

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: Ms. Paula Crane

Official School Name: Prairie Central Upper Elementary

School Mailing Address:
PO Box 496
Forrest, IL 61741-0496

County: Livingston State School Code Number*: 170530080262007

Telephone: (815) 657-8238 Fax: (815) 657-8821

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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. John Capasso

District Name: Prairie Central CUSD 8 Tel: (815) 692-2504

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: Ms. Patricia Haberkorn

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 2004.
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)
- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 5 | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| 1 | Middle/Junior high schools |
| 1 | High schools |
| | K-12 schools |
| 7 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 9582

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. 3 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	73	83	156
K			0	7			0
1			0	8			0
2			0	9			0
3			0	10			0
4			0	11			0
5	97	67	164	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							320

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
92 % White
3 % 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: 10 %

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.	18
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	13
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	31
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	297
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.104
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	10.438

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: 47 %

Total number students who qualify: 149

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: 24 %

Total Number of Students Served: 77

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>4</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>9</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>40</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>6</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</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>14</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>6</u>	<u>13</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Total number	<u>32</u>	<u>19</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 23 :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	97%	96%	96%	97%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	95%	96%	95%	93%	94%
Teacher turnover rate	10%	5%	10%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate	%	%	%	%	%

Please provide all explanations below.

Daily teacher attendance in the years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 are below 95% due to maternity leaves.

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

Prairie Central Upper Elementary is a progressive school serving fifth and sixth grade students from several rural communities. Located in the heart of the Illinois Corn Belt, PCUE is home to 320 students hailing from over 400 square miles, and coming together for the first time, combining students from four K-4 elementary school buildings throughout the district. Although not culturally diverse, the student body includes students from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds and with an array of disabilities.

Our school currently has seven classrooms of 5th grade students and seven classrooms of 6th grade students who are mostly self-contained. One of the greatest benefits of the logistics of our school is that all 5th and 6th grade students are in one building. This allows teachers to do team teaching, exchanging students for one or two subjects in order to best utilize their strengths and expertise, and also gives us the ability to place students in classrooms best suited to their needs.

The staff at Prairie Central Upper Elementary works diligently to foster a sense of community in our building. Each of our “citizens” has a sense of belonging, teamwork, and cooperation and each shows responsibility in contributing to the community. When we work toward common goals, we work as a team. For example, our school-wide discipline program has virtually eliminated serious discipline issues. Whether a faculty member or a member of our student body, everyone takes pride in what we have accomplished and works hard to maintain a positive atmosphere for education.

At PCUE, we pride ourselves on our belief that all children can learn. It is our mission to help each student become an active and responsible participant in our educational community and to help each child develop to his or her full potential. Our school takes great pride in our communities, traditions, and devotion to children. We work hard to include parents in the educational process, maintaining a parental contact rate of 100%, and an attendance rate of 96%.

The true key to the success of Prairie Central Upper Elementary is in the dedication and collaboration of our faculty members. The PCUE staff is committed to constantly improving their teaching skills and individualizing education for students. It is a staff that does not settle for mediocrity, and strives to offer excellence. Through differentiation, integration and intervention, all students are given an opportunity to thrive.

Another integral part of the success of our students is our delivery of special education services. Nearly all students with disabilities are placed in classrooms with their regular education peers. Co-teaching is done by teams of regular education and special education teachers who interact constantly in the classroom. Innovative methods of teaching and technology are used to engage students of all ability levels. Inclusive education not only gives our teachers the opportunity to collaborate, but to teach a wider array of children. Teachers work hard to discover where students are academically and socially to determine how best to facilitate learning. In order to maximize opportunities for students with disabilities, our teachers use their ability to focus on what students can do and have the persistence to hold them to high standards and expectations. The skills acquired by teachers to make inclusion a success have been beneficial to both teachers and students alike.

Like many good schools, Prairie Central Upper Elementary is fortunate enough to have incredible support of community members. Businesses and individuals from all of our communities are willing to partner up for the benefit of our children. Parents, grandparents, and others have volunteered to read with students, help with activities such as school store and classroom events, assist with our music concerts and plays, and to mentor our most needy students. When we ask the community to get involved, they willingly accept. Although we do not have any significantly large businesses in our rural district, our small businesses have been willing to

help educate students through visiting our school to talk with students and by opening their doors and allowing our students to tour their facilities.

In addition to these assets, we are fortunate to have a great deal of support from district administration. Despite difficult economic circumstances, we continue to focus on a well-rounded education for our students, offering art, band, choir, general music, computer education, and physical education to students on a regular basis. Our classrooms are well-equipped with technology to aide our instructional delivery, housing an interactive white board in every classroom. It is this commitment to excellence from all levels that enables us to deliver the quality education that PCUE students receive every day.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Prairie Central Upper Elementary is proud of the accomplishments of our students on state assessments. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress every year since it was introduced. Over the past five years, several notable trends immerge in our school's test scores, including the following:

Over the past five years, nearly 100% of our students have been tested in both reading and math. Please note that standardized testing for sixth grade students in reading and math did not begin until 2006.

Each year since first tested, sixth grade reading and mathematics scores have increased. More specifically, sixth grade reading scores increased from 80% meets and exceeds to 97% in just four years. Although not as dramatic, already excellent scores in sixth grade math assessments rose from 93% to 96% meets and exceeds. The same is true regarding the fifth grade, showing score increases from 77% meets and exceeds in 2005 to 92% in 2009. Fifth grade math scores have also seen a significant jump in that same timeframe, from 86% meets and exceeds to 97%.

Achievement gap data is also impressive. The achievement gap between low socioeconomic/disadvantaged students and their peers has decreased each year in 6th grade in both reading and mathematics. As well, the gap between the fifth grade students in this same group and their peers has shown a steady decrease in both reading and math. This gap was as high as 46%, however has been in the single digits the past two years.

Students with disabilities have made huge gains in both math and reading since 2005. Scores for fifth graders with disabilities increased in the area of math from 60% in 2005 to 96% in 2009. In reading, scores improved from 50% meets and exceeds in 2005 to 96% in 2009. Similar successes are found in the sixth grade population, noting incredible gains of 49% in reading and 16% in the already respectable math scores.

While our school does not have a significant population of students in a racial ethnic group other than white, our data shows that the students we do serve generally have shown success. In our next largest group no more than 12 students have been tested in any given year over the past four years. Although many of those years show 100% of students meeting or exceeding standards, it is difficult to detect trends with this limited number.

In 2009, in order to make Adequate Yearly Progress in Illinois, an elementary school must maintain an attendance rate of 90% or better, and must have tested a minimum of 95% of its students in both reading and mathematics. In addition, in 2009, the state of Illinois required that at least 70% of all students in all subgroups meet or exceed state standards in these disciplines. More detailed information about these requirements can be found at www.isbe.state.il.us.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The staff at Prairie Central Upper Elementary works hard to improve their teaching skills and strategies in order that students get the best possible education. Using assessment results is incredibly helpful in adjusting curriculum and instruction. Each year, our staff comes together several times to analyze data. The first of these meetings takes place before students enter the building for the first day of school.

During one of the first meetings of the year, our staff joins together to review ISAT results. We not only look at the grades as a whole, but also the individual classes and individual students. Overall scores are analyzed,

as well as subscores. These scores are used not only to gain insight into how well students learned the state standards the year before, but also to get a glimpse of the students coming into our building. This allows us to address areas of concern, and make decisions on what skills should be emphasized in the classroom. Once data is reviewed, our staff brainstorms ideas to create a school improvement plan for the current year. This plan addresses the weaknesses apparent through assessment.

Other assessments used throughout the year are AIMSweb and Maze. Because our RtI plan especially emphasizes the improvement of reading, these assessments are administered several times during the year to mark gains in this area. Reading fluency and comprehension scores obtained by these measures are graphed and presented to classroom teachers and small group intervention teachers. If students do not show gains, they may be moved to another group that may be more beneficial, or the teacher may change the current intervention to better meet the needs of the group. For the first time this year, we have also started sharing this information with parents during parent/teacher conferences, explaining to them how their student scored and what we are doing to improve the scores of students needing improvement.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Our communication of assessment results begins at the building level. Once we receive test scores from the State Board of Education, the administration analyzes the results, looking for strengths and weaknesses in overall scores as well as sub scores, and prepares to share the data with staff. In early fall, even before students arrive, the staff is presented with the information. The staff and administrator evaluate the results and discuss them, insuring that each staff member has a full understanding of their meaning. This data is then used to improve teaching strategies, and to find target areas to concentrate on with students.

Similarly, our Superintendent shares the results with our Board of Education with the aide of a thorough PowerPoint presentation. Both district and school scores are analyzed and each school's improvement plan is presented.

Since parents are a very important part of our educational team, we take the time during parent/teacher conferences to share individual and school ISAT results with them. The state provides a very detailed report of individual and school scores and how these scores compare to the state averages. Although the report describes the meaning of the results, teachers take the time to explain them and allow parents to ask questions.

The community also receives test scores for our district. Not only are our test scores available for viewing along with our school improvement plan on our district and school website, but also presented to the public in a district-wide newsletter sent to all residents. Another valuable resource to our community members is the Illinois Interactive Report Card website, which helps people compare our school to others in the state.

4. Sharing Success:

At Prairie Central Upper Elementary, one of our strongest assets is the sharing of success with others. This sharing begins at the building level, with each teacher being more than willing to offer their most successful lessons and strategies to others. Constant collaboration takes place, with a very strong learning community not only for the students, but for the teachers, young and experienced alike.

Outside of our building, we share our success through various means. One way our success has been shared is through our special education coop, which services schools county-wide. It is not unusual for other schools to call to request information about our programs and teaching methods because of information they received from this group and other various sources. We have had teachers from the area come in to observe our teachers and discuss their success. We are proud to offer this to anyone requesting it, and welcome anyone interested to come into our classrooms.

Another way we share our success is by allowing our teachers to present information to other schools. Recently, our media center specialists spent two days at a neighboring school in order to train their teachers on the use of the interactive white board. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have these resources to offer.

If Prairie Central Upper Elementary is privileged enough to receive a Blue Ribbon award, we will gladly share our success with others not only by continuing the sharing we currently have in place, but to add other means such as presenting at conferences and additional networking opportunities.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The Illinois State Learning Standards drive our curriculum at Prairie Central Upper Elementary in all subject areas. In lieu of using a prepackaged textbook program, the teachers have continuously collaborated for the last twelve years in creating a working curriculum map for each subject area. The map incorporates a variety of instructional materials and methods including trade books, leveled readers, white board lessons, centers, hands-on activities, manipulatives, computer software programs, cooperative learning groups, internet sources such as United Streaming, as well as the traditional textbook.

Our teachers are very effective in using the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model of teaching. Additionally, what has set us apart from other schools are the high expectations we set for all students, including those students with individualized education plans. These goals are met through direct instruction in the regular classroom, with supplemental instruction and reinforcement of skills in small and individual flexible groupings. All staff, including paraprofessionals, specials teachers, administrators and even parent volunteers is utilized to facilitate the success of all learners.

In a time when schools are being required to teach more in less time, integration of core subject areas has become a major part of the curriculum delivery. Not only does this enable us to more efficiently and effectively teach the state standards, it enables the students to fully internalize skills and concepts that are continuously reinforced throughout the day in all content areas. The staff firmly believes this integration facilitates connections while keeping students engaged in the learning process. For example, during the study of our Ancient Egypt unit, you might find the social studies class engrossed in a trade book, a reading group involved in a play or reader's theatre, while the science class is experimenting with substances to determine the most effective mix of minerals for mummification. Down the hall in the media center students are preparing a power point on Egyptian culture while the fine arts department is constructing step pyramids. This style of curriculum delivery is reflective throughout the building, making PCUE an enjoyable, engaging place to learn.

Our Language Arts curriculum includes direct instruction of reading strategies, comprehension, reading fluency, vocabulary, morphographic word parts, listening skill, and oral expression. Functional grammar as opposed to traditional grammar strengthens our written expression instruction. We write for different purposes emphasizing specific word choice, sentence variety, coherent and cohesive structure, automaticity, common imagery, elaboration, and voice.

Our math curriculum starts with a hands-on learning approach in order to cultivate a deeper understanding of math skills and concepts. This method enables students to move from the concrete to the abstract resulting in mathematical thinkers. As students enter the upper elementary stage, this is especially imperative. Students participate in daily problem solving activities to build knowledge of mathematical concepts, encouraging explanation and justification of the process. This approach is incorporated throughout the math curriculum, which consists of number sense, estimation, algebraic and geometric methods, data analysis and interpretation, and measurement. We are also fortunate to be able to provide an accelerated math class and math team to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

The science curriculum at Prairie Central Upper Elementary incorporates scientific process skills, critical thinking, and exposure to a variety of topics including life science, earth science and physical science. Students routinely work together to conduct experiments, form hypotheses, draw conclusions, and observe the world around them. The direct instruction and utilization of reading strategies are necessary in order to increase the understanding of informational text found in the science curriculum. These concepts are further

supported using additional materials such as trade books, children's science magazines, educational videos, and web-based resources.

Our social studies curriculum focuses on United States history, ancient world history, geography, and current political and social events. Teachers engage students in simulations and discussions to help them understand reoccurring ideas, concepts, and conflicts in our world. Through the use of technology, we are bringing the world into our classrooms.

In addition to core academic areas, students receive weekly instruction in music, art, physical education, and media technology. The fine arts program boasts two musical productions a year, choir and band concerts in the fall and spring, and an art show once a year. Our physical education class focuses on healthy living habits and active lifestyles. Technology class focuses on teaching students technology literacy with an emphasis on desktop publishing, research, and evaluative thinking skills.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

In reading we use a direct, balanced approach where skills are spiraled. As with other curriculum areas, the released responsibility model is used to engage and develop independent readers. Students are immersed in authentic fiction and nonfiction literature through listening to read alouds and reading selections from anthologies, leveled readers, novels, trade books, magazines, articles, and other print media.

Through guided and small group instruction, teachers engage each student in formulating and answering explicit and implicit questions. Direct instruction of the reading strategies empowers the students to become critical readers who consistently use metacognition in monitoring their comprehension. Specific comprehension skills which are taught and spiraled include self questioning techniques, connecting with text, visualization and imagery as well as inferring, drawing conclusions, predicting and summarizing. Our teachers also use the Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) program which teaches students to independently monitor various texts.

In addition to these strategies, direct instruction of narrative elements, genre, text structure, literary devices, author's point of view, and author's purpose as well as tone, mood, and word choice (connotation) is delivered to students.

Another piece of our reading curriculum is vocabulary instruction, which includes both receptive and expressive vocabulary. Reading fluency is modeled and consistently monitored. Word part meanings are also taught to enhance vocabulary comprehension.

As students transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn", nonfiction reading becomes a critical component of our curriculum. Therefore, teachers focus in on specific nonfiction comprehension strategies such as determining text structure, analyzing and interpreting graphic aides, and monitoring and adjusting reading rates based on text format and content.

In addition to the regular reading curriculum we have provided an additional half hour of daily reading practice or instruction. Students are grouped according to reading needs and work on specific areas of deficit. Student groups are flexible and based on individual levels of achievement. Progress is constantly monitored so that students can be moved from group to group according to need. Additionally, an enrichment group is offered for advanced readers who require more challenge.

We have found that this comprehensive approach to reading has significantly raised the overall reading levels of students at PCUE.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

We at Prairie Central Upper Elementary see ourselves as part of many communities from our school to our towns to the global world. Children learn that their actions can have a positive impact right now and for future generations. The staff at PCUE tries to instill a sense of responsibility and a social awareness not just of our school but of the world. We reach outside our doors involving the children in many social events. For the local community, children make cards for soldiers and nursing home residents. Donations of food items are also collected for food pantries in our area. Students also complete math problems to raise money for St. Jude with the dual purposes of improving math skills and helping other children. Children are also involved with the school's recycling project creating a greener world for futures to come one can at a time. Students see their responsibility in saving our planet Earth by recycling cans, plastic bottles, and paper. Weekly at the school, classrooms throughout the building discuss and play a current events game called Newsbowl. Directly from the headlines, the questions quiz students on many different topics including national and international news. To reach across borders, children raised money for the "Pennies for Peace" project. Amazingly, our school community was able to raise over \$2,000.00 and gain an understanding of the true spirit of the Pakistanian people and their struggles with terrorists within their own country.

In addition to the traditional textbook, the Illinois Social Studies Standards are addressed through a variety of mediums including, novels, trade books, videos, magazines, and hands on activities. Standards addressed include: geography of the world, political and economic systems, world wide social systems, and the cause and effect of events, trends, and individuals that shape our history.

Many examples of integrating social studies with other content areas can be seen throughout the building. For example, fifth graders may read a novel about life as a slave in the South, journal about this experience, research a famous individual creating a power point presentation, and read a Time magazine article on the Underground Railroad. In art the children may create quilt squares signaling a safe station for those traveling on the Underground Railroad. Learning the past, studying the present, and creating a brighter future encourage students to become responsible and caring citizens.

4. Instructional Methods:

Daily, our teachers deliver a curriculum that is challenging, integrative, and exploratory. We are committed to offering lessons that appeal to all learners, and also to offering classes such as accelerated math and leveled spelling to meet the needs of our academically diverse population.

In creating lesson plans, our teachers take into consideration each student and include a variety of teaching methods and activities that appeal to even our most reluctant learners. These methods may include cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, and direct instruction among others. Teachers plan lessons that include integration and ensure flexibility, and are willing to make adjustments when necessary. They provide a plethora of hands-on activities which engage and motivate all children and provide challenge for even the top ability students. Nearly every lesson will incorporate technology at some level. The vast amount of resources available to our teachers has allowed education to reach new heights.

One example of differentiation is the use of flexible grouping. This includes the grouping of students according to ability level, interest, etc. or the creation of heterogeneous groups depending on lesson objectives. Teachers will work with small groups to pre-teach or re-teach lessons as they see fit. This practice is not only beneficial, but essential. Often, novel studies are done using this method. Students will be placed in groups according to their reading level and will be given a novel of the same theme appropriate for their reading skill. It is not unusual to observe three novels being studied in a classroom at one time, where students are finding novels pleasurable instead of frustrating.

Offering students a choice of tasks to complete to further explore and show their understanding of concepts has also proven successful. Students are offered a variety of activities and may choose the one that best fits their learning style or interest. Although teachers maintain high expectations for all students, some students will be held to higher standards based on their ability. In this way, even the assessments are differentiated.

This has been extremely motivating to even our most reluctant learners, while providing additional opportunity for teachers to integrate curricular areas.

Our vast knowledge of differentiation is in part an effect of our inclusion classrooms. Because we have included students with disabilities in our classrooms for many years, our teachers have become masters of this concept. Working with special education teachers in the classroom, teachers collaborate to determine the needs of each student. Differentiation is not something that we are working to include in our delivery of curriculum, it defines our delivery.

5. Professional Development:

Professional development happens at both the district level and building level. The Prairie Central school district is committed to proving its teachers with the latest topics in professional development. Each year, twice a year, speakers are brought in to keep teachers up to date on what is working in schools. This year, for example, the district has brought in speakers that will help us to further improve our methods of differentiated instruction. Each year's agenda for the teacher's institute is based on the current educational needs of the staff, as well as assessment data from state tests.

At the building level, we are able to pinpoint even further the needs of our staff members. Several years ago, the staff had multiple trainings on the Standards Aligned Classroom initiatives. Since then, student scores on the ISAT test have improved tremendously.

Another boost to our instruction came when our school added interactive white boards to classrooms. When these were added, the district committed to providing many building-level trainings for teachers. These trainings were invaluable to the teachers, who now use these boards in nearly every lesson.

It is obvious that providing teachers with professional development helps them to be better prepared for the classroom. Another very valuable piece of our program is providing collaboration meetings for our grade-level teachers. During this time, teachers are sharing "what works" in the classroom. They not only teach one another, they inspire one another. Teachers learning from each other can be extremely valuable to their development as an effective teacher. Although this method may not work for all staffs, as some may be less willing to share, for the staff at Prairie Central Upper Elementary, it is the key to the success of our students.

6. School Leadership:

The leadership structure of Prairie Central Upper Elementary includes commitment to excellence from not only building leaders, but from district leadership as well. From the very top, our school board and superintendant influence the quality of education taking place in our building. They are diligent about realizing the needs of the building and staff, and providing us with valuable resources to continue with and improve our instructional methods, and therefore the quality of education our students receive.

At the building level, the school leadership comes not only from the administrator, but from teacher leaders as well. All teachers serve on committees, or teams, all of which are formed with the purpose of ensuring that we are offering the best educational programs possible. For example, our Response to Intervention (RTI) team is lead by a group of teacher-leaders, all committed to focusing on each individual student and their achievement. The principal and teachers work together on this committee, analyzing data and allocating resources, as well as determining programs for students to increase their skill levels in specific curricular areas.

The building principal puts a big emphasis on her role as facilitator of effective educational practices. She continually communicates with teachers, staying in touch with what is happening and what is needed for improvement. Each teacher is given autonomy and structure, and is encouraged to try new things. She encourages all teachers to share their ideas and to present their work to others in the building, in the district, and beyond to others in the field of education. It is especially important to her that all teachers feel comfortable and willing to seek her out when advice, guidance, or resources are needed for the classroom. She firmly believes in the leadership abilities and qualities of the teachers, and relies on each teacher's strengths to maintain a very strong team of educators.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 1999, 2006-2009

Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	97	92	93	86	86
% Exceeds	27	25	21	18	18
Number of students tested	158	140	139	168	167
Percent of total students tested	98	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	1	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	93	87	90	73	79
% Exceeds	20	13	10	7	8
Number of students tested	60	52	52	59	61
2. African American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	96	71	86	61	60
% Exceeds	4	14	12	3	10
Number of students tested	26	28	45	31	30
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Data for subgroups less than 10 are not reported.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 1999, 2006-2009

Grade: 5 Test: ISAT
Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	92	89	79	79	77
% Exceeds	34	40	24	19	22
Number of students tested	158	140	139	168	167
Percent of total students tested	98	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	1	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	86	85	69	61	67
% Exceeds	20	29	12	8	8
Number of students tested	60	52	52	59	61
2. African American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	96	68	51	52	50
% Exceeds	8	11	0	3	10
Number of students tested	26	28	45	31	30
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:
Data for subgroups less than 10 are not reported.

Subject: Mathematics
Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2009

Grade: 6 Test: ISAT
Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	96	95	95	93	
% Exceeds	43	30	27	24	
Number of students tested	145	147	173	158	
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	95	92	90	84	
% Exceeds	30	8	13	13	
Number of students tested	57	50	61	55	
2. African American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	88	85	88	73	
% Exceeds	23	15	3	7	
Number of students tested	26	46	33	30	
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100				
% Exceeds	36				
Number of students tested	11				

Notes:

Data for #6 reported for "Multiracial" subgroup.

Data for subgroups less than 10 are not reported.

Grade 6 not tested in the areas of reading and math in 2005

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2009

Grade: 6 Test: ISAT
Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	97	93	88	80	
% Exceeds	48	41	22	18	
Number of students tested	145	147	173	158	
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	95	88	82	65	
% Exceeds	37	24	8	4	
Number of students tested	57	50	61	55	
2. African American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	92	78	79	43	
% Exceeds	4	20	0	0	
Number of students tested	26	46	33	30	
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	91				
% Exceeds	55				
Number of students tested	11				

Notes:

Data for #6 reported for "Multiracial" subgroup. Data for subgroups less than 10 are not reported.

Grade 6 was not tested in areas of reading and math in 2005.