

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. Kirby Bryson

Official School Name: Northwestern Elementary School

School Mailing Address:
9975 Sharptown Road
Mardela Springs, MD 21837-2218

County: Wicomico State School Code Number*: 0106

Telephone: (410) 677-5808 Fax: (410) 677-5850

Web site/URL: http://www.wcboe.org/schools/nwe/ E-mail: kbryson@wcboe.org

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

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. John Fredericksen

District Name: Wicomico Tel: (410) 677-4400

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. Mark Thompson

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)
- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 17 | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| 3 | Middle/Junior high schools |
| 4 | High schools |
| 0 | K-12 schools |
| 24 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 12296

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	16	18	34	6			0
K	23	24	47	7			0
1	24	17	41	8			0
2	20	16	36	9			0
3	17	26	43	10			0
4	29	16	45	11			0
5	24	17	41	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							287

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
17 % Black or African American
4 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
79 % 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: 18 %

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.	20
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	26
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	46
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	257
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.179
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	17.899

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: 48 %

Total number students who qualify: 138

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: 7 %

Total Number of Students Served: 21

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

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
Total number	<u>37</u>	<u>12</u>

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

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

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	94%	93%	96%	95%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

During the 2007-2008 school year, a first grade teacher was diagnosed with cancer and was absent for the first 8 weeks of school. She later was placed on a year-long medical leave but the school was able to hire a full time teacher in her place. Also, a 4th grade teacher was on an extended medical leave due to complications resulting from a fractured elbow.

During the 2008-2009 school year, a 1st grade teacher was on an extended maternity leave.

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

Northwestern Elementary School is located in the Wicomico County, Maryland town of Mardela Springs, approximately twelve miles west of the city of Salisbury. First opened in 1966, the school originally consisted of only classrooms and an office. In 1967, more classrooms and offices were added along with a media center, multi-purpose room, and stage. A 1992 renovation included the addition of a wing that currently houses grades 1 and 2.

Northwestern prides itself on being a true community school, serving students from neighboring towns of Mardela Springs, Sharptown, and San Domingo. While agricultural trades including the poultry industry are the primary source of employment for our families, others work in the fields of healthcare, K-16 education, and retail.

The student population of 287 (as of September 30, 2009) is made up of students in Pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Forty-eight percent of Northwestern's population is low income, qualifying the school for Title I services. Although currently designated as a targeted assistance school, Northwestern is engaged in the year-long process of becoming a school-wide Title 1 school for 2010-2011. Regardless of their poverty level, Northwestern students have shown continued growth on the Maryland School Assessment in both math and reading for the past six years. The school has received State of Maryland recognition for the past two years as a result of increased subgroup achievement. In addition, the school prides itself on having a Wicomico County Teacher of the Year and Maryland Art Teacher of the Year on staff.

Northwestern's Mission Statement calls for a continued partnership with the home and community to prepare students to become lifelong learners and self-sufficient citizens in a safe, orderly environment. This mission stems from the following beliefs:

- Students' learning needs should be the primary focus of all decisions impacting the work of our school.
- Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches and opportunities for success.
- Each student should be treated as a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- Students' self-esteem can be enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect.
- Cultural diversity can increase students' understanding of different peoples and cultures.
- Our school should function as a learning organization to promote opportunities for all stakeholders to work together as a community of learners.
- In order for students to become confident, self-sufficient, lifelong learners, our school should be committed to continuous improvement.

The school attributes its success to having a strong leadership team, a knowledgeable and dedicated school staff, and supportive parents. The administration values all stakeholders' input when determining what is best for the school. Collegiality is apparent throughout the school as all teachers, paraprofessionals, specialists, and support staff work together to help all students achieve. Instructional decisions are based on the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle of continuous improvement and driven by student data, including state and county assessment results and ongoing classroom learning. Grade level teachers, specialists, and administrators meet weekly to discuss individual student learning and plan instruction based on identified needs. Struggling students are assisted through flexible small groups, one-on-one assistance, and supplemental support, while students exceeding expectations are challenged with critical thinking activities.

Building relationships within the school and community is an important characteristic of Northwestern Elementary School. The staff has assumed leadership roles in scouting, music and youth ministries,

university athletic programs, mentoring programs, Destination Imagination, community fundraisers to support families in crisis, and the PTA. Our Relay for Life Team has also raised over \$20,000 for the American Cancer Society, more than any school in the county.

We believe the focus on continuous improvement, strong leadership, stakeholder involvement, and caring relationships have directly and positively impacted our ability to close the achievement gap and help all students succeed at Northwestern Elementary School.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

Students in grades three through five take the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), which measures reading and math achievement. Given in March, this assessment provides educators, parents, and the public with valuable information about student, school, school system, and state performance. The test meets the requirements of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. MSA scores show how well Maryland children have learned the reading and mathematics skills specified in the Maryland State Curriculum (MSC). Three proficiency levels, Advanced, Proficient, and Basic, characterize individual student scores on a series of selected and constructed response items. Students who score Advanced or Proficient on the reading MSA are able to demonstrate the ability to construct meaning from on to above grade level text. On the math portion of the MSA, students scoring at Advanced or Proficient are able to successfully apply math concepts to real-world situations.

The cornerstone of Maryland's accountability system is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). To meet AYP, schools, school systems, and the State must show that students are meeting the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) in reading, math, and attendance at the elementary level and must also meet the 95% participation rate requirement. In addition to student achievement in the aggregate (all students), eight student subgroups (African American, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, White, Limited English Proficiency, Free and Reduced Price Meals, and Special Education) must also meet the AMO to achieve AYP. It is important to note that although some of the subgroups did not meet the 10% criteria for reporting, we are still accountable for their progress toward meeting AYP, in accordance with State of Maryland standards.

Since 2005, MSA data indicates significant progress for grades 3-5 at Northwestern. Over the last five years, third grade students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels have ranged from a low of 63% to a high of 87% in reading and 74% to 93% in math. Students in fourth grade have shown excellent progress with a range between 77% to 90% in reading and 82% to 100% in mathematics. Additionally, growth was shown as fifth grade students progressed from 65% to 94% in reading and 73% to 94% in mathematics. We are also pleased to have shown remarkable gains in the percent of students scoring at the advanced level across all grade levels. Most notable is the increase in 4th grade students moving from 9% to 58% in math.

All subgroups have made AMOs in each of the past five years, and all have met or exceeded the county and/or state levels of proficiency in many areas. Northwestern's goal of increasing student performance while decreasing the achievement gap among subgroups has met with considerable success and in some areas we have reversed the gap. Last year, 90% of Caucasian students scored at the proficient or advanced levels in reading and math and 100% of African American students in fourth grade scored at the proficient or advanced level in math. Also, 98% of our fifth grade disadvantaged students scored at the proficient or advanced level on last year's reading and math assessments.

The teachers and staff at Northwestern Elementary are committed to sustained progress toward the national goal of 100% proficiency for all students by 2013-2014. It is the collaborative effort among all stakeholders that drives the culture of our school and ensures success of every child. We will continue our mission to improve instruction by meeting the individual needs and addressing the various learning styles of our students.

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Assessment data drives instruction at Northwestern Elementary School. A variety of assessments, including formative, summative, and standardized tests, are administered to obtain an accurate picture of the students'

performance. The Maryland School Assessment is given annually to monitor student and school progress in both reading and math. Additionally, teachers administer county benchmark assessments four times a year to monitor student growth in both reading and math. The Scholastic Reading Inventory is given three times a year and provides a measure of reading comprehension.

Northwestern implements unique practices to differentiate instruction. “Reading Enrichment and Learning” (REAL) is a practice conceived by the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) nine years ago consisting of a variety of interventions for students. Students are grouped and regrouped instructionally based upon assessment data and their classroom performance. Teachers utilize a variety of materials with students during instruction including language support readers, below level readers, on level readers, above level readers, or novels.

“Math is No Trouble” (MINT), also developed by the Instructional Leadership Team, consists of differentiated instruction for students in math. Students are placed in groups based upon their proficiency of math skills using data from benchmarks, chapter tests, and daily performance. As a result, students are given remediation or extension activities based on achievement.

Instruction for both programs is facilitated by classroom, Title I, and special education teachers.

Our professional development program is developed as a result of the analysis of student assessment data. Strengths and opportunities for improvement are identified by the administration in conjunction with the Instructional Leadership Team. Topics for on-going, job-embedded professional development, which will focus on meeting the unique needs of our student population, are then selected. Teachers meet weekly, during professional days, and at quarterly half-day meetings to evaluate assessment data and create differentiated lessons and flexible groups. Furthermore, teachers also disaggregate the data to determine if there are particular areas that need special attention.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Northwestern Elementary School realizes the importance of communicating assessment results to students, parents, and the community in an effort to maximize and maintain working relationships and networks with important stakeholders. This communication occurs through written, verbal, and electronic means.

Parents are invited to attend Instructional Leadership Team meetings and Title I Parent Advisory Committee meetings. At these meetings, attendees review formative and summative data disaggregated by grade level. This data includes the MSA, benchmark assessment data, formative and summative data, student reading levels, and school-wide discipline information.

Since not all parents are able to attend the school improvement meetings, the staff at Northwestern is firmly committed to communicating these results to parents in other ways as well. Although the county benchmark assessments are secure documents that must remain at school, parents may access the assessment results through communication with teachers. Also, every child who takes the MSA receives a detailed individualized report. Other school assessment data, such as SRI Lexile levels and Reading Counts progress reports, is shared quarterly with parents.

In addition, school assessment data can be found on the Maryland State Department of Education website, Northwestern’s website, and the Wicomico County Board of Education’s website. Information is also shared in the school’s monthly newsletter and during PTA and Parent Advisory meetings.

Finally, parents with internet capabilities can access the newly instituted Parent Portal. This gives parents the ability to view electronic teacher grade books using a secure password. Such access provides the most current data on their child including class work, projects, homework, and test scores.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Staff members at Northwestern view the Blue Ribbon Award as a great honor and a validation for the staff's dedication over the past five years. Most of our existing staff members recall that our school was close to being reconstituted due to low performance. At that point, our school committed to the core values of the Baldrige Learning Initiative with a focus on creating a culture of continuous improvement to achieve results for all students.

We welcome the opportunity to share our accomplishments and instructional practices and look forward to sharing our journey and success with colleagues in our school system. Given the uniqueness of Northwestern as being one of only a few community schools in Wicomico County with a large disadvantaged population, we believe that we have much to offer. Frequently, our administration and staff are questioned about how we have adjusted our daily schedules to focus on reading and mathematics to meet the individual needs of our students. Although unique to our school and staffing structure, many of our practices can be adapted in other schools. We look forward to sharing our instructional practices and are readily available to share the processes that have improved achievement over the years.

In the event that Northwestern Elementary School is named a National Blue Ribbon School, we will continue to operate in the same manner that has led to our success. We will foster an open approach to our learning and promote an environment that welcomes any and all visitors who wish to learn more about our school programs.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The curriculum at Northwestern Elementary mandates rigorous instruction and sets high expectations for all students. Our highly qualified staff provides challenging, engaging educational experiences, which are differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Northwestern follows the Wicomico County Public Schools' (WCPS) curriculum, which is aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum across all subject areas. Northwestern's School Improvement Plan, which includes components of the Baldrige Learning Initiative, directs our professional development, curriculum planning, and instructional decisions. The plan, developed by the leadership team, is monitored during meetings and reflects the school's specific and current needs.

Reading-Language Arts

Northwestern utilizes a balanced literacy approach to teach reading, language arts, and writing. Our school implements the WCPS Reading/Writing/Language Arts curriculum, which is aligned with the grade level indicators from the Maryland State Curriculum (MSC). The Houghton Mifflin Reading Series is utilized in grades Kindergarten through five and includes a grade level anthology, as well as remedial and extension readers for small group instruction. The 90-minute reading block includes 45 minutes of whole group instruction and 45 minutes of small group differentiated instruction, which is based upon ongoing teachers' analysis of data. Bi-weekly reading planning sessions allow for the determination of concepts taught, as well as placement of students. Northwestern's focus is based upon the five components of reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension. Teachers also utilize classroom libraries that are categorized by Lexile and Fountas and Pinnell levels for individualized independent reading.

Mathematics

The mathematics program at Northwestern is based upon the WCPS curriculum, which provides an instructional program designed to ensure all students achieve proficiency of math skills, concepts, and processes. This curriculum is aligned with the grade level indicators from the Maryland State Curriculum. The 90-minute math block includes 60 minutes of whole group instruction and 30 minutes of small group differentiated instruction. The small group instruction support is based upon ongoing teacher analysis of data. As with Reading/Language Arts, bi-weekly math planning sessions allow for the determination of concepts taught, as well as placement of students.

The mathematics curriculum is organized into units of study based upon standards from the MSC. These units include Algebra, Patterns and Functions, Geometry, Measurement, Statistics, Probability, and Number Relationships and Computation.

Science/Social Studies

Science and social studies are taught on a daily basis as outlined by WCPS instructional plan and incorporate standards that are part of the MSC. In primary grade levels, many of the science and social studies concepts are integrated into daily reading instruction. Intermediate grade levels schedule specific times daily for instruction in these areas but alternate the subject matter every 4 ½ weeks. Concepts in science focus on the disciplines of Biology, Earth and Space, and Environmental Science, while the social studies curriculum is based upon the study of our community, nation, and world.

FineArts

Students at Northwestern participate in fine arts through weekly general music and art programs using the WCPS curriculum. In general music instruction, students have the opportunity to create, perform, and respond to music using varying techniques. Fourth and fifth grade students may elect to participate in a strings instrumental program while fifth grade students may also participate in an instrumental program consisting of woodwinds, brass, and percussion. During art instruction, students are exposed to the exploration, expression, communication, and creation of artwork. In each grade, students discover art elements such as color, line, texture, form, space, shape, and patterns. In both general music and arts instruction, technology is integrated into each lesson.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

Northwestern Elementary School adheres to the philosophy that reading is the basis for all knowledge and subject areas. Our highly qualified staff incorporates a rigorous and comprehensive reading program that is aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum and is molded to meet the individual needs of all students.

Our school, along with all schools in Wicomico County, utilizes the *Houghton Mifflin Invitations to Literacy* program in grades K-5 as a basis for instruction and to promote lifelong readers. The focus of our instruction is based upon increasing students' understanding of phonemic awareness, phonics, word analysis, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills. Our knowledgeable staff encourages greater cognitive thinking by embedding critical analysis questions into classroom discussions. We also utilize the expertise of our reading professional development coach and other specialists to enhance our reading instruction.

Instructional Block

The reading block consists of 90 minutes daily of whole group, small group, and independent reading instruction across all grade levels. During whole group instruction, students are exposed to grade level text and instructed using the indicators from the Maryland State Curriculum. Small group instruction provides the opportunity to utilize support staff from Title I and special education to differentiate instruction for students needing greater assistance. This allows classroom teachers to also extend material for highly able children.

This model targets specific skills and processes needed for student mastery. All staff utilize materials from the Houghton Mifflin series that are designed at each child's instructional level. Grade level teams, consisting of classroom teachers, Title I staff, special education staff, reading professional development coach, and administration, meet bi-weekly to systematically plan lessons that support instruction and student needs. Data derived from teacher generated common assessments, along with quarterly county benchmark assessments, is discussed at these meetings and drive the instruction and grouping of the children.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

Northwestern Elementary School's mission, in partnership with the home and community, is to *prepare students to become lifelong learners and self-sufficient citizens in a safe, orderly environment*. We believe that in order to increase student achievement, technology must be an integral part of daily instruction. As evident in our School Improvement Plan for the past two years, we have identified technology as an effective instructional tool that must be used to meet the needs of diverse learners.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the Wicomico County Board of Education initiated a competitive application process in which all schools could apply to receive Promethean Learning Boards, software, and supplementary devices for each classroom. As a result, the Northwestern Instructional Leadership Team agreed to submit an application. Of the fifteen applications received by the county, Northwestern was the only elementary school to be awarded the technology package.

Following confirmation of the award, the ILT created a Technology Professional Development Plan. In order to ensure that all certified teachers participated in the mandatory ten hours of training, opportunities were infused into the county in-service days, monthly faculty meetings, and planned school-based professional development days.

To sustain progress as new members join the staff and veteran teachers become ready to take on more challenges, continuing professional development activities are included in the School Improvement Plan. Each year, our new teachers are assigned a technology mentor. This mentor is either a colleague who is an advanced Promethean user, a technology resource teacher, or the technology professional development coach. Weekly meetings are held to provide guidance on infusing technology into instruction and to provide demonstrations on how to use the components.

It is our belief that exposing the staff to these new forms of instructional technology has benefitted our children and has created a new, highly motivating, and interesting method of learning. We believe that this technology has been integral to the advancement of our students and will foster a life-long appreciation for understanding and the use of technology.

4. Instructional Methods:

Due to the fact that Northwestern Elementary only has two classrooms per grade level, there is a great need to implement a variety of unique instructional methods. Teachers are trained in utilizing explicit instruction techniques in which they model instruction for the children, work cooperatively to complete examples, and encourage independent practice by the children. Teachers also incorporate a number of best practices for differentiating instruction and the school is creative in utilizing support staff to meet the individual needs of the students.

Students are grouped heterogeneously for core instruction in all areas. During reading instruction, students are exposed to the grade level anthology, specific vocabulary, and tested state objectives and indicators. Throughout math instruction, objectives from the Maryland State Curriculum are taught at each grade level. Manipulatives are utilized throughout instruction to ensure that the children are instructed using a multisensory approach.

Small, flexible groupings are also utilized during the reading and math blocks. Throughout this period, classroom and support teachers, along with paraprofessionals from Title I and special education, differentiate the instruction to meet the needs of all children. Lessons are planned based upon students' instructional levels and incorporate concrete, experimental, and abstract thinking in order to target the various learning modalities of the children.

Classroom teachers closely monitor the progress of all children during direct and independent practice. By reviewing daily student progress and analyzing formal and informal assessments, teachers are able to plan and reteach concepts to students needing further assistance while providing extension activities for more advanced students.

5. Professional Development:

Northwestern embraces the philosophy that in order to move our students to the next level of achievement, we must embrace learning ourselves. Each year, the Instructional Leadership Team reviews student data and feedback from the staff in order to plan the appropriate activities for the following year. In each of the last three years, our School Improvement Plan has focused on providing action steps that will enhance reading and math instruction, more specifically relating to how higher order thinking skills and questions can be infused into daily instruction. Also, as a result of our school's acquisition of Promethean Learning Boards in all classrooms, we have had a greater focus on integrating this new technology.

In addition to professional development being conducted during specific county designated days, more grade level specific staff development is achieved during our weekly planning meetings. During these hour long sessions, grade level teachers and content specialists work collaboratively with either our math or reading professional development coach to plan lessons that are aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum, discuss grade level specific teaching strategies, review student placement among differentiated groupings, and circle score student work. This embedded, grade level specific professional development has been a vital link to the improvements witnessed at Northwestern over the past few years and epitomizes the effectiveness of using the Baldrige Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle to inform instruction.

6. School Leadership:

The leadership structure at Northwestern Elementary consists of the principal, assistant principal, Instructional Leadership Team, committee chairpersons, and grade level representatives. Mr. Kirby Bryson, Principal, and Assistant Principal, Mrs. Jennifer Rice, work diligently to share the vision and mission of the school with staff, students, and parents. As the instructional leader, Mr. Bryson sets high expectations for all staff and fosters collaboration in order to determine what instructional methods are most effective to meet students' needs.

Mr. Bryson has supported the ongoing success of our school by encouraging leadership within the building and promoting a true Professional Learning Community. Many of the practices refined over the years, including weekly collaborative planning sessions, individualized reading and math interventions, quarterly grade level data analysis meetings, and a successful cooperative discipline program, are an outgrowth of Mr. Bryson's vision. His confidence in staff members has truly changed the overall culture and climate of the school and has had a great impact on our school achieving Blue Ribbon status.

The guiding force of the school is the Instructional Leadership Team. Led by veteran teachers, Mrs. Susan Webster and Mr. Charles Echard, the team is comprised of grade level representatives, Title I reading and math teachers, special education teachers, professional development coaches, paraprofessionals, central office staff, parents, and business partners. The team is committed to meeting four priorities: accelerating student learning; improving student attendance; improving school climate to ensure a safe, drug-free environment conducive to learning; and engaging parents in taking an active role in their child's daily educational program. The team meets quarterly to develop and refine the School Improvement Plan, review student data, address instructional methods, and plan professional development activities. The team also focuses on ways to encourage parental involvement.

Since Northwestern Elementary School is a community school, the administration and staff work to establish a positive image with parents and community members. A key tool used for communicating information is our monthly Tee Pee Talk newsletter. The newsletter highlights current school events, shares students' successes, encourages positive character values, and promotes healthy wellness initiatives. Also, important messages and reminders are conveyed periodically to families through the use of the Parent Link communication system.

We believe our innovative, supportive, and actively involved administrators have played a significant role in Northwestern's achievement of becoming a Blue Ribbon school.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Maryland School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2008 Publisher: MSDE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	87	89	80	93	74
% Advanced	20	17	14	9	16
Number of students tested	45	35	35	43	38
Percent of total students tested	100	100	97	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	77	87	77	95	73
% Advanced	15	7	9	11	18
Number of students tested	26	15	22	19	22
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	82				
% Advanced	27				
Number of students tested	11				
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subgroup #6 consists of ethnicity of White.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2008

Grade: 3 Test: Maryland School Assessment
Publisher: MSDE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	80	89	75	81	63
% Advanced	16	14	14	5	5
Number of students tested	45	35	36	43	38
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	77	87	68	84	64
% Advanced	8	7	9	5	5
Number of students tested	26	15	22	19	22
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	82				
% Advanced	18				
Number of students tested	11				
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subgroup #6 consists of students with ethnicity of White

Subject: Mathematics
Edition/Publication Year: 2008

Grade: 4 Test: Maryland School Assessment
Publisher: MSDE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	97	97	100	92	82
% Advanced	58	33	42	19	9
Number of students tested	36	39	43	37	34
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93	95	100	90	83
% Advanced	53	16	33	21	0
Number of students tested	15	19	21	19	18
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					67
% Advanced					0
Number of students tested					12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subgroup #6 consists of students with ethnicity of White

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2008

Grade: 4 Test: Maryland School Assessment
Publisher: MSDE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	90	86	84	77
% Advanced	19	13	21	16	12
Number of students tested	36	39	43	37	34
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	87	84	86	84	72
% Advanced	7	5	5	11	11
Number of students tested	15	19	21	19	18
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					67
% Advanced					0
Number of students tested					12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subgroup #6 consists of students with ethnicity of White

Subject: Mathematics
Edition/Publication Year: 2008

Grade: 5 Test: Maryland School Assessment
Publisher: MSDE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	82	85	80	73
% Advanced	19	27	5	13	11
Number of students tested	36	45	39	40	44
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	68	79	93	65
% Advanced	6	18	5	21	9
Number of students tested	18	22	19	14	23
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		77		82	
% Advanced		31		9	
Number of students tested		13		11	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subgroup #6 consists of students with ethnicity of White

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2008

Grade: 5 Test: Maryland School Assessment
Publisher: MSDE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	89	69	65	68
% Advanced	28	42	13	23	7
Number of students tested	36	45	39	40	44
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	82	58	71	52
% Advanced	11	32	5	14	0
Number of students tested	18	22	19	14	23
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		85		55	
% Advanced		23		0	
Number of students tested		13		11	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subgroup #6 consists of students with ethnicity of White