (math club) and the National Honor Society. Test results are also used by counselors and classroom teachers to help students make appropriate scheduling choices, for example, whether or not to enroll in an AP course.

We also use test results to fine-tune curriculum. Based on test data, departments have added supplemental textbooks (for example, a non-fiction text in English II to better prepare students for the type of writing assignments required on the GEE test) and reordered curriculum sequences. Test results also help build continuity among course levels. Results of the 2008 9th grade iLeap test were provided to this year's tenth grade teachers preparing their classes for the high-stakes 10th grade GEE. These results, broken down by skills set, enable sophomore teachers to address student needs by class (more thesis writing practice in one class, perhaps, with additional work with grammar skills in another).

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

To enhance student awareness of the importance of doing well in testing programs, successes are widely-publicized, in school publications (the parent newsletter and school newspaper), and via media resources (the PA system, school website, and city media resources). We maintain a bulletin board prominently displaying the successes of students who score well on the GEE. High testing students are also recognized at end-of year awards programs, as are National Merit, National Achievement and National Hispanic finalists and semi-finalists and AP Scholars.

The need for fast and efficient parent/school communication is taken seriously among Franklin faculty and administrators. When the school receives standardized test results, they are immediately disseminated to students through homerooms and/or sent home by mail to parents. As test results become available the counselors schedule meetings with parents of different grade levels to communicate information about their students' results and ensure that they understand scoring methods and ways in which these results can impact their children's academic future.

Franklin uses an electronic grading program for reporting class grades. Parents may enroll in Parent Connect, a program which allows them to view their student's in-class grades online at any time. Reporting student progress is easy with this program; teachers can print out a student's grades immediately, or send via email a copy of those grades to the student's parents. All teachers issue class-wide hard copy progress reports twice a semester, which must be signed and returned, and parent-teacher conferences are held three times a year; in addition counselors periodically schedule conferences which include student, parent and teachers for academically at-risk students to investigate causes of academic problems and conduct trouble-shooting

sessions. The success of our program depends on always keeping lines of communication open among teachers, parents and students.

4. Sharing Success:

Franklin students and faculty assist fellow New Orleans students both through individual projects and through organizational community service. For example, Key Clubbers regularly read books to children at area libraries or City Park Storyland and help out each year at the Celebration in the Oaks, and post-Katrina our students helped re-landscape the area around our school and also participated in restoration projects throughout the city; they are still periodically participating in “Service Saturdays.”

Franklin students, administrators and faculty members offer academic support to other educational institutions. Our technology director is a resource for troubleshooting problems throughout the system, and our principal participates in a city-wide charter organization. Franklin counselors hold yearly College Nights, to which area students receive invitations. Students in Franklin-based extracurricular organizations help other schools develop programs; for example, our Academic Games team goes to elementary schools to teach competition skills and members of the Speech Club traveled across the lake to help Slidell High School set up a speech team. Our physical plant is made available for workshops and intra-school activities; for example, our Mu Alpha Theta team prepared materials for and hosted their first MAT tournament at Franklin this year, and students in our health classes held a Health Fair in our gym, inviting middle school students to visit tables where our students discussed health issues like smoking and weight-reduction techniques. Our Admissions Team interfaces with middle school students and administrators, providing information about our program and personalized tours of the campus; Vertical Teaming sessions help incoming students transition successfully into our rigorous academic program.

Since Franklin reopened after Hurricane Katrina, our school has assisted other charter schools in the district, both directly and indirectly. We gave office space, advice, and clerical support to the principals of Edward Hynes Charter School and Warren Easton High School while they were in the process of applying for their charter and reopening their schools. As part of the East Bank Collaborative, an association of public schools that have chartered in New Orleans, the school administration supports other charter schools in developing their programs and structure.

Franklin faculty and staff members also share information with educators outside of Louisiana. For example, one of our counselors delivered a presentation at the SACA conference last year; she also conducted a Rotary Club workshop on the college admission process for teachers and students throughout our region. Every year Franklin teachers in all disciplines present at professional conferences (for example, our Creative Writing teacher is conducting a session at the Colombia Scholastic Press Association Convention this spring), and Franklin teachers often give AP workshops to teachers from schools throughout the nation.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The Benjamin Franklin curriculum includes honors, gifted and Advanced Placement courses. Students develop problem-solving and abstract reasoning skills through advanced work in both required courses and electives, learning through class discussions, technology-based activities, and performances and presentations, as well as traditional teacher-centered instruction. All students must successfully complete four years of English, Science, Math and Social Studies.

The English Department creates a genuine love of language through interaction with a variety of texts and helps students develop an authentic writing style along with the ability to use rhetorical techniques effectively. We rely heavily on discussion formats to encourage connectivity and holistic thinking. Electives include Journalism (Newspaper and Yearbook) and Creative Writing; students in Creative Writing produce the the *Riverbend Review*, one of top high school literary magazines in country, working with less-experienced peers to develop their writing skills and collaborating interdepartmentally with student artists and the school's Fine Arts instructor on graphic components of the magazine. The *Riverbend Review* earned the America Scholastic Press Association Award in 2008; in 2007 it won the National Council of Teachers of English Highest Award in 2007.

The Foreign Language Department offers four years of instruction in French, German, Latin and Spanish. Courses in modern languages develop listening, reading, writing and speaking skills, using a state-of-the-art language lab which fortunately survived Hurricane Katrina. Students in Advanced Placement French, Spanish and German also study literature in its original language. Students must earn three credits of foreign language, two of which must be in the same language.

The Mathematics Department curriculum enhances and develops computational proficiency, problem-solving techniques, critical-thinking skills and a conceptual understanding of the language and science of mathematics, through individualized instruction and a carefully coordinated sequential curriculum. Technological aids, such as the graphing calculator, the CBL and the computer, are incorporated into the program. The Math Department offers Statistics AP and Computer Science as electives

The Science Department makes extensive use of laboratory facilities and state-of-the-art technology. Local experts and university facilities are utilized to pursue research goals. A bridge is built between the sciences and math through statistical data analysis, computer applications and quantitative explanations for natural phenomena. Franklin offers a variety of upper level courses, including Biology I H, Chemistry I H, Biology II (AP), Chemistry II (AP), Environmental Science AP, Physics I Mechanics (AP) and Physics Magnetism & Electricity AP. Each student is required to design and execute an independent research project (IRP) before graduation, and participation in state and national Science Fair competitions provides students with opportunities to do original research as well as national recognition and the chance to receive scholarships and awards,

Social Studies courses broaden student understanding of themselves, their society, and the world in which they live, through studying man's past and present in a developmental sequence that prepares students to be creative, active participants in the social dynamics of their time. All social studies courses require research and integrate current events into curricular materials, often relying on primary source materials. Elective social studies courses include European History AP, Twentieth Century History, Russian History, Greek and Roman History and Psychology AP. Ninth graders are encouraged to take the Human Geography AP Test at the end of their freshman year.

Physical Education/Health includes activities in volleyball, basketball, golf, physical/motor fitness, cabbage ball, soccer and track and field. Levels III and IV are for student athletes and include weight training in addition to practice in their specialized sport(s). All students take Health, a separate semester class which focuses on wellness through exercise, weight control, nutrition, cardio respiratory conditioning, basic physiology and stress control.

The Arts engage the imagination, foster flexible ways of thinking, develop disciplined effort, build self-confidence, and instill respect for other cultures. They enrich our students' lives through self-expression and study of world art. We encourage students to pursue arts electives in order to obtain a balanced, well-rounded education; choices include Talented in Art and Theatre, Art, Art History AP, Instrumental Music, Music Appreciation/Theory, Choir, Speech and Stagecraft.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

This question is for elementary schools only

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

At Franklin virtually all students read at or above grade level; reading instruction is cross-curricular and designed to develop critical thinking skills as well as sophistication in interpreting and responding to written materials. In all course areas, students are required to interact with a variety of advanced, multi-level texts in a thoughtful, creative way, exploring inferences and implications rather than simply decoding the materials. Writing is also integrated into every Franklin's academic program; every major exam at Franklin is required to be 50% essay.

In English classes, direct instruction in close reading is a routine part of the curriculum; teachers and students explore the language used in literary works with unmatched intensity and delight. In particular, the high proportion of students who take one or both of Franklin's two English AP courses (91% at the senior level, 86% at the junior level) receive intensive training in processing sophisticated literary materials and producing thoughtful, analytic written responses to those materials. A comprehensive four-year vocabulary development program is incorporated into the English curriculum, as are an average of five or six novel-length works a year. Research and reading assignments in other classes, along with Summer Reading assignments (selected with input from a student committee), raise the number of book-length texts studied by the average Franklin student to as many as twenty-five a year. Franklin students have access to numerous professional databases through the school's partnership with the University of New Orleans as well as through school library resources, and exposure to reading materials ranging from literary materials to technical articles and research reports ensures adaptability and flexibility in pacing and assimilation skills. Perhaps most important, in all disciplines Franklin teachers, themselves voracious readers, serve as role models in helping their students develop an appreciation for and willingness to interact with complex texts.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

In every Franklin mathematics course, students learn to express mathematical ideas analytically, graphically, numerically, and verbally. All students must successfully complete at least four full-year mathematics courses, at Franklin. Students who earn Algebra I credit in middle school may take Geometry at the ninth grade level (with the understanding that they may be required to schedule Algebra and Geometry concurrently or re-take Algebra I if necessary), but they must then take a Calculus course in their senior year. The Math Department has initiated an Honors Calculus class, to supplement the AP Calculus course which students starting in Geometry had previously been required to take.

The Math Department addresses student needs through a wide spectrum of course options. Honors and gifted courses are offered in Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-calculus, and Calculus, which is also offered as an AP course. The department's other AP offering, Statistics, is an elective. Advanced placement courses are open to all students, and students who complete all course offerings often take advanced courses at the University of New Orleans.

All Franklin students are required to achieve math literacy. For students who find math challenging, in-class instruction is enhanced through online tutorials correlated to Louisiana curriculum standards which complement the Prentice Hall textbook series, along with Saturday Tutoring and tutoring by Mu Alpha Theta and Honor Society members. Math teachers are also available at lunch, before and after school and during study halls to provide individualized assistance.

Math is one of Franklin's most successful programs, with 73% of our sophomores scoring at the Advanced Level on the GEE and over 92% achieving at the mastery level or above. Over 50% of our AP students earn scores of 3 or above. Also, Franklin math students are phenomenally successful in various city, state and national competitions. In addition to hosting their own tournament for the first time, Mu Alpha Theta (math club) students this year competed in five area-wide tournaments, winning first or second place in all of them.

4. Instructional Methods:

At Benjamin Franklin High school, we are committed to providing our students a level of courses that matches their ability, academic interests and ambitions for the future. This commitment is evidenced by our course offerings that feature

- twenty-two Advanced Placement courses;
- four levels of gifted coursework in English and mathematics;
- four levels of art;
- four levels of Talented in Art;
- four levels of Talented in Theatre;
- beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of band, orchestra, and choir;
- electives in English, social studies, science, foreign language, and the arts;
- publications (yearbook, newspaper, creative writing);
- college courses at the University of New Orleans.

Our relatively small class size (typically 15-20 students) facilitates full participation of all students as well as targeting specific student needs. Our teachers employ a range of instructional and management strategies. A teacher-initiated group meets weekly to brainstorm strategies and methodologies designed to motivate high ability students. Among the public high schools in New Orleans, Franklin students comprise the highest percentage of students at New Orleans Academy for the Creative Arts (NOCCA). Since our graduation requirements exceed state requirements, we provide a course plan that facilitates students' completing graduation requirements for Franklin and NOCCA as well as the state.

In any typical year, our Gifted/ Talented student population varies from 75 – 85%. Our Gifted courses in English and mathematics include activities that require students to conduct independent research, produce creative projects, and engage students in independent readings and study on their own. In Gifted math classes students are required to communicate mathematically demonstrating their understanding of the systematic development of course skills, and to make generalizations about topics they have investigated using higher level analytical and problem-solving skills. Our science department makes extensive use of laboratory facilities and state of the art technology. Local experts and university facilities are utilized extensively to pursue research goals and enrich classroom instruction.

5. Professional Development:

Franklin's current professional development plan, developed by a faculty committee, reviewed by our Leadership Council and approved by the CEO/Principal, establishes three goals for faculty: becoming a better teacher, improving student outcomes and participating actively in professional educator organizations. Implementation includes department level activities, individually selected activities and building-level activities conducted during after-school faculty meetings. Our plan requires 10 hours of professional development per year beyond the school work day, but all Franklin teachers devote many additional hours of their personal time to honing their academic skills and pedagogical techniques. Teachers prepare a portfolio which showcases their growth and demonstrates their ability to creatively implement community resources and their own special talents into their teaching activities.

Two benchmarks of our program, "Data-driven Decision-making" and "Teaching for Understanding," inform in-house professional development. While working on curriculum committees and especially within departments, where much of our school-based PD takes place, faculty use data to guide instructional choices. Studying performance results from state and national assessments, faculty teams trouble-shoot problems, adjust teaching styles and modify curriculum, all with the goals of improving student achievement. Instruction at Franklin is about "Teaching for Understanding," not about "absorb, apply and reproduce" learning; our high-achieving students are expected to develop critical thinking skills within an application context. PD sessions focus on instructional strategies which promote authentic learning (for example, we are currently investigating the advantages of different grading systems in one school-wide committee, while another is preparing to evaluate the effects that our decision to implement the modified block schedule two years ago is having on student learning).

Franklin faculty are active in professional programs at the state and national level, including AP workshops (both as participants and as presenters), organizational meetings, and the moderation of extra-curricular academic activities such as Mu Alpha Theta and Close-Up (e.g., this year faculty members took a group of 21 students to the Inauguration).

6. School Leadership:

Our principal, Dr. Rusnak, fosters a sense of leadership in every member of the school community. Through a distributed approach, teachers, staff and students assume ownership in the development of policies and practices that craft a learning environment that is positive and participatory.

This process is showcased in the organizational structure of the various faculty committees that direct and support the school program. A Leadership Council, consisting of department chairs and site administrators, meets weekly to resolve issues ranging from school policy and grading to daily practices and scheduling. Other faculty committees focus on curricular issues such as professional development, evaluations, state reporting, and accreditation. Yet another committee of teachers is revising our Employee Handbook.

Each week the principal meets with student leaders. This year students have helped resolve issues relating to the responsibilities that accompany Senior Privileges, dress code enforcement, components of the honor code, and the processes required for the establishment of new clubs and organizations. The importance of their input in decision-making processes is reinforced by an "open door" administrative policy which encourages students to talk directly to teachers and administrators throughout the day.

Parents are key partners of our learning community. Our Franklin Parent Association meets every month and is always attended by the principal who is on the board of the organization. The school and FPA have promoted stronger communication ties with the community by enhancement of the school web site, the

development of a Parent Liaison department, publication of a newsletter and frequent web and telephone communications.

We measure our success by enhanced parent participation, faculty volunteerism, and student participation. Simply put, the leadership style of Ben Franklin High School centers around administrators being visible, accessible and open. This approach has fostered a community of learners who are focused on improving student achievement through an environment of cooperation.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 10 Test: La. Education Assessment Program Graduate Exit Exam
English Language Arts

Edition/Publication Year: changes yearly

Publisher: La. Dept. of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
mastery + advanced	77	66	75	82	80
advanced	18	13	14	19	18
Number of students tested	119	199	145	224	228
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
mastery + advanced	68	90	72	69	86
advanced	9	10	8	0	9
Number of students tested	44	90	76	14	22
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Asian					
mastery + advanced	87	97	76	80	69
advanced	16	12	17	20	19
Number of students tested	25	33	29	30	26
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
mastery + advanced		50			85
advanced		0			15
Number of students tested		10			13
4. (specify subgroup): African-American					
master+advanced	70	57	69	82	77
advanced	7	11	19	3	5
Number of students tested	27	56	26	55	65

Notes:

There were fewer than 10 Hispanics enrolled 3 of the 5 school years listed above: data for those years are blank.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 9

Test: iLEAP

Edition/Publication Year: test changes every year Publisher: contracted by the state of LA

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar			
SCHOOL SCORES					
Advanced + Mastery	77	82			
Advanced	43	55			
Number of students tested	99	125			
Percent of total students tested	100	100			
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Advanced + Mastery	36				
Advanced	21				
Number of students tested	44				
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Asian/Pacific Islander					
Advanced + Mastery	16	17			
Advanced	9	11			
Number of students tested	22	22			
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
Advanced + Mastery	20	13			
Advanced	9	11			
Number of students tested	27	22			
4. (specify subgroup): White					
Advanced + Mastery	38	46			
Advanced	23	29			
Number of students tested	48	71			

Notes:

in 2006-07 data was not disaggregated by free/reduced lunch status.

Prior to 2006-07 9th graders took only a Norm Referenced test such as the IOWA.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 9

Test: iLEAP

Edition/Publication Year: changes each testing year

Publisher: Contracted by the state of LA

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar			
SCHOOL SCORES					
Advanced + Mastery	93	92			
Advanced	76	28			
Number of students tested	99	125			
Percent of total students tested	100	100			
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0			
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Advanced + Mastery	41				
Advanced	6				
Number of students tested	44				
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Asian/Pacific Islander					
Advanced + Mastery	21	16			
Advanced	19	2			
Number of students tested	22	22			
3. (specify subgroup): Black					
Advanced + Mastery	26	15			
Advanced	0	3			
Number of students tested	27	22			
4. (specify subgroup): White					
Advanced + Mastery	43	54			
Advanced	28	20			
Number of students tested	48	71			

Notes:

In 2006-2007 the grades were not disaggregated by Free/Reduced lunch status. Before 2006-2007 the 9th grade took only Norm Referenced tests such as the IOWA.

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