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: Mr. Alan Brown

Official School Name: M. Norcross Stratton Elementary

School Mailing Address:
    180 Mountain Avenue
    Arlington, MA 02474-2023

County: Middlesex   State School Code Number*: 00100055

Telephone: (781) 316-3754   Fax: (781) 641-5454

Web site/URL: http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us   E-mail: abrown@arlington.k12.ma.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. Kathleen Bodie

District Name: Arlington Public Schools   Tel: (781) 316-3501

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. Joseph Curran

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)

7	Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1	Middle/Junior high schools
1	High schools
0	K-12 schools
9	**TOTAL**

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: __11685__

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

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

4. __10__ 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	42	33	75	7			0
1	36	28	64	8			0
2	27	20	47	9			0
3	21	30	51	10			0
4	34	21	55	11			0
5	21	19	40	12			0
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL					332

6.   Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native

                                                                              8 % Asian

                                                                              3 % Black or African American

                                                                              3 % Hispanic or Latino

                                                                              0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

                                                                            86 % White

                                                                              0 % Two or more races

                                                                        100 % Total

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

7.   Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 12   %

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred *to* the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	22
(2)	Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	15
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	37
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	311
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.119
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	11.897

8.   Limited English proficient students in the school: 4   %

Total number limited English proficient   13

Number of languages represented: 11

Specify languages:

Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Albanian, Bulgarian, Haitian, Dinka, Korean, Mandarin, Norwegian, Tibetan.

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: __7__%

                   Total number students who qualify: __24__

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: __14__%

    Total Number of Students Served: __45__

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

8	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	2	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	10	Specific Learning Disability
2	Emotional Disturbance	10	Speech or Language Impairment
0	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	1	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
7	Multiple Disabilities	5	Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-Time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	1	0
Classroom teachers	12	6
Special resource teachers/specialists	5	1
Paraprofessionals	6	0
Support staff	1	0
Total number	25	7

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

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

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	98%	97%	97%	99%
Teacher turnover rate	11%	6%	11%	35%	6%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

At the end of 2005-2006 3 teachers retired; two teachers moved to another part of the state; one teacher moved out of state.

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	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
Total		%

PART III - SUMMARY

Within the M. Norcross Stratton community every child is a special gift, valued by home and school. As partners in learning, parents, guardians, faculty and staff share the tremendous responsibility of helping each individual develop into a productive member of society.

The Stratton School is one of seven elementary schools in Arlington, Massachusetts serving grades K-5. Arlington is a first ring suburb of 2 major cities: Boston (downtown is 6 miles to the east) and Cambridge (Harvard Square is 3 miles to the south). It is connected to both by multiple modes of public transportation. Its population consists of a large proportion of academic, business, and professional families. Members of the community regularly avail themselves of the cultural, educational, and athletic facilities of the Greater Boston area. Arlington is a safe and close-knit community with a low crime rate and busy streets with watchful and aware neighbors. Many of these neighbors were born in other countries as evidenced by the nearly 12% of students whose first language is not English but instead one of the other 58 home languages spoken by Arlington students.

Built in 1960, Stratton Elementary is a neighborhood school serving 332 students. The school building itself has been a district resource for many years, which has contributed to a spirit of openness within the school. Stratton housed students from five different Arlington elementary schools while they were being rebuilt during the last decade. The school also houses five self-contained special education classrooms that serve the entire district; this program was expanded from just two classrooms in the past year. These special education students are integrated into mainstream classrooms K through 5, based on the individual needs and abilities of the students.

Stratton began its transition into a unique learning environment when it won the Bay State Readers Initiative in 2002, a Massachusetts funded reading grant. Stratton was awarded this grant in large part because of its existing collegial and supportive environment. The successful experience of working collaboratively and productively with this grant served as the catalyst for Stratton to transform itself into a truly professional learning community. The initiative surpassed its initial goals and Stratton staff have sustained the collaborative effort begun with the program and adopted it a key part of its professional culture.

Today, the most notable feature of the school is the trust and openness among staff who are focused on the goal of educating each child. A unique vertical partnership exists within the school. Kindergarten teachers observe colleagues in fifth grade, and second grade teachers visit first grade classrooms. Everyone in the building is a mentor and this relationship extends beyond Stratton to the district. Whether a staff member is newly arrived or a thirty-year veteran, their contributions are valued. This leads to a collective expectation of ongoing informal mentoring.

A special feature of the Stratton school is a strong sense of community and teacher commitment, which together foster a vibrant atmosphere. A Stratton School parent offered the following reflection, "As a neighborhood school, Stratton offers the opportunity for an informal community gathering at drop-off and pickup. Parents linger to discuss PTO activities, coordinate play dates and carpools, or simply to socialize and bond over the shared experiences of parenthood and life in Arlington. During the school day parents can be found helping out in classrooms, photocopying or working on special projects. Evening events such as Halloween pumpkin carving, bingo night, Spring Fling, and the end-of-year picnic and ice cream social are eagerly anticipated by the students and always well attended. One of our greatest accomplishments is that Stratton families feel a sense of belonging that adds pride to the K-5 experience, and builds bonds that extend into the middle school, high school and beyond."

This sense of community laid the foundation for the recently instituted PRIDE program, which allowed the entire school community to clearly define the school's culture as relying on **P**erseverance, **R**espect, **I**ndependence, **D**etermination, and **E**mpowerment. Students and the entire community have embraced activities organized under this initiative. Community supported activities that extend the school day include: a grant funded Health and Wellness Walking Club, Children's Theater, Foreign Language Club, and a wintertime Physical Activities Club. Finally to support parents in the community, regular forums with guest speakers are held focusing on current issues in child rearing.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

The **Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)** is the statewide, standards-based assessment system developed in response to the Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993. Details can be found at: http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/

MCAS has three primary purposes:

(1) to inform and improve curriculum and instruction;

(2) to evaluate student, school, and district performance (AYP);

(3) to ensure eligibility for a high school diploma (Students must pass the grade 10 tests in English Language Arts (ELA),Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, and fulfill local requirements.).

Note: Public reporting of both ELA and Math test scores began in *1998* for fourth grade and in 2006 for fifth grade. In third grade, ELA results were first reported in 2005 and Math scores were first reported in 2006.

At Stratton School, student performance has improved significantly in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math in fifth grade. In Math, students scoring in the "proficient & advanced" category increased from 66% in 2006 to 96% in 2009, a 30% improvement over a four-year period. Additionally, students scoring "advanced" in Math increased from 34% to 64% in this same period. In ELA for the same period, the "proficient & advanced" category went from 87% to 97%, a 10% improvement.

Student performance improved in fourth grade in ELA and Math from 2005 to 2009. Students scoring in the "proficient & advanced" category in ELA moved from 73% in 2005 to 91% in 2009, an 18% improvement. In addition, students scoring "advanced" in ELA increased from 14% to 38% during this same period, an even greater 24% improvement. Math scores for the same period climbed from 73% "proficient & advanced" to 88%, a 15% improvement.

There are instances in our assessment history where scores have dropped. When this occurred, we analyzed the circumstances in order to address them. As an example, 5th grade Math scores dropped on the 2007 MCAS test. At that time, the 5th grade departmentalized math instruction. As part of our analysis of this drop, we read research indicating that departmentalization was not always the most effective practice. We tested this by not departmentalizing math in the 2007–2008 school year. The results were dramatic. Our "proficient & advanced" students' math scores rose 30% from 63% (2007) to 93 % (2008).   The data confirmed that ending departmentalization was the best decision for our students, accordingly, we ceased departmentalizing. Scores the following year confirmed this decision as the correct one. This example illustrates how we use MCAS data to improve our instruction.

Other discrepancies appear in grade 3 data. Third grade ELA performance ranged from 81% to 88% "proficient & advanced" and Math ranged from 71% to 87% "proficient & advanced" during the period of 2006 to 2009. There is no trend in these data.   Based on our knowledge of the expectations of third grade we recognize numerous possible contributors to the lack of a positive trend.

Third grade is an important transition year.   Instruction is delivered differently at grade 3 than at grade 2. Students move towards independence with less time spent on guided practice. Higher level thinking skills

are incorporated into daily work more than ever before and student responses require a greater amount of abstract thinking. Eventually, students adjust to this demand as they mature and move up in the grades.

While we recognize that the strengths and weaknesses of groups of students may vary from one year to the next, our task is to educate the students sitting before us. A group's performance one year does not dictate its performance the next year. For example, Math scores of 4th graders improved from 66% "proficient & advanced" with 33% "advanced" in one year (grade 4: 2007-2008) to 96% "proficient & advanced" with 64% "advanced" for the same group of students in grade 5 (grade 5 :2008-2009).

While we were pleased with this result, our emphasis focuses on each student achieving his or her best performance rather than on achieving a particular MCAS performance for a grade. We feel positive about our classroom instruction, our analysis of student performance, and our ability to make adjustments that serve our students.

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Stratton School teachers meet either as an entire staff or in grade level teams to analyze the results of frequent assessments in reading, math, and writing at least three times a year. We use district-wide common assessments aligned to our TERC math curriculum and to the state math standards. In English Language Arts (ELA) we use district-wide writing prompts, the DRA 2, and a variety of phonics and phonemic awareness assessments by Marie Clay. After assessment analysis, teachers re-group students for re-teaching essential concepts and skills. Teachers at a grade level often share each other's students' assessments to gain a broader perspective on the progress of the entire grade and to work together on student needs.

At least twice a year the principal conducts data and service review meetings at which teachers discuss the results of district-wide ELA and math assessment results. Teachers identify students who have not made measurable performance gains. After careful analysis of test items that students missed, teachers create immediate and specific goals for these students. Their analysis also guides future instruction in math and reading, which often involves re-teaching and other interventions.

The progress of these students is closely monitored from this point on. They are reassessed at the end of the year and the results of that assessment are shared among the staff and with the child's parents. The results are used to create preliminary groupings for future intervention purposes. This ensures that teachers work with the proper focus with these students at the very beginning of the next academic year.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

Communication of assessment data among faculty, students, and parents is critical to the success of Stratton School. Arlington provides us with a comprehensive system of data collection used K-5, accessible by all teachers, faculty, and administrators. We take full advantage of opportunities to use this data as an informative tool in parent conferences, staff meetings, and district meetings. The district supports this at Stratton by providing laptop computers to classroom teachers.

Stratton parents look forward to accessing many of our communication outlets to keep informed about their child, and the school as a whole. Each classroom frequently updates its website with homework and other important postings. All teachers are available by e-mail seven days a week, and can be reached by phone during school hours. Stratton staff meet with parents before and after school to accommodate parent schedules, and teachers go out of their way to have regular contact, promoting trust and confidence among all involved in the education of the Stratton children.

Another way we communicate data is through district established Teacher Assistant Teams (TAT). A TAT is comprised of teachers and other professionals who can offer the most beneficial contribution for "at-risk" children on a case-by-case basis. TAT meetings address concerns about a particular student and data are a

driving force in these meetings. After studying the data, these teams collaborate with parents and create plans for intervention strategies for these children.

This past year Stratton implemented the district's new standards based progress report. This report is closely aligned with the strands of the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and its purpose is to inform parents of their child's progress relative to the state requirements. Assessment data collected by teachers shapes the content of the trimester progress report. The report gives parents a clear understanding of grade level benchmarks, and indicates whether or not their child meets the essential standards. Parents are invited to discuss any areas in which a child is not demonstrating grade level performance, or is excelling relative to the benchmark, and intervention in targeted curriculum areas can begin.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Stratton School shares its success by playing a leadership role within the district. During the past three years, at least one faculty member from each grade level has either facilitated district wide professional development, acted as a mentor in a mentoring program, or participated in a study group. Currently, six Stratton mentors are reaching out to the district for first and second year teachers, in Math and English Language Arts.

As a professional learning community, Stratton offers expertise in many areas. We have a National Board Certified teacher in the building, one of our teachers has recently been nominated for Elgin Heinz Outstanding Teacher award, two teachers traveled to Japan to extend their knowledge for our recently instituted second grade social studies curriculum and Sarah Ward, an expert in Executive Functioning, has worked closely with our kindergarten staff. Knowledge gained is beneficial to Stratton, but a larger benefit comes with our willingness to share this expertise with other schools when we act in a leadership capacity. One of our second grade teachers was recently invited to give a presentation about data collection to the Arlington School Committee: this presentation was broadcast town-wide so these strategies could be used as a model for other teachers.

At Stratton school we recognize success has to be shared in order for it to be truly rewarding. In the event that Stratton is awarded a Blue Ribbon, we will continue to share our road to success widely. Stratton faculty see the importance of teaching the students and the subsequent learning they gain, as a dynamic situation, which keeps everyone invested in the celebration of our achievement.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

Stratton's literacy program is designed to instruct all students to become proficient readers (see Reading –2a), writers and communicators.

Stratton teachers model good writing for their students and provide time for guided writing practice throughout the day. They instruct and encourage their students to be able to support and explain their thinking in all forms of writing including responses to science, math, and social studies questions.

Stratton's writing program is based on Arlington's Essential Writing Standards, which is referenced to the Massachusetts ELA Standards. All grades use *The Write Traits* by Houghton Mifflin, which provides a common language for teaching the six traits of writing and the skills necessary to communicate clearly and accurately. Also, all teachers use *The Write Source* by Houghton Mifflin that emphasizes the writing process through five forms of writing and includes a continuum of writing vocabulary. *Units of Study For Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum* by Lucy Calkins, forms the core of the K-2 writer's workshop program, which is structured with mini lessons and whole class instruction.

The core of our science curriculum is *Science & Technology for Children* published by the National Sciences Resources Center. It is a series of kit-based science and technology units that focus on student investigations within a prescribed content and skills framework. In early elementary years, hands-on activities are enriched by reading choices, field trips, and enrichment programs related to the science topics.

We deliberately revisit certain important science topics that already have been introduced through the kits. Our purpose is to help children move from a basic understanding of important concepts to a deeper appreciation of complexities that occur when natural systems interact. Understanding soil is an example. In grade 2, students explore the composition and properties of soils. In the grade 4 rocks and minerals unit, students investigate how the weathering of rocks produces mineral portion of soil. At grade 5, they investigate how the decomposition of living matter produces the organic components of soil. As childrens' ability to comprehend moves to a higher level so does the content, so that children build a coherent story of connected fundamental concepts.

TERC – Investigations in Data, Number, and Space is the core of our math curriculum in grades K through 5. The curriculum addresses number and operations, geometry, data, measurement, and early algebra using manipulatives, models, and problem solving. It emphasizes constructing knowledge by having children build new ideas based on relationships they already understand. As builders of their own knowledge, they develop habits of exploration, reflection, and sense making that result in connected understandings and the creation of powerful mathematical structures. This requires that teachers create mathematical learning communities where conversations, explanation, and all manner of mathematical discourse are central.

 The TERC curriculum has no textbooks so it is essential that teachers discuss across grades how they present math topics that students master over a number of years. It is hard work to teach such a curriculum. Often, it requires that teachers relearn mathematics in a new context that is challenging as well as rewarding.

The Stratton School has been a key part of the district's effort to realign the social studies curriculum to state frameworks. Social studies is integrated into the district's reading, art, and music programs, and reflects Arlington's diversity and its international connections. For example, grade 4 students study North American geography beginning with a letter-writing exchange with Arlington's sister city of Teosinte, El Salvador. Grade 2 students study Japan's culture, a topic that is a great fit with our vibrant sister city relationship with Nagaokakyo and Arlington's large population of Japanese-speaking residents. To enrich

their curriculum, two Stratton second grade teachers traveled to Japan through the Primary Source collaborative, which included a homestay exchange.

All Stratton students participate in music, art, physical education, and library – each weekday all children experience one of these specials (physical education occurs twice weekly). In music they sing, play instruments, read and notate, improvise and create, and listen and respond to music. In art class students create in a variety of media, discuss works of art, and learn about art history. Students also engage in interdisciplinary learning between the arts and general classroom studies. For example, they learn about the art and music of some of the cultures they focus on in social studies, in particular, Japan at grade 2 and Africa at grade 1. Physical education programming instructs students in a wide range of team and individual sports. In addition, Health Education, which follows the Great Body Shop curriculum, is closely aligned with Physical Education. Library teaches the children research skills and supports classroom topic exploration.

The PTO funded Enrichment Program operates collaboratively to support the core curriculum and social-emotional development of Stratton students. To facilitate collaboration, the PTO assigns each grade level an Enrichment Liaison who ensures that enrichment is tied to the core curriculum. In addition, school-wide enrichment programs include: Open Circle training and parent forums, the PRIDE school culture program, field trips and school based presentations, and our school-wide "Stay Sharp" summer reading program. Popular evening events for entire families include Math Night and Science Exploration Night.

2a. **(Elementary Schools) Reading**:
(This question is for elementary schools only)

Our reading curriculum is based on the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks and best practice from research and is the foundation of our balanced literacy program. It includes varied reading experiences for students taught through a variety of instructional practices: read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and literature circles. Students benefit from many opportunities to learn and improve their reading skills: phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency and vocabulary (outlined by the National Reading Panel). All grades commit to a daily reading block of no less than 90 minutes.

All students in grades K- 2 are instructed in a daily 30-minute Wilson Fundations phonics lesson. Through this systematic, sequential, multisensory program, students learn phonics skills and the English language following the six syllable types to be able to read and spell words.

Leveled guided reading (described by Fountas and Pinnell) is at the heart of the K-2 reading program. Through this instructional practice teachers have become very skilled in moving student reading progress forward, through monitoring student progress, and by identifying student reading needs. Fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategy skills are taught and practiced within the reading block using the appropriate instructional practices.

The reading curriculum at grades 3-5 is based on Integrated Units of Study developed by all grade 3-5 teachers in the district. Each unit of study incorporates a variety of quality texts and genres to instruct the use of reading comprehension strategies (introduced by Nancy Boyles), the application of specific literary elements to text, and to strengthen the acquisition of vocabulary. Teachers frequently use texts that correlate with the district science and social studies curriculum to teach reading skills.   Students are expected to be able to respond to what they read orally and in writing to meet state and district benchmarks.

Students who do not meet district reading benchmarks based on district assessment data and on daily observations are recommended for additional support in our reading intervention program. Highly trained teachers and staff use specialized reading programs to instruct these students: Wilson Reading System, Wilson Fundations (Double-Dose), Wilson Just Words, Orton Gillingham, and Read Naturally.

3.   **Additional Curriculum Area:**

Across all grades, Stratton teachers focus on learning how their students acquire mathematical understandings and how they develop skills. They realize that correct answers do not necessarily mean solid, mathematical understandings. They also appreciate that skills do not develop without practice. This knowledge has guided their additional efforts in mathematics over the past several years.

At all grades levels, teachers blend their classes before they form smaller, flexible groups where instruction can be targeted. This enables one teacher to instruct students who need to have a concept or skill re-taught, another teacher to address the needs of students ready to move more deeply into the mathematics, and the remaining students to work independently or in groups on application or practice.

At grades K – 2, teachers use *Assessing Math Concepts* (*AMC*) by Kathy Richardson to help form their groups. This series of individual, structured interviews allow teachers to probe student mathematical understanding. Teachers select activities for practice or instruction guided by the program. These activities build on knowledge at the very edge of student understanding, exactly where new learning happens.

Stratton's kindergarten teachers spearheaded the use of *AMC* by piloting the program in their classrooms. News of the progress and growth of their students' mathematical understanding spread to other elementary grades in their own school and throughout the district. This contributed to *AMC* becoming our district's math intervention tool.

Teachers at grades 3-5 have identified areas where students need additional practice to polish and to apply certain mathematical skills. Guided by MCAS results and classroom assessments, they have identified skill weaknesses and developed a series of Quick Checks that they use to transition all students to higher skill performances. A Quick Check is a collection of 5 problems that students do as part of their morning work. These rapid measures of student fluency give teachers an opportunity address misunderstandings with a mini-lesson. These efforts beyond the curriculum have resulted in gains in student performance.

4.   **Instructional Methods:**

The Stratton School staff utilizes a broad range of teaching methodologies to address the individual needs of all students. Flexible and dynamic grouping in the classroom and across grade levels provides targeted response to moving children forward. Our organic nature of responding to students needs means that groupings are constantly changing. Every teacher tracks data and develops accommodations for any student presenting academic challenges or excellence in any curriculum area and effective systems are put in place. Some examples of these responses are specialized math instruction around specific topics for small groups and reading groups developed based on DRA2 scores. The response to intervention model adopted by the district targets intervention only for those below the district benchmark. Stratton teachers have embraced and taken ownership of this model. At Stratton, it is not only students at either end of the spectrum of learning that are offered these opportunities, but peer groups are established for all learners.

Students found eligible for special education services receive support both in the classroom and in pull-out settings. Specialized technology has been integrated into the classrooms for children with physical and learning challenges. FM systems, consultation and materials for visually impaired, *Kurzweil* text reading and *Alphasmarts* have all enhanced functioning for students with reading and written expression weaknesses.

The English Language Learner Program is currently servicing a three-tiered student population for those whose first language is not English. English language instruction is provided in small groups for speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The Academic Challenge and Enrichment (ACE) Program provides teachers with co-teaching opportunities in Critical and Creative Problem Solving. Specialists collaborate with classroom teachers to build their capacity

to provide challenge work to students. As well as offering this to the upper grades, these specialists are a resource for math extensions in the early years.

In addition, college students from local universities, including Tufts, have developed engineering programs to enhance the fifth grade curriculum at Stratton.

5.   **Professional Development:**

Professional development is formally offered across the district over five half days with one full day as its centerpiece.   Offerings are decided with input from teachers and the administrative team of principals, literacy coaches, and curriculum leaders and are linked to district initiatives, such as the Elementary Response to Intervention Reading program. The elementary focus this year has been on effective practices in reading comprehension, underlying understandings in math, classroom extensions for advanced students, and global education. Several Stratton faculty members serve as workshop leaders in these efforts.

At the building level several hours per month are devoted to working in professional learning communities, called "Collaborative Learning Teams" (CLT's). CLT projects at Stratton include: Kindergarten – Integrating Executive Functioning Concepts into General Education Kindergartens; Grade 1 – Developing Writing Pacing Guide; Grade 2 – Focusing on "high readers" and their metacognition when it comes to reading; Grade 3 – Differentiating Instruction in Math (geometry); Grade 4 – Extending the reading program in order to fully meet the needs of advanced readers; and Grade 5 – Extending mathematical thinking and discourse in number sense for high-level learners.

An example of a district initiative that was embraced and extended by the Stratton staff was the Math RTI program. As part of their piloting work teachers in grades K-2 sought additional training within the school by visiting classrooms above and below their own grade. Additionally, extra training was completed by our staff to understand how to use data received from informal inventory assessments. Working together as a K-2 staff, the data was synthesized and student learning groups across classrooms were created for intervention and extensions. The district elementary math specialist supported these efforts with curriculum materials. This piloting experience has been shared with district elementary schools.

Finally, Stratton teachers extend their Professional Development by selecting courses outside of the district. Examples of these additional activities include: Problem Solving in Math, Algebra - Elementary through High School, and Sign Language.

6.   **School Leadership:**

The principal of the Stratton School has a singular focus on learning and high achievement for all students. In addition, he is an innovative administrator who has applied the district's Response to Intervention Reading program to create a unique model of math intervention at Stratton. He understands the power of data to drive teacher collaboration and to stimulate creative intervention in response to student needs. He follows through on initiatives and secures outside resources to support new structures and curriculum development, while always remaining a team player at the district level.

It is extremely important to highlight that leadership at Stratton is a shared responsibility among teachers and principal. Throughout this application for Blue Ribbon recognition Stratton teachers are cited for their continuous professional activities: district and school mentoring, district curriculum development and adaptation, and professional development. District coaching programs in Reading and Math are actively supported and utilized by all faculty members. Without such full acceptance these important programs would not realize their full impact. There is no resistance for innovative program changes at Stratton, whether initiated at the district or school level.

A building structure is in place at Stratton for the implementation of school-wide policies and programs. Individual teachers serve as principal assistants; data team liaisons, technology advisors, and representatives to PTO and School Council. Nearly every faculty member contributes to important school support and administrative activities.

This wide ranging school and district involvement enriches individual teacher knowledge of school leadership. This awareness drives original insights and observations that Stratton teachers offer at school and district based meetings around programming, professional development, curriculum innovation, instructional review, and student learning.

At Stratton it is our collective understanding and expectation that professionalism is an individual responsibility, which is also supported by the whole. Leadership is not dependent on a hierarchical dynamic. Instead it is a powerful merging of staff and it is our collective responsibility to maintain that effective interaction.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics   Grade: 3   Test: MCAS

Edition/Publication Year: 2009   Publisher: Measured Progress Inc.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	71	87	86	76	0
% Advanced	25	50	26	11	0
Number of students tested	52	38	53	54	0
Percent of total students tested	100	97	100	98	0
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	5	1	8	3	0
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	0	3	2	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	0	1	1	0
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	9	6	8	6	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	4	2	6	4	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:
(In Massachusetts, elementary level testing began in fourth grade. Public reporting of both ELA and Math test scores began in *1998* for fourth grade and in 2006 for fifth grade. In third grade, ELA results were first reported in 2005 and Math scores were first reported in 2006.)

Subject: Reading   Grade: 3   Test: MCAS

Edition/Publication Year: 2009   Publisher: Measure Progress Inc.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	81	84	88	82	84
% Advanced	19	47	28	28	0
Number of students tested	52	38	53	54	38
Percent of total students tested	100	97	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	5	1	8	3	3
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	0	3	2	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	0	1	1	0
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	9	6	8	6	3
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	4	2	6	4	1
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

(In Massachusetts, elementary level testing began in fourth grade. Public reporting of both ELA and Math test scores began in *1998* for fourth grade and in 2006 for fifth grade. In third grade, ELA results were first reported in 2005 and Math scores were first reported in 2006.)

Subject: Mathematics   Grade: 4   Test: MCAS

Edition/Publication Year: 2009   Publisher: Measured Progress inc.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	88	66	61	81	73
% Advanced	35	33	20	32	22
Number of students tested	40	54	54	37	49
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	7	3	2	1
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	2	1	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1	0	0	1
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	8	9	9	5	4
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	5	3	1	3
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: MCAS

Edition/Publication Year: 2009 Publisher: Measured Progress INC

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	91	70	81	81	73
% Advanced	38	9	20	8	14
Number of students tested	40	54	54	37	49
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	7	3	2	1
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	2	1	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1	0	0	1
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	8	9	9	5	4
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	5	3	1	3
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics   Grade: 5   Test: MCAS

Edition/Publication Year: 2009   Publisher: Measured Progress Inc.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Apr	May	May	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	96	93	63	66	
% Advanced	64	68	30	34	
Number of students tested	53	53	33	47	
Percent of total students tested	100	96	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	8	3	2	1	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	1	0	0	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	3	1	0	1	
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	82				
% Advanced	9				
Number of students tested	11	9	4	4	
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	3	1	0	4	
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

(In Massachusetts, elementary level testing began in fourth grade. Public reporting of both ELA and Math test scores began in *1998* for fourth grade and in 2006 for fifth grade. In third grade, ELA results were first reported in 2005 and Math scores were first reported in 2006.)

Subject: Reading   Grade: 5   Test: MCAS

Edition/Publication Year: 2009   Publisher: Measured Progress Inc.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	97	91	79	87	
% Advanced	42	19	12	40	
Number of students tested	53	53	33	47	
Percent of total students tested	100	96	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	1				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2				
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	3	1	0	4	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	1	0	0	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	2	0	1	
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	73				
% Advanced	18				
Number of students tested	11	9	4	4	
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	3	1	0	4	
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:
(In Massachusetts, elementary level testing began in fourth grade. Public reporting of both ELA and Math test scores began in *1998* for fourth grade and in 2006 for fifth grade. In third grade, ELA results were first reported in 2005 and Math scores were first reported in 2006.)