

U.S. Department of Education
2010 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) Charter Title I Magnet Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. Jennifer Able

Official School Name: Half Day School

School Mailing Address:
239 Olde Half Day Rd
Lincolnshire, IL 60069-2906

County: Lake State School Code Number*: 340491030022003

Telephone: (847) 634-6463 Fax: (847) 634-1968

Web site/URL: www.halfday.district103.k12.il.us E-mail: jable@district103.k12.il.us

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

Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Larry Fleming

District Name: Lincolnshire-Prairieview SD 103 Tel: (847) 295-4030

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

Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. David Panitch

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

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

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. 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 2009-2010 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 Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
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: (per district designation) _____
2. Elementary schools (includes K-8) _____
- 1 Middle/Junior high schools _____
- High schools _____
- K-12 schools _____
- 3 TOTAL** _____

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 12695

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. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position 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	6			0
K			0	7			0
1			0	8			0
2			0	9			0
3	86	90	176	10			0
4	92	83	175	11			0
5			0	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							351

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
19 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
7 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
71 % White
1 % 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.	7
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	7
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	14
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	355
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.039
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3.944

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 3 %

Total number limited English proficient 9

Number of languages represented: 6

Specify languages:

Students enrolled in the ELL program speak a total of six languages: Spanish, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Hindi, and Hebrew. However, a total of 23 languages are represented in the entire student body, including: Bengali, Cantonese, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Italian, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Serbian, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 8

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: 11 %

Total Number of Students Served: 40

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>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>8</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>29</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</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>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>16</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>41</u>	<u>6</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 22 :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%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	24%	12%	10%	9%	8%
Student dropout rate	%	%	%	%	%

Please provide all explanations below.

During the 2008-09 school year, vacancies were filled for two fourth grade teachers who retired from Half Day School after 50 years of combined total service. Vacancies were also filled for one third grade teacher who assumed an administrative position in a nearby district and a total of three additional teachers who resigned from their positions for various reasons (one third grade teacher, one fourth grade teacher, and our general music teacher). An additional section of fourth grade was added, as well as a part time remedial math teacher. In total, this made eight teachers new to the building out of 33 total certified staff for the 2008-09 school year.

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

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Located in Lincolnshire, Illinois and established in 1839, Half Day School is the oldest school in Lake County. Over the years, three major additions and building renovations have provided Half Day School with modern amenities while maintaining character. With a unique history and rich traditions, Half Day distinguishes itself as an exciting learning environment.

School District 103's organizational plan places all children in grades three and four at Half Day School. This configuration allows staff to fully concentrate on the unique needs of children in these grade levels. The school's mission is to share an educational experience, which is academically challenging, developmentally appropriate, and responsive to each individual in a safe, nurturing environment; where children, parents, and teachers collaborate and embrace life-long learning. Currently, 351 students are enrolled. Students are predominately from middle to upper-middle class families and represent a diverse demographic population. Approximately 30% of the student body is Asian/Pacific Islander or other nationality, and 23 languages are spoken by students.

Students are the heart of Half Day's traditions. Students' Illinois State Fair quilts and immigration projects adorn the hallways. Students continually celebrate school spirit through participation in Student Council's activities; such as charitable fundraisers, special dress days, and the annual Talent Show. The school mascot, the hawk, comes to life during Student Council's annual assembly where a rescued hawk and its naturalist visit the school. The student-composed school song, "Half Day Hawks," is a common cultural experience uniting the student body. Semi-annual chorus and orchestra concerts and a spring musical allow children to shine. These activities nurture the school community and provide an enriching environment that focuses on the whole child.

The Half Day teaching community collaborates to provide a high quality, engaging academic experience. Teachers are provided extensive professional development opportunities, financial and educational resources, and thorough curriculum training. Professional development opportunities are offered to further extend professional knowledge and teaching expertise. These opportunities provide a forum for dialogue concerning best practices, classroom experiences, philosophical reflection, and development of classroom materials. Collaboration and communication within Professional Learning Communities, and between grade levels, fine arts specialists, and special educators, allow teachers to ensure children are successful learners.

Innovative teaching practices and school initiatives keep students motivated and invested. Curricula in all content areas are developed by a cross-section of school staff to inspire and engage students. Instructional materials are selected to align with state standards after rigorous review, ensuring learning materials are appropriate for students' needs. The Enrichment Learning Model extends a curricular topic for small groups or classrooms. Technology integration provides a motivating and personalized learning environment that engages students in twenty-first century learning. Student support services provide individualized interventions for struggling learners. Specialists in the areas of reading, math, English Language Learning, learning and behavior (LBS), speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, visual and hearing impairment, school psychology, and social work provide services for students through a responsive, individualized approach. A school-wide character education program ensures a safe and comfortable environment.

Active and supportive parents are an integral part of the school community. The PTO coordinates classroom volunteers and sponsors grade level learning programs, such as an Ellis Island simulation and Illinois State Fair, both Half Day School traditions [refer to part IV Q.1]. The Learning Fund Foundation spearheads annual initiatives, such as Health/Fitness and Technology. Open Houses and Parent Conferences provide additional opportunities for parents to partner with the school and nearly 100% attend these events.

The school community takes pride in its accomplishments. Students consistently score well above average on the nationally-normed Measures of Academic Progress test, and students routinely meet and exceed performance standards on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test. Half Day School consistently receives the Bright Red Apple Award and the Bright A+ Award for academic performance. The average years of teaching experience is fifteen, 97% of teachers have a masters' degree or above, and six certified staff have earned National Board Certification.

Collectively, these unique components allow Half Day School to achieve its mission.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) addresses seven Illinois State Learning Standards in reading and eighteen standards in mathematics. These standards represent rigorous expectations for student performance. Detailed information about the ISAT is available on the Illinois State Board of Education website, <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/isat.htm>. Half Day students' scores on the ISAT are excellent and reflect our curriculum's alignment with the standards, sound instructional practices, and challenging curriculum.

In Illinois, students exceeding the state standard in reading demonstrate strong comprehension beyond grade level, while meeting the standard shows comprehension of grade level text. Exceeding the math standard means a student demonstrates a high degree of math literacy and problem solving skills, while meeting the math standard is defined as having skills commensurate with grade level expectations. Detailed information may be found at http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/per_def.htm.

ISAT data over the last five years demonstrates that Half Day students perform consistently higher than the national average. The five year trend shows gains in the number of students at or above standards and also in the percentage of students exceeding state expectations.

In reading, the percent of students who meet and exceed standards in third and fourth grade has steadily increased, beginning with 89% in third grade and 93% in fourth grade, and growing to 93% and 98% respectively. The percentage of students who exceed the learning standards in third grade grew from 41% in 2005 to 60% in 2009, and in the fourth grade from 45% to 67% over the same timeframe. Not only do these growth rates show more students are meeting state learning benchmarks, but also that students are mastering the State Learning Standards at higher proficiency levels.

A cohort analysis of students' reading achievement also shows impressive results. Each year for the past five years, growth is shown in the percentage of students who meet or exceed standards from third to fourth grade, ranging from a 1% to 4% increase. Growth in the number of students who exceed standards is exceptional. For the past three consecutive years, the cohort group from third to fourth grade shows an average 18% gain in the number of students who exceed standards. This exemplifies students' abilities to perform above grade level expectation by applying higher level thinking skills and strategies to new ideas on standardized measures.

Standardized test results in mathematics have been particularly advanced for the past five years. In 2005, 98% of third grade students met or exceeded standards and in 2006, 98% of fourth graders met or exceeded standards. For third grade, this number increased to 99% of students meeting and exceeding math standards. In fourth grade, 100% of students have met or exceeded standards for the last three consecutive years. The percentage of students exceeding standards has also increased over the designated timeframe, from 74% to 82% for third grade, and 63% to 68% for fourth grade. At the same time, the student cohort analysis for math shows a decline in the number of children who exceed standards from third to fourth grade. This points to the need to identify the change in expectations between grade levels, so teachers may enrich instruction to challenge student thinking in mathematics.

The analysis of subgroups' data shows achievement comparable to the whole school population, reflecting equity in instructional practices and programs. Special education students have the lowest scores in reading, due to the area of students' disabilities [refer to part II Q.10]. The Asian/Pacific Islander subgroup has slightly lower reading achievement, beginning in 2008, due to lack of English proficiency. In 2008, LEP students were administered the ISAT for the first time, which impacted ISAT results statewide, and is a contributing factor to the slight decrease in 2008 ISAT scores for Half Day School. However, overall results reflect high achievement for this subgroup. Data shows between 96%-100% of third graders and 100% of fourth graders have met or

exceeded math standards annually. In reading, 95%-100% of fourth grade Asian/Pacific Islanders and 90-100% of third graders in this subgroup have met or exceeded ISAT standards. The data illustrates equitable student achievement between demographic groups.

Half Day students' ISAT scores reflect a strong curriculum correlated to Illinois State Learning Standards, and a teaching staff committed to best instructional practices.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Half Day School's assessment program includes standardized testing, local curriculum-based assessments, portfolios, and grade-level common assessments. These assessments are designed to stimulate and challenge students in a variety of ways at levels appropriate to their particular needs. Assessments yield valuable information, which guides classroom instruction, remediation programming, and curricular development.

Student performance on standardized tests, such as AIMS Web, ISAT, and MAP, is analyzed for specific strengths and weaknesses in achievement. This information is used on a global scale to guide staff development, inform curricular decisions, and design academic support or enrichment programs for students. Item analysis reports from standardized measures point to curricular strengths or gaps, which are then addressed school-wide. Standardized assessment data, from ISAT and MAP, is used as a source for teachers to plan differentiated instruction meaningful to each child, based on his/her specific needs.

Half Day School teachers utilize common formative assessment results to identify student strengths and weaknesses within district curriculum in order to improve student and school performance. These assessment instruments are also utilized during formal data meetings, which are collaborative discussions among personnel held every six weeks. Information is shared with the administrator, school psychologist, reading specialist, math specialist, and classroom teachers to develop an action plan for students not meeting benchmarks. This plan is used to further guide differentiated classroom instruction and implement additional support, such as remedial reading and/or math. Weekly assessment probes monitor students receiving specific remediation. Every data meeting is an opportunity to review the progress of each child to ensure success in meeting the demands of the curriculum. If progress is not reflected in the data, the team adjusts the plan by changing the instructional method, curricular materials, or the intervention's frequency, intensity, or teacher-to-student ratio. Further, the school-wide assessment data helps suggest areas of intervention for student groups within the general education setting and provides individual teachers a grade-level perspective on academic achievement and progress.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Teachers assess students on an ongoing basis through the use of multiple evaluation methods, both formal and informal, to guide differentiated instruction. Rubrics are used to communicate expectations and performance with parents and students. Students receive rubrics at the onset of an activity to understand what they must accomplish to meet and exceed expectations. Parents also have access to these tools through teachers' websites, emails, and notes home. If students are not meeting district expectations, teachers have discussions with parents and establish a plan to remediate and support the student. Timely feedback, individual conferences, and appropriate modeling create an environment in which students are actively involved in their own learning and growth.

Students maintain a portfolio, providing an opportunity for self-assessment and reflection on individual growth. Portfolios empower students to be active participants in their own evaluation and learning. These are shared with parents during Open House.

Parents and students receive formalized, standards-based report cards three times per year. The report cards utilize the state descriptors of exceeds expectations, meets expectations, and needs improvement, although the criteria for each descriptor is based on a higher standard of performance than the state. A narrative portion of the

report card provides a more detailed explanation of performance. Parent-Teacher conferences, held in the fall and spring, offer a forum to discuss student expectations, performance, and needs.

Parent-Teacher conferences also provide an opportunity for teachers to share the results of standardized assessments, along with other common formative assessments. The Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) is administered at the beginning and end of the year, with struggling students also assessed mid-year. MAP test and Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) results are sent home to parents with an explanation for interpreting data.

The school district distributes a monthly newsletter, which includes assessment information for the community to review. The annual Illinois School Report Card is distributed to the residents of the community and is also incorporated in an Annual Report format, which includes comparative metrics. Media releases celebrate student success by highlighting achievement data for a broad audience.

4. Sharing Success:

As a Blue Ribbon Award winner, Half Day School will continue to place a high priority on communicating its successful programs and effective pedagogy to district schools, consortium schools, neighboring schools, and the community at large.

“Celebrating Successes” is a monthly agenda item at the District School Board Meeting during which teachers and students personally describe successful programs and initiatives. Half Day School has been featured on numerous occasions and would ensure this tradition continues.

The faculty and administrator from Half Day often represent the school as speakers at educational workshops, conferences, and state and national conventions. Examples of this from the past year alone include: the Occupational Therapist teaching two five-day classes for special educators from the greater Chicago area on strategies which best support autistic students; four teachers presenting math and reading workshops on Institute days for educators from surrounding districts; and the Enrichment Coordinator speaking at the Illinois Association for Gifted Children to share Half Day's innovative school-wide enrichment program. As a result, other school districts came to Half Day School for a site visit, observing and then attending a question and answer session with the Enrichment Coordinator. Recently, representatives from a Wisconsin K-8 school district came to observe two veteran teachers using the EnVisions math program and its connection with technology. They witnessed the efficacy of the program and the use of SMART Boards as an effective teaching tool.

Over the past few years, thirteen staff members have sponsored student teachers from seven universities; mentoring future teachers and demonstrating best practice. Two teachers serve as adjunct professors for local universities.

These impressive examples demonstrate the wealth of knowledge of Half Day School faculty, and more importantly, their willingness to share their pedagogy and expertise with others. Half Day will remain dedicated to the practice of sharing successes with fellow educators.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Half Day's teachers educate students following principles of best practice. Instruction is based on the district's curriculum guide, which is aligned to state standards. Teachers use research-based materials to differentiate for skill levels, learning modalities, and multiple intelligences. Using data from common formative assessments, teachers determine which skills to reteach or extend. Teachers collaborate with resource and enrichment specialists to ensure all students' learning needs are met.

In Language Arts, students develop into skilled readers, writers, and oral communicators [refer to Part V Q. 2a]. Teachers use whole class read alouds and mini lessons to model strategies for understanding various types of texts. Students apply these skills as they read the Storytown series, non-fiction texts, and independent reading books. Through guided reading groups, literature circles, and readers' workshop conferences, teachers differentiate for students' skills and interests.

Students write for authentic purposes as they learn expository, persuasive, and narrative writing. Using a framework of 6 + 1 Traits and writers' workshop, teachers scaffold learning with modeling and group-assisted writing as students engage in the writing process. Students develop a sense of authorship as they use the school's publishing center to create original books. Writing instruction occurs across disciplines as students write responses to literature, explanations of math strategies, and scientific observations. Reflective and creative writing is emphasized through journals, poetry, and plays.

The math curriculum guides students to become effective problem solvers. Open-ended, real-world problems encourage all learners to develop higher-level thinking skills. Students share their strategies through demonstrations, discussions, and written explanations. They use manipulatives to visualize and construct their understanding. Computation and mental math skills are taught in the context of real world experiences. Instruction is differentiated with tiered problems and guided math groups. Advanced math students are challenged with more complex problems to deepen conceptual knowledge. Teachers use the EnVision math series to support instruction along with materials from Investigations in Number, Data, and Space and Marilyn Burns. Technology and math are integrated by using SMART Board tools, computer games, hand-held response systems, and Internet resources. Math is incorporated into other content areas; students use measurement skills in science, geometry concepts in art, and pattern recognition in music.

Science units are taught through inquiry. Every year, students investigate physical, life, and earth science by focusing on overarching concepts, such as systems, change, and equilibrium. Teachers help students eliminate misconceptions and construct understanding through hands-on experiments, simulations, trade books, and real world observations. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to Rivershire, the district's nature center. There, students study plants' life cycles, investigate animal habitats, and observe constellations in an inflatable planetarium. A two-day Outdoor Education field trip for fourth graders also extends the science curriculum through interactive, authentic activities, such as pond studies.

Thematic social studies units are integrated across disciplines. Third grade students examine the features of communities by studying local history, visiting municipal facilities, and researching their ancestors' communities. This study culminates in a simulation of Ellis Island in which students "immigrate" to America from their ancestors' home countries. By acknowledging the diverse student population, teachers guide students to reflect on the similarities and differences of their families' histories. Fourth grade students examine the interdependence of regions and their national and global connections. Students explore the branches of government and investigate their roles as citizens. An extensive study of Illinois culminates in a State Fair simulation. Throughout these units, teachers work with the librarian to help students investigate primary sources, conduct historical research, and cite print and electronic sources.

Through an integrated fine arts curriculum, students develop an understanding and appreciation of art and music. Students explore styles, techniques, and materials from around the world. Experiential learning engages students in fine arts. For instance, students paint hieroglyphics inside a pyramid while studying Egyptian art.

The music teacher collaborates with third grade classes to create a musical about the history of Chicago. As an extension of the literacy curriculum, students learn research and citation skills through weekly library and technology classes. Additionally, daily physical education classes teach students to use teamwork and self-motivation to be successful in all facets of their education.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

The reading curriculum is aligned to state standards, and teachers use the district's curriculum guide to drive instruction. Teachers provide a balanced literacy program that includes guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, and read-alouds. Differentiated instruction with small groups enables teachers to address the specific needs of below grade level, on level, advanced, and ELL students. Teachers assess the reading and fluency skills their students have acquired by listening to children read, discussing novels in literature circles, conferencing with students, reviewing their reading response journals, and analyzing the results of local reading assessments. Frequent readers' theater performances provide a shared enjoyment of oral reading, and sustained silent reading opportunities build interest and enthusiasm for reading. Teachers help students learn to select books at appropriate reading levels and encourage exploration of a variety of genres. Students are also instructed in the format and features of textbook reading. The enrichment teacher, reading specialist, and librarian provide valuable reading support. Students learn to use a variety of resources and technology to enhance their research skills and understanding.

The foundation for this approach is based on the guided reading framework provided by Fountas and Pinnell. It serves as a conceptual tool for organizing instruction, with an overarching goal to assure all students become lifelong readers and writers. In addition, the Harcourt Storytown series was selected because it is research-based, providing explicit systematic instruction, a spiral review of key skills and strategies, and abundant practice, application, and assessment. To build reading comprehension, students learn and practice skills and strategies, such as finding the main idea, reading for detail, understanding vocabulary, making inferences and connections, sequencing, understanding cause and effect, predicting outcomes, knowing the author's purpose, and understanding fact and opinion. A recognized strength of this series is its emphasis on students developing a robust vocabulary to incorporate into their own lexicon.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

Half Day School's technology curriculum supports the school's mission [refer to Part III]. With a full time certified technology teacher, students receive 45 weekly minutes of direct instruction. The technology curriculum reaches beyond basic terminology to emphasize the application of operations, productivity, communication, and research tools. Whether students are publishing a book, learning about website citations, creating iMovies, or completing quizzes with the SMART Response system, their learning is enriched through the technology curriculum. To ensure students are responsible digital citizens, they learn to evaluate websites and conduct safe searches. For more safe and focused web searches, the newly implemented Destiny program helps teachers to prescreen websites and create Trackstar web collections that provide enrichment and re-teaching opportunities.

Integrating technology into all subjects increases students' familiarity with programs and also demonstrates technology applications in real life scenarios, such as word processing, research, data and graph creation, and presentation. For example, the technology teacher links the animal unit to a picture metamorphosing project complete with audio bites, digital pictures, graphics, researched statistics, and synchronized music.

Together, Half Day School and the District 103 community support technological advances across the district. The Digital Classroom Initiative has equipped 63% of Half Day classrooms with interactive whiteboards and document cameras, with aspirations for 100% completion by the fall, 2010. These technological advances improve the quality of instruction and enhance student learning. Research by Marzano on the effective use of interactive whiteboards shows a 16% gain in student achievement (Educational Leadership, November 2009, p.80).

Recently, Half Day adopted a math and reading series with extensive technology components to enhance the student learning experience. These programs contain a link between home and school for students to share their learning with parents. These resources help teachers further differentiate instruction to meet student needs. The

test manipulation and creation tool within the math online resources allow teachers to pinpoint student weaknesses with individualized question analysis and assign appropriate intervention assignments.

All Half Day School staff members are dedicated to sharing their technological education with one another, board members, community members, parents, and, of course, students. In fact, 47% of Professional Growth Plans for Half Day teachers are related to development and further integration of technology.

4. Instructional Methods:

Half Day School uses the backward-planning curricular model, where all students are challenged to meet or exceed district goals. Big ideas, essential understandings, content, process, and performance goals are identified. All building professionals collaborate to design and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction that stimulates all students. Open-ended, real-life learning activities engage and challenge all children to meet their potential. Formative assessments monitor and address specific student learning needs as units progress.

When implementing units, teaching teams collaborate to further differentiate instruction to address specific student needs. Participation in flexible groups and individualized services is determined through data analysis, including checklists, anecdotal evidence, teacher recommendations, and formative, summative, and standardized testing. Team teaching with flexible, small groups allows teachers to specifically focus remediation or extend student learning. Examples of differentiation include:

- Math problem solving is based on readiness. Student groups receive similar problems of varying complexity. The type and size of numbers, amount of steps needed, manipulatives provided, and depth of mathematical explanations are differentiated. As students solve problems efficiently and accurately, they are challenged to solve more complex problems.
- In reading, teachers model higher level thinking skills, such as inferencing using shared text. Reading groups are then established based on reading level and ability to effectively apply strategies independently.
- In small groups, the ELL teacher provides instruction in functional vocabulary. To support classroom instruction, the ELL teacher pre-teaches vocabulary and concepts across subjects. Unit specific dictionaries with visual and kinesthetic components encourage verbal interaction and concept development.
- Students with disabilities receive support individually, in small groups, or in the classroom. Service is delivered on a continuum with careful consideration given to build skills necessary for students to close the achievement gap. Depending on need as outlined in IEPs, Special Education teachers preview core vocabulary using a variety of modalities. Through hands-on experience, rich text, and discussion, students activate prior conceptual knowledge. Leveled or adapted resources may be provided.

This differentiated instruction, extensive teacher collaboration, and variety and flexibility of student services address the diverse learning needs of students.

5. Professional Development:

Half Day's Professional Learning Community encompasses all teachers, creating shared responsibility for student success. The PLC strives to fulfill its action plan, an annual instructional quality learning goal. The action plan gives direction to staff development activities, and its success is measured using student achievement results. Currently, the staff is collaborating across disciplines to improve reading comprehension skills. To achieve this goal, the reading specialist led workshops on guided reading and readers' workshop, and staff members shared reading instructional tools.

Curriculum committees meet throughout the year to rewrite curriculum, set the scope and sequence for units, and develop common formative assessments. The Staff Development Committee plans workshops based on district curricular goals, teacher feedback, and student assessment results. To address the technology curriculum standards, the Staff Development Committee planned for two teachers to train staff on using SMART Board components to enhance student engagement, administer assessments, and monitor students' progress [refer to Part V Q. 3].

To help teachers follow content standards, Half Day staff, educational consultants, and publishers' representatives lead curricular and instructional workshops for teachers. For example, the Enrichment

Coordinator led teachers and assisted in effectively implementing newly adopted inquiry-based science units. A regional expert helped teachers develop effective tools to improve students' expository writing and extended reading response skills, based on students' performance on standardized assessments. Representatives from the EnVision math series demonstrated how the technological components of the program could be used to enhance instruction of math content standards.

New teachers are supported throughout their transition into the district. Workshops train first year staff in backward curriculum mapping. New teachers collaborate with and observe a mentor teacher to enrich their understanding of best practices. Veteran teachers hone their teaching craft by setting goals through Professional Growth Plans. Teachers are encouraged to pursue National Board Certification, outside workshops, and graduate courses. The Board of Education financially supports these initiatives as teachers continue their education and training.

6. School Leadership:

Half Day School is comprised of a principal responsible for overall leadership and teachers who take on many leadership roles, including curriculum chairs, committee heads and mentor teachers. Together as a team, these educational leaders promote student learning by fostering an environment that focuses on raising student achievement.

Because Professional Learning Communities are a priority for the principal, a school schedule was created to provide teachers with common time to clarify essential goals of curriculum, create common assessments, collect evidence of student progress, and analyze student data in order to respond to students' academic needs. Teachers regularly gather in teams to analyze data from common formative assessments. The principal facilitates these meetings and uses a collaborative model to determine appropriate interventions designed to improve student achievement.

The principal builds a collaborative culture that creates a collective responsibility for student achievement. A team of teacher representatives meets annually with the principal to discuss goals and develop an action plan that drives staff development. The Communication and Staff Development Committees meet monthly to share ideas to improve the school environment, instructional delivery, and overall student achievement. The principal leads these meetings and sets the agenda, which focuses on short and long term goals.

The principal, committed to both teacher and student growth, leads new teacher workshops, staff meetings, the mentoring program, and the formal evaluation of staff. The evaluation is a collaborative and reflective process between the teacher and principal for the purpose of achieving exemplary teaching practices which positively impact student learning and achievement.

Teacher leaders foster leadership in students through both formal and informal structures in the school. Programs include Student Council, Morning P.A. Announcer, and Half Day Helpers, a character education program that highlights positive student behaviors. With support from their teachers, students model positive leadership for other students.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1999-2009

Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Meet or Exceed	99	100	99	99	98
% Exceed	82	82	80	84	74
Number of students tested	174	181	186	172	173
Percent of total students tested	100	100	99	95	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Meet or Exceed	94	100	94	93	90
% Exceed	71	45	60	52	52
Number of students tested	17	22	35	27	31
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Meet or Exceed	94				
% Exceed	56				
Number of students tested	16				
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Meet or Exceed	95	100	100	100	96
% Exceed	93	95	92	100	91
Number of students tested	44	42	36	17	23

Notes:

The largest other subgroup, as outlined in number six, is Asian/Pacific Islander. Prior to 2008, all Limited English Proficient students took an alternate state standardized assessment called the IMAGE.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 1999-2009

Grade: 3 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test
Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Meet or Exceed	93	94	95	91	89
% Exceed	60	46	46	40	41
Number of students tested	174	181	186	172	173
Percent of total students tested	100	100	99	95	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Meet or Exceed	76	77	83	77	61
% Exceed	35	27	23	23	23
Number of students tested	17	22	35	26	31
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Meet or Exceed	75				
% Exceed	38				
Number of students tested	16				
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Meet or Exceed	93	90	97	100	96
% Exceed	77	57	61	76	57
Number of students tested	44	42	36	17	23

Notes:

The largest other subgroup, as indicated in question six, is Asian/Pacific Islander. Prior to 2008, all Limited English Proficient students were assessed using an alternate state standardized assessment called the IMAGE.

Subject: Mathematics
Edition/Publication Year: 1999-2009

Grade: 4 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test
Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Meet or Exceed	100	100	100	98	
% Exceed	68	70	74	63	
Number of students tested	181	188	186	183	
Percent of total students tested	100	99	97	97	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	2	3	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	1	2	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Meet or Exceed	100	100	100	92	
% Exceed	37	53	42	35	
Number of students tested	27	32	24	37	
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Meet or Exceed	100				
% Exceed	60				
Number of students tested	11				
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Meet or Exceed	100	100	100	100	
% Exceed	88	84	96	78	
Number of students tested	44	37	28	27	

Notes:

The largest other subgroup, as indicated in question six, is Asian/Pacific Islander. Prior to 2008, Limited English Proficient students took an alternate state standardized assessment called the IMAGE. Fourth grade students began to be assessed in reading and math in March of 2006.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 1999-2009

Grade: 4 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test
Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Meet or Exceed	98	96	94	93	
% Exceed	67	61	58	45	
Number of students tested	181	188	186	183	
Percent of total students tested	100	99	97	97	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	2	3	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	1	2	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meet or Exceed					
% Exceed					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Meet or Exceed	96	91	83	73	
% Exceed	30	25	25	24	
Number of students tested	27	32	24	37	
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Meet or Exceed	80				
% Exceed	30				
Number of students tested	11				
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Meet or Exceed	95	100	100	96	
% Exceed	81	76	79	52	
Number of students tested	44	37	28	27	

Notes:

The largest other subgroup, as indicated in question six, is Asian/Pacific Islander. Prior to 2008, Limited English Proficient students took an alternate state standardized assessment called the IMAGE. Fourth grade students began to be assessed in reading and math in March of 2006.