

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

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

Name of Principal: Ms. Karen Burnett

Official School Name: Northern Middle School

School Mailing Address:
2954 Chaneyville Road
Owings, MD 20735-9665

County: Calvert State School Code Number*: 315

Telephone: (410) 257-1622 Fax: (410) 257-1623

Web site/URL: http://nmsweb.calvertnet.k12.md.us/ E-mail: burnettk@calvertnet.k12.md.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. Jack Smith

District Name: Calvert Tel: (410) 535-1700

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. William Phalen

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) | 13 | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| | 6 | Middle/Junior high schools |
| | 4 | High schools |
| | 1 | K-12 schools |
| | 24 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 11195

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

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

4. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

| Grade | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total | Grade | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------|-------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| PreK | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 112 | 109 | 221 |
| K | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 114 | 116 | 230 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 122 | 129 | 251 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL | | | | | | | 702 |

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
3 % Asian
8 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
84 % White
2 % 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: 5 %

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. | 25 |
| (2) | Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year. | 12 |
| (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. | 729 |
| (5) | Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4). | 0.051 |
| (6) | Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100. | 5.075 |

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

Total number limited English proficient 1

Number of languages represented: 1

Specify languages:

Icelandic

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7 %

Total number students who qualify: 52

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: 4 %

Total Number of Students Served: 29

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

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</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>40</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Special resource teachers/specialists | <u>5</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Paraprofessionals | <u>5</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Support staff | <u>14</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Total number | <u>66</u> | <u>1</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 17 :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% | 97% | 96% | 96% |
| Daily teacher attendance | 96% | 97% | 97% | 98% | 98% |
| Teacher turnover rate | 10% | 10% | 12% | 15% | 7% |
| Student dropout rate | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

Please provide all explanations below.

At the end of the 2005/2006 school year, one teacher transferred in county, two were promoted to administrative positions, two took teaching positions in another state, one received a year of parenting leave, and one left the teaching profession.

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 | 0 | % |

PART III - SUMMARY

Northern Middle School is a learning community located in rural Calvert County, Maryland, situated between the Chesapeake Bay and the Patuxent River, serving the residential, farming, and small business communities of Northern Calvert County. As part of the Calvert County Public School System, we are proud to consistently rank among the top performing school systems in the state of Maryland.

Our mission statement, Learning First, is the foundation of success at Northern Middle School. A simple focus on the development, implementation, and maintenance of a school community that is centered on learning is our primary goal. Our learning culture is supported by our norms, infrastructure, and daily priorities and decisions. We believe in the operational structure of teaming, and have created Instructional Learning Pods to facilitate the instruction of the whole child. The Learning Pods ensure that learners are monitored for success and every teacher is connected to targeted learners, of varying levels, who may need enhanced support. These targeted learners include both proficient and struggling learners, as our goal is to move every learner forward. Instructional Learning Pods also promote collegial sharing and collaboration. Each Learning Pod is responsible for identifying best instructional practices through observation of colleagues and best practices are shared with the faculty as a whole via staff meetings and other professional development opportunities. In this way, high quality instruction is continually being observed, rewarded, and promoted throughout our school.

The School Learning Improvement Team (SLIT) supports our six core initiatives at Northern Middle School: Community, Communication, Instruction, Math, Reading, and Climate. SLIT is divided into instructional and community leadership teams that drive these six core focus areas. Each decision at our school is continually held up against the question: How does this impact learning and/or the learner? Through this process, we have been able to sharpen our focus towards success for all learners, in all populations that we serve.

Northern Middle School offers a continuum of challenging courses. Recognizing that all learners do not learn at the same pace or to the same level, we have developed a master schedule that allows learners to receive instruction across a wide variety of settings and offerings. A large number of our learners take high school-level math and foreign language classes, with many leaving 8th grade having already earned high school credits in these areas. Intervention classes, advanced classes and co-taught classes with flexible groupings allow us to focus on meeting the needs of individual learners.

Aside from our core content learning focus, our learners are given opportunities to develop their individual potential through participation in the arts, technology, and physical fitness classes. Coupled with our after school activities, learners choose from a wide array of offerings including: jazz band, symphonic band, music, theater, MESA, robotics, Student Government, treble choir, Math Counts, Green Club, and After School Learning Clubs. Northern Middle School also has a long history of successful sports teams, boasting many county championships in soccer, volleyball, track, girls' and boys' basketball, softball, and baseball. We recognize the importance of diversified experiential learning in promoting character development, citizenship, and the whole child.

All professional and support staff at Northern Middle School are genuinely committed to supporting the various needs of our middle school learners. As constant and true role models for our learners, we exemplify the school pledge: "As a NMS learner, I promise to uphold the Bobcat Roar: Respect, Outstanding Achievement, and Responsibility." As you walk through our building, it is obvious that learning is taking place and that our staff loves kids. As a staff, we also seek to care for one another and for all of those in our learning community. In this way, learners observe the staff working together as a community striving to represent best practices daily.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Northern Middle School has been recognized for outstanding achievement on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for the past five years. The MSA was first given in 2003 in response to the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. This criterion-referenced assessment is administered each spring to all Maryland students in grades 3-8. Achievement levels are referred to as “advanced”, “proficient”, and “basic”. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) establishes standards to measure the Adequate Yearly Progress of the student population, as well as subgroups, and ensure ongoing progress towards the 100% proficiency goal in 2014. These Maryland standards are termed “Annual Measurable Objectives” (AMO).

Northern Middle school has routinely outperformed MSDE’s AMO in both reading and math. Worthy of mention is the fact that every grade level has surpassed their AMO goal by at least 25% each year since 2005. Eighth grade reading scores have seen an increase in proficient and advanced totals for the past four years, with seventh grade reading showing an increase each year for the past five years!

Northern Middle has many data milestones of which to be proud. Beyond the AMO increase, last year’s MSA results in eighth grade math showed just 6.3% of the class scoring basic, down from 40.3% in 2005.

However, the largest math milestone can be seen in the Students With Disabilities (SWD) scores in eighth grade math. In 2005, just 10% of 8th grade SWD population tested advanced or proficient on the MSA, whereas 73.3% tested advanced or proficient in 2009. Other sub-groups have continued to make progress in math as well. For example, our African-American proficiency rate in 2005 stood at just 31.0%. That number has increased dramatically over the past few years to 87.5%. Additionally, this subgroup has seen an increase in the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced every year since 2005.

These learning successes can be attributed to several factors: teacher-learner placement, co-taught double-block math classes and skill-specific, data-driven interventions for targeted learners. These successes also stem from classroom teachers who consistently use formal and informal assessment data to drive instruction for ALL students.

Similar data milestones can be seen in NMS’s reading results. Our 2009 MSA reading scores show a yearly increase over the past four years in the percentage of students testing proficient and advanced (94.8% in 2009 vs. 85.3% in 2005). Similarly, our subgroups have performed well, specifically our FARMS population. All three grade levels have managed to improve their FARMS proficiency scores by an average of 21% since 2005. Additionally, our SWD population, especially seventh grade, continues to make significant gains toward the 100% proficiency goal. Since 2005, the number of seventh grade SWD students testing proficient or above on the MSA has nearly DOUBLED from 45.2% to 90%.

In addition to the MSA, all students enrolled in Algebra I take the Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) in Algebra and Data Analysis. The HSA is one of four tests high school students must pass as part of the Maryland High School Diploma Program. At Northern Middle, we are so excited to report that for every year since 2005, at least 99% of our HSA test-takers have scored proficient or above, therefore earning their first credit towards a Maryland high school diploma. In 2006 and 2008, 100% of our learners scored proficient or above on the Algebra HSA, with over 50% scoring advanced.

From 2005-2009, Northern Middle School learners have continually demonstrated high levels of performance AND made great strides toward the 2014 goal of 100% proficiency in both reading and math. Our faculty, staff, and administrators are tirelessly committed to academic success for all learners. Furthermore, we are

confident that our differentiated instruction, co-taught classes, professional learning communities, and intervention constructs will continue to support learning success for all learners.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Northern Middle School is truly a data driven school; the ability to use data to design and drive our instruction has become the foundation of our academic focus. Over the past five years, effective use of our data management program, Performance Matters, has become key to moving each of our learners forward. Teachers are trained to use Performance Matters, and are proficient at accessing, monitoring, and using assessment scores to make decisions regarding learners.

Prior to the start of each new school year, SLIT meets to analyze data and create a workable plan that will best meet the needs of all learners. The master schedule is created to include double block periods of math, co-taught classes, support classes and classes that will challenge our advanced learners. Assessment results are also used to determine teacher assignments, class sizes, and pacing. Learner schedules are fluid enough to allow movement in and out of various content classes, should it be determined by ongoing data analysis that they are in need of a different placement. Data is also used to determine the structure of our school-wide Organizational Period (OP). OP occurs at the end of each school day, and is designed to offer targeted math or reading groups that address specific skill deficits in a small group setting.

Learning Pods meet twice per month to review current learner data, discuss skill reports, and design individual learning plans for specific learners. These targeted learners may be in need of extra learning support, which is often delivered through After-School Learning Clubs, OP, or Saturday School. Portfolios of targeted students are created by each Learning Pod and passed on to the teachers and Learning Pods that will work with these learners the following year.

In the classroom, teachers use informal and formal assessments to drive and design their instruction. Successful mastery of State Curriculum indicators is constantly monitored to determine pacing, grouping, and the need for differentiated instruction.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Northern Middle School has a multi-dimensional and dynamic approach to communicating assessment results to learners, parents and the community. The goal of communicating assessment results is to inform parents and learners of academic progress, as well as to guide teacher instruction in a way that optimizes learner achievement.

NMS blends a variety of communication tools to create learner and parent ownership of assessment results and learning. The traditional reporting vehicles of interim progress reports, quarterly report cards, and monthly newsletters contribute to timely and meaningful communication of student learning. Beyond these traditional methods, NMS also uses the following: 1) Pinnacle Internet Viewer: real-time grades for student/parent viewing; 2) Performance Matters 2: a data base system that analyzes assessment results by skill level and allows teachers to track learner progress based on the Maryland VSC; 3) Back-to-School Night: an opportunity for parents to understand data systems and grading policies; 4) After School Learning Club: based on parent understanding of data, this is an enrichment as well as an intervention in Math and Reading programs; 5) Double-Block Math/Reading Interventions: based on parent recognition of learner needs in these areas, learners are scheduled for a double period during their regular day; 6) Special Education Grants have funded after-school programs for learners in need of accommodations; 7) Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meetings with parents begin with analysis of Math/Reading data; 8) Teacher-Learner discussions: during the school day, these discussions are designed to motivate learners and further communicate data results through them to parents.

Sharing results telephonically, electronically, and in meetings with parents, learners, and the community has proven successful to learner academic development at NMS.

4. **Sharing Success:**

As we strive toward becoming a National Blue Ribbon school, it is our mission to continually impart our successes with other schools and districts. Northern Middle School teacher leaders pride themselves in sharing best practices with their system-wide colleagues, learning and identifying the needs of struggling learners, as well as working collaboratively with the Maryland State Department of Education.

NMS teachers are consistently sought out to design and implement professional development workshops in areas such as Integrated Reading and Language Arts (IRLA), Math, Physical Education, Social Studies, co-teaching, and curriculum development. Furthermore, our teacher leaders have worked with representatives of MSDE with regards to IRLA curriculum and the development of the Modified Maryland State Assessments.

With collaboration being an integral part of the foundation of our success, the NMS leadership team has designed opportunities for all middle school principals and assistant principals in the county to meet monthly. During these administrative professional learning communities, NMS administrators facilitate discussions on best learning practices and brainstorm strategies, policies and procedures in an effort to enhance system-wide continuity of instruction. It is the goal of NMS to expand the infrastructure of these professional learning communities to include deans, learning specialists, special educators and guidance counselors.

At NMS the learning specialist, special educators, guidance counselors and administrators take part in the vertical articulation process with the elementary and high school feeder schools on an annual basis. The goal of this process is to provide a seamless transition for learners coming from elementary to middle and going from middle to high school. During this discourse, we learn about the struggles of our incoming learners and are able to describe the needs of our outgoing learners. Additionally, we are able to convey the successes of the research-based interventions provided for our learners and also describe the non-formal interventions such as: Saturday School, After-School Learning Club, and organization period intervention, which our learners use for extra support.

As a National Blue Ribbon School, we will continue our professional responsibilities by engaging in conversations with school leaders within and outside the CCPS forum. In order to ensure that learning first remains our mission and to build on success, we will continue to share and reflect with professionals from districts across the state.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Integrated Reading and Language Arts

Adolescent literacy in the 21st Century requires that current middle school learners be critical readers, fluent writers, and strategic thinkers who make use of multiple media to interpret and express ideas. The NMS Integrated Reading and Language Arts Curriculum provides opportunities for learners to develop the skills necessary to be productive leaders and citizens in tomorrow's world.

The curriculum integrates the processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing with the contents of language and literature from the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum. The curriculum is designed from a theme-based approach and supports cognitive development while recognizing the social development of adolescents.

Math

The NMS mathematics program offers two honors-level programs of study. One begins with Pre-Algebra 6 and ends with Honors Algebra 2. Learners may also complete Honors Algebra I by eighth grade through a recommendation by their sixth grade math teacher for taking Honors Pre-Algebra in seventh grade and completing the course with an "A" or a "B". Learners enrolled in our standard curriculum will complete the Transitions sequence which is in place to prepare learners for Algebra I as they enter high school. Instruction in the classroom is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners, as well as separate interventions that may be needed to accommodate learners with special learning needs. All courses are designed to prepare learners to think critically and apply skills to real world situations.

Social Studies

The NMS social studies department provides learners with instruction that requires them to think critically about course content. Learners must evaluate contemporary and historical decisions, predict outcomes based on alternative courses of action, and argue points of view based on logic and facts. The World History and United States History curricula taught in grades 6, 7 and 8 are linked to overarching themes that require learners to develop and demonstrate an enduring understanding of core concepts and interpretive skills. Beyond cultivating content knowledge, learners develop essential reading, writing and research skills. Learners are asked to analyze documents and respond to document based questions, as well as craft cogent answers to free response essays and short answer prompts. These rigorous experiences, coupled with honors level participation in the History Day process, require learners at NMS to conduct research, formulate arguments and support their position or thesis in writing. Participation in the CHESPAX program is an important adjunct to the curriculum and exposes learners to performance based archaeological opportunities as well as provides Service Learning enrichment activities as part of a full day field trip.

Science

The NMS Science curriculum is an active, hands-on approach which encourages exploration through a rigorous curriculum. Sixth grade Science focuses on Earth and Space, Seventh grade emphasizes Life Science, and learners conclude Eighth grade with Physical Science. The curriculum is integrative, incorporating instruction in mathematics, reading and social studies. Lab work is an integral component and is inquiry based to promote higher level thinking skills. A key component to the curriculum is the CHESPAX program, which

incorporates environmental field trips to allow learners to see science in action and make real world connections.

World Language

Learners at NMS are able to enter World Language in seventh grade, choosing either French or Spanish. Seventy-three percent of NMS seventh and eighth graders participate in World Language classes, and many continue language study in high school. The NMS World Language program is both engaging and enriching, striving to incorporate a variety of authentic materials and scenarios which require learners to apply their learning in new and real-life contexts. The World Language curricula are designed with unit understandings tied to the culture and communication standards of the National Standards for World Language Learning. The program's primary goals are for learners to: communicate in Spanish or French, understand other cultures, establish interdisciplinary connections, develop insight into their own language and culture, and to participate in a global community.

Music

NMS has an exemplary music program that has consistently been awarded excellent and outstanding ratings for Band, Orchestra and Chorus at both the District and State levels. Students elect to take Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced Band, Orchestra or Chorus classes. As an option, Music Appreciation is offered to learners who wish not to be involved in performance-based ensembles.

Outside of the school day there are additional performance opportunities for learners in rehearsals for groups such as Symphonic Winds, String Orchestra, Treble Chorus, Jazz Ensemble, and Full Orchestra. Performance ensembles perform concerts in and out of the school community by providing music for several events throughout the school year. The after-school drama program presents an annual musical.

In addition to school-based groups, learners have the opportunity to participate through audition in the All-County Middle School Band, Orchestra or Chorus, the Tri-County Middle School Honor Band, Orchestra and Chorus. Learners who achieve a high level of performance can also audition for All State Junior ensembles. Lastly, any learner who desires can participate in the District XII Solo and Ensemble Festival, where learners receive ratings for individual or small group performance.

Art

Learners at NMS are offered the opportunity to take art each year. The Art curriculum focuses on both creative and expressive arts, incorporating all disciplines of art. Learners begin art with exploration in sixth grade for one quarter, continuing with a semester in seventh grade, and can then request a full year of art in their eighth grade year. Student art work is displayed each year at various community sites, the Calvert County Board of Education, the Maryland state art conference, and at the State Board of Education. In addition, a learner exhibit and community reception is held each March at the Calvert Marine Museum to celebrate Youth Art Month.

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

(This question is for secondary schools only)

Northern Middle School has an Integrated Reading and Language Arts (IRLA) curriculum which is aligned to the Maryland State Curriculum. The IRLA class is delivered in a double-blocked session, allowing teachers to utilize a full 90 minutes in which to integrate the processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Lessons are planned in a way that encourages learners to engage and respond via multiple modalities across the content of language and literature.

The double-blocked class provides an opportunity for learners to work in a variety of settings within the same session: independent, pairs, small groups, and whole groups. Teachers may maximize class time by having students rotate through stations, accessing a variety of skills such as vocabulary, word study, and writing skills.

During the year, learners are given the opportunity to connect life applications to what they read, write, view, hear, and discuss through the implementation of a theme-based curriculum. The grade-level themes, which utilize a variety of text and genre such as short stories, poetry, novels, plays and non-fiction, are: Grade 6: Growing Pains; Grade 7: Making Changes and Meeting Challenges; Grade 8: Making Choices.

Northern Middle School staff carefully monitor learner progress using informal and formative assessment data, as well as data garnered from County assessments. Particular attention is paid to students as they respond to and ask questions, and interact with classmates during relevant activities. These performance-based measures are used to inform and differentiate instruction.

When necessary, struggling learners are targeted for intervention by the IRLA Learning Pod teachers. Intervention takes many forms, including an additional daily reading class, reading support during our half-hour Organizational Period, Saturday School and After-School Learning Club. Intervention instruction is accomplished in small groups, based on the needs of each learner, and ranges from skill/indicator-based support to delivery of research-based programs such as Phonics Blitz, Wilson Reading, or Corrective Reading. Interventions are reviewed regularly and revised when needed to ensure optimal learner progress.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

The social studies curriculum at Northern Middle School is designed to produce citizens who are critical thinkers, skillful learners and culturally aware individuals. Our school's mission is Learning First. Thus, to frame our daily lessons, we aim to achieve at least one outcome every day that falls within one of five social studies core learning goals: 1) Political Science, where learners analyze historical developments and the growth of political systems; 2) Peoples of the Nation and World, where learners gain understanding of the diversity and commonality of various cultures and recognize human interdependence; 3) Geography, where learners examine geographic concepts and processes to analyze the role of the environment in shaping culture; 4) Economics, where learners analyze monetary evolution, economic principles, the institutions and the cultures they impact, and; 5) Social Studies Skills, where learners cultivate and reinforce skills such as chronological thinking, spatial understanding, development of historical interpretations, etc.

Although social studies content is conveyed through a variety of modalities, our subject matter naturally aligns with reading and writing. Teachers reinforce the essential skills and knowledge critical to becoming a successful reader and writer in many ways. Learners are expected to evaluate material by distinguishing essential information from what is simply interesting or eye catching. Learners also synthesize new learning by combining fresh information with prior knowledge to construct an original idea or a new way of thinking. To guide the formation of independent opinions, learners analyze concepts to make generalizations about information. Finally, learners interpret documents to form viable judgments and to cite evidence or proof to justify a position.

Within the social studies department, teachers emphasize creating a culture of inquisitiveness, curiosity, thoughtfulness, and civic-mindedness. At the core of each lesson, learners and teachers together strive to answer the "so, what?" question regarding every learning opportunity.

4. Instructional Methods:

Northern Middle School delivers effective instruction by infusing technology into lessons and providing a variety of learning experiences that appeal to many learning styles. Instruction at NMS is always focused on

the learner, guiding strategies and practices that deliver clear and explicit lessons. It is the learner that drives instruction at NMS.

All classrooms with Smartboard technology are used each class period of the day. This assures that learners have access to engaging, interactive lessons which frequently incorporate movement, video clips, music selections, interactive web sites and games, interactive virtual lab simulations, and Senteo.

NMS has embedded opportunities for flexible scheduling for learners deemed to be at risk. Learners' strengths and weaknesses can be identified by evaluating available data which is based on classroom, county and state assessments. After reviewing the data, a learner found to be in need of additional assistance could be moved to a double-blocked math class, or, added to a research-based reading intervention class (i.e. Corrective Reading, Phonics Blitz). Identified learners receive support for concepts in science by alternating attendance in intervention groups during organizational period based on continuing assessment data.

Other instructional opportunities are available to all learners. The After-School Learning Club services advanced learners, SWD, and/or low-performing learners in either reading or math. The advanced learners are involved in enrichment programs, such as a book study, while the SWD or low-performing learners are receiving instruction (for identified indicators) in non-traditional approaches: small group, kinesthetic activities, and the use of Kurzweil. Additionally, Saturday School enables learners to receive small group instruction through creative lessons featuring kinesthetic activities, music, and individualized selection of interactive computer games. To offer additional support to those learners who may have issues with transportation after school, teachers voluntarily provide group tutoring for all content areas during lunch.

Teams work together to genuinely know the students. Through professional dialogue, instruction is focused on meeting individual needs while optimizing learner achievement.

5. Professional Development:

Professional development at NMS is an on-going process with strategic development of best instructional practice linked to our guiding thesis: in order to improve learning, we must improve instruction. Therefore, our focus is always on learning and our learners as we guide our in-house professional growth opportunities. Examples of this include building understanding and knowledge of our learners, via increased staff awareness of growth and development issues, brain research, the importance of relationship building, and utilizing software to analyze data. Enhancing Professional Practice, by Charlotte Danielson, was introduced to serve as our benchmark for articulating effective practice.

The key piece to professional development at Northern Middle centers on grade level Learning Pods. Each grade level is split into two pods, one each for math/science and reading/social studies. A member of the SLIT leads these groups of teachers in discussions regarding relevant data and instructional focus for the year. These groups of teachers select fifteen to twenty shared learners, determined by aggregated data, to target for the year. The teachers develop detailed plans to target specific learning objectives to either help at risk learners or enrich proficient learners to become advanced learners. The teachers develop specific learning plans for the targeted learners and track progress on specific objectives throughout the year.

Linked with the Learning Pods are walk-throughs. Walk-throughs are done not only by the school leadership team, but also by all teachers. The leadership team began walk-throughs last year; as a strategy to learn from others, each Learning Pod has developed a walk-through form that allows teachers to gain skills by collaborating within the pod. For the leadership team, walk-throughs have five focus areas, based on Danielson: (a) communicating with students, (b) questioning and discussion, (c) engagement, (d) using assessment, (e) flexibility and responsiveness. Each teacher selects one of the five focus areas at the beginning of the year. For teachers, each learning pod developed its own walk-through form and teachers are required to do one walk-through per quarter and are encouraged to do as many as they like.

On-going professional development also occurs through the sixth grade team. This is a group of eight teachers who meet daily to discuss best practices and evaluate data to improve the learning for all students. A team initiative is a book talk on Wormeli's *Fair Isn't Always Equal*. This discussion has been a catalyst for improving classroom instruction and discussion among the team to promote learning.

The school district also supports professional development, providing six days throughout the year to come together either as whole school or content county-wide. These professional development days focus on specific content at the county level, discussing data, best practices, and collaborative assessment. At the school level, this professional development time focuses on county-wide initiatives, which includes LETRS and thinking based learning.

NMS is continuing to create ways to promote on-going in-building professional development, as we believe learning is enhanced in a collaborative culture which encourages professionals to be resources for one another's growth and understandings.

6. School Leadership:

The role of leadership within NMS is to convey, model, and implement an infrastructure and expectations which support our mission statement: Learning First. This message is built on the following beliefs and values: 1) We are a community of learners and each person is acknowledged and regarded as a learner; 2) Learning communities are collaborative, collegial, affirming and purposefully focused; 3) Within a learning community, each decision, activity, and prioritization must be linked to the learning process and be guided by the overarching question of "how does it impact the learner or how does it impact learning?"; 4) We are all resources for one another's learning, and as such have a responsibility to promote a collaborative environment, which honors individual and collective voice; 5) We will best meet the needs of our young learners by understanding growth and development issues, how people learn and knowing our individual learners through data analysis and the building of relationships; 6) Learning is on-going, connective, and measurable; 7) Within the schoolhouse, the on-going improvement of student learning is directly related to the increased understanding and effective usage of best instructional practices.

The primary structure for leading this charge is a four person Leadership Team, comprised of the principal, assistant principal, dean, learning specialist, and the School Learning Improvement Team. As leaders, we have a heightened awareness of the importance of protecting learning time and providing an environment that supports individual learners. Our PBIS team has provided key leadership in creating a culture that is welcoming, affirming, and motivating for our learners.

The Leadership Team advocates the importance of learning by modeling best instructional practices, spending significant time in the classrooms, striving to know the learners, and clearly communicating high expectations and the importance of learning for both adult and adolescent members of the NMS community.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: Maryland School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009

Publisher: CTB / CTB / Harcourt / Harcourt / Pearson

| | 2008-2009 | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing Month | Mar | Apr | Mar | Mar | Mar |
| SCHOOL SCORES | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 97 | 90 | 94 | 87 | 78 |
| % Advanced | 65 | 54 | 38 | 36 | 23 |
| Number of students tested | 227 | 257 | 237 | 239 | 277 |
| Percent of total students tested | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number of students alternatively assessed | 0 | 1 | 1 | 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 | 91 | 72 | 85 | 74 | 35 |
| % Advanced | 52 | 17 | 31 | 5 | 0 |
| Number of students tested | 21 | 18 | 13 | 19 | 17 |
| 2. African American Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 93 | 69 | 86 | 78 | 44 |
| % Advanced | 29 | 27 | 31 | 19 | 4 |
| Number of students tested | 14 | 26 | 29 | 27 | 27 |
| 3. Hispanic or Latino Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | 100 | | | |
| % Advanced | | 50 | | | |
| Number of students tested | | 10 | | | |
| 4. Special Education Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | 29 | 56 | 65 | 29 |
| % Advanced | | 17 | 0 | 4 | 3 |
| Number of students tested | | 17 | 18 | 23 | 31 |
| 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: Fewer than 5 Hispanic students tested from 2005-2007.

Fewer than 5 LEP students tested from 2005-2009.

No other subgroup had 10 or more students test from 2005-2009.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6 Test: Maryland School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 Publisher: Harcourt / Harcourt / Harcourt / Harcourt / Pearson / 2009

| | 2008-2009 | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing Month | Mar | Apr | Mar | Mar | Mar |
| SCHOOL SCORES | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 99 | 93 | 92 | 92 | 94 |
| % Advanced | 70 | 63 | 51 | 64 | 64 |
| Number of students tested | 227 | 258 | 237 | 239 | 277 |
| Percent of total students tested | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number of students alternatively assessed | 0 | 0 | 1 | 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 | 95 | 72 | 77 | 90 | 59 |
| % Advanced | 47 | 22 | 46 | 58 | 24 |
| Number of students tested | 21 | 18 | 13 | 19 | 17 |
| 2. African American Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 93 | 74 | 79 | 85 | 74 |
| % Advanced | 50 | 41 | 41 | 37 | 33 |
| Number of students tested | 14 | 27 | 29 | 27 | 27 |
| 3. Hispanic or Latino Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | 100 | | | |
| % Advanced | | 80 | | | |
| Number of students tested | | 10 | | | |
| 4. Special Education Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | 53 | 61 | 70 | 71 |
| % Advanced | | 0 | 0 | 30 | 23 |
| Number of students tested | | 17 | 18 | 23 | 31 |
| 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:

Fewer than 5 Hispanic or Latino students tested from 2005-2007.

Fewer than 5 LEP students tested from 2005-2009.

No other subgroup had 10 or more students test from 2005-2009.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: Maryland School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009

Publisher: CTB / CTB / Harcourt / Harcourt / Pearson

| | 2008-2009 | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing Month | Mar | Apr | Mar | Mar | Mar |
| SCHOOL SCORES | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 94 | 85 | 83 | 87 | 74 |
| % Advanced | 40 | 27 | 31 | 29 | 15 |
| Number of students tested | 251 | 241 | 241 | 283 | 260 |
| Percent of total students tested | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number of students alternatively assessed | 1 | 1 | 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 | 96 | 61 | 53 | 63 | 35 |
| % Advanced | 8 | 13 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of students tested | 24 | 23 | 19 | 16 | 23 |
| 2. African American Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 84 | 85 | 63 | 55 | 39 |
| % Advanced | 20 | 22 | 6 | 13 | 17 |
| Number of students tested | 25 | 27 | 35 | 31 | 23 |
| 3. Hispanic or Latino Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 86 | | | | |
| % Advanced | 21 | | | | |
| Number of students tested | 14 | | | | |
| 4. Special Education Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 80 | 26 | 43 | 43 | 29 |
| % Advanced | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 |
| Number of students tested | 10 | 19 | 21 | 28 | 31 |
| 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:

Fewer than 5 Hispanic students tested from 2005-2008.

Fewer than 5 LEP students tested from 2005-2009.

No other subgroup had 10 or more students test from 2005-2009.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: Maryland School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / Publisher: Harcourt / Harcourt / Harcourt / Harcourt / Pearson
2009

| | 2008-2009 | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing Month | Mar | Apr | Mar | Mar | Mar |
| SCHOOL SCORES | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 96 | 95 | 86 | 88 | 83 |
| % Advanced | 67 | 59 | 44 | 51 | 44 |
| Number of students tested | 251 | 242 | 241 | 283 | 260 |
| Percent of total students tested | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number of students alternatively assessed | 1 | 1 | 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 | 96 | 91 | 79 | 63 | 65 |
| % Advanced | 42 | 39 | 16 | 13 | 22 |
| Number of students tested | 24 | 23 | 19 | 16 | 23 |
| 2. African American Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 84 | 96 | 86 | 65 | 61 |
| % Advanced | 36 | 48 | 34 | 23 | 26 |
| Number of students tested | 25 | 27 | 35 | 31 | 23 |
| 3. Hispanic or Latino Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 100 | | | | |
| % Advanced | 57 | | | | |
| Number of students tested | 14 | | | | |
| 4. Special Education Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 90 | 74 | 57 | 61 | 45 |
| % Advanced | 10 | 5 | 10 | 21 | 13 |
| Number of students tested | 10 | 19 | 21 | 28 | 31 |
| 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:

Fewer than 5 Hispanic or Latino students tested from 2005-2008.

Fewer than 5 LEP students tested from 2005-2009.

No other subgroup had 10 or more students test from 2005-2009.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8 Test: Maryland School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009

Publisher: CTB / CTB / Harcourt / Harcourt / Pearson

| | 2008-2009 | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing Month | Mar | Apr | Mar | Mar | Mar |
| SCHOOL SCORES | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 94 | 86 | 84 | 75 | 60 |
| % Advanced | 47 | 50 | 43 | 34 | 27 |
| Number of students tested | 252 | 246 | 295 | 272 | 238 |
| 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 | 83 | 65 | 63 | 40 | 16 |
| % Advanced | 17 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Number of students tested | 24 | 23 | 16 | 20 | 19 |
| 2. African American Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 88 | 74 | 56 | 46 | 31 |
| % Advanced | 34 | 17 | 16 | 35 | 14 |
| Number of students tested | 32 | 35 | 32 | 26 | 29 |
| 3. Hispanic or Latino Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |
| 4. Special Education Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 73 | 47 | 50 | 19 | 10 |
| % Advanced | 13 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of students tested | 15 | 19 | 22 | 26 | 30 |
| 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:

Fewer than 5 Hispanic or Latino students tested in 2005, 2006, and 2008.

Fewer than 5 LEP students tested from 2005-2009.

No other subgroup had 10 or more students test from 2005-2009.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8 Test: Maryland School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / Publisher: Harcourt / Harcourt / Harcourt / Harcourt / Pearson
2009

| | 2008-2009 | 2007-2008 | 2006-2007 | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing Month | Mar | Apr | Mar | Mar | Mar |
| SCHOOL SCORES | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 95 | 93 | 88 | 85 | 85 |
| % Advanced | 58 | 54 | 41 | 35 | 40 |
| Number of students tested | 252 | 246 | 294 | 272 | 238 |
| 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 | 92 | 91 | 63 | 65 | 68 |
| % Advanced | 38 | 30 | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| Number of students tested | 24 | 23 | 16 | 20 | 19 |
| 2. African American Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 94 | 89 | 66 | 62 | 55 |
| % Advanced | 47 | 51 | 16 | 23 | 24 |
| Number of students tested | 32 | 35 | 32 | 26 | 29 |
| 3. Hispanic or Latino Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | | | | | |
| % Advanced | | | | | |
| Number of students tested | | | | | |
| 4. Special Education Students | | | | | |
| % Proficient plus % Advanced | 80 | 74 | 64 | 46 | 57 |
| % Advanced | 20 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 7 |
| Number of students tested | 15 | 19 | 22 | 26 | 30 |
| 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:

Fewer than 5 Hispanic or Latino students tested in 2005, 2006, and 2008.

Fewer than 5 LEP students tested from 2005-2009.

No other subgroup had 10 or more students test from 2005-2009.