

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

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

Name of Principal: Mrs. Angela Pucci Bender

Official School Name: Grant School

School Mailing Address:
104 Henry Street
Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660-2209

County: Bergen State School Code Number*: 03 4380 060

Telephone: (201) 641-0441 Fax: (201) 440-9579

Web site/URL: http://www.rpps.net/grant/grant_home_page.htm E-mail: abender@rpps.net

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 Richardson

District Name: Ridgefield Park School District Tel: (201) 807-2638

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

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Ms. Barbara Merritt Butler

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)
- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 3 | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| 1 | Middle/Junior high schools |
| 1 | High schools |
| | K-12 schools |
| 5 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 13756

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	6	1	7		6	20	17	37
K	8	18	26		7			0
1	11	7	18		8			0
2	14	11	25		9			0
3	16	14	30		10			0
4	22	11	33		11			0
5	14	11	25		12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL								201

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
13 % Asian
4 % Black or African American
62 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
21 % 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.	24
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	13
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	37
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	201
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.184
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	18.408

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 9 %

Total number limited English proficient 18

Number of languages represented: 4

Specify languages:

Urdu, Spanish, Korean, Arabic

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 49 %

Total number students who qualify: 99

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: 15

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>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>2</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>7</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>32</u>	<u>10</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%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	99%	98%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

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

As you travel on Teaneck Road in Ridgefield Park, New Jersey you will see a one-hundred-year-old red brick building with children playing in the school yard. That building is Grant School, a small neighborhood school dedicated on January 30, 1909. The Grant School family commemorated the school's one hundredth birthday last June with a tremendous celebration. With enthusiasm we entered "the second hundred years." The computer screen mounted near the school's entrance showcases students, teachers, and parents in recent activities and gives visitors a glimpse of the school.

A parent recently stopped by the school to speak with a teacher and commented in limited English, "Even if you had never been at this school, you would come in and know it's a happy place!" That same day our new custodian commented, "I've worked at several places – and this is a happy place to work." They expressed what students and staff experience everyday: Grant School is a great place! From the annual Grant School Family Picnic in September through the last day of school in June, a positive attitude permeates everything we do. Our mission is "To provide students with an environment conducive to developing an active and inquisitive mind, strong self-esteem, ethical values, and respect for and acceptance of others." We pledge to help our students "...meet the academic and social challenges of today's society. We stress the development of the full potential of each individual student and a life-long commitment to learning. Grant School believes that parental involvement as partners in their children's learning is a critical component for success."

The Record and *The Star-Ledger* newspapers reported that Grant School was ranked #1 in New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) results. *The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Business Coalition for Educational Excellence* recognized Grant School as a **Benchmark School** which was highlighted on *News 12 New Jersey* for outstanding standardized test scores. School recognition programs such as *Student of the Month*, *Principal's Prize*, *Honor Roll*, and *Annual Student Awards* motivate student academic performance. The *Bulldog News*, our weekly school publication, highlights events, activities, and student accomplishments. The website includes *Edline* entries which provide informative links about the school's academic programs, social environment, and student honorees.

The Village of Ridgefield Park is rich in history and supportive of quality education. Incorporated in 1892 Ridgefield Park is located on the Hackensack River near New York City and intersected by three major highways. Some residents have lived here all their lives and provide stability and pride, while others come from a variety of countries, ethnic backgrounds, and international experiences. Town-wide traditions link the Grant School family with Village history. In 1894, Ridgefield Park's pride in self-government gave birth to the oldest continuously running Fourth of July Parade in the United States. Annually Grant School enters a thematic float and wins several trophies!

Education has always been important in Ridgefield Park. Today Grant School houses kindergarten through grade six and a Pre-K Handicapped Class. It has a diverse socio-economic population. Approximately sixty percent of our students speak another language at home. Free and reduced meals are distributed to forty-nine percent of students.

Administration and staff use every means available to teach and inspire students. For example as Dr. Greg Olsen, a Ridgefield Park graduate, soared into space as an astronaut, students watched from our gymnasium via video conferencing. They were able to see Dr. Olsen and hear him as he answered their questions during his mission. Then and now Grant School students learn firsthand they can accomplish amazing things also!

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Our test data show we have had outstanding scores over the past five years in both language arts literacy and mathematics. The improvement in these scores is dramatically more evident when comparing them to the scores on the 1999 Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA administered just to grade four). Only 44.2% of grade four students passed language arts literacy. Even fewer, 40.3 % of grade four students passed mathematics.

In the five years preceding 2009-2010, the Grade 3 and Grade 4 New Jersey Assessments of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) have been administered in both language arts literacy and mathematics. The NJ Department of Education revised these assessments beginning with their administration in the spring of 2009. Not only were all the assessments made more challenging, the proficiency standards were raised as well. Despite these changes, grades three and four school scores in language arts literacy remained high: Grade three scores dipped from 100% to 93.5 % and grade four dipped even less-from 100% to 95.4%. The string of four consecutive years of grade four mathematics scores of 100% was stopped. However, grade three mathematics scores remained at 100% for the fifth consecutive year! Take special note that in grade three mathematics over the previous five years, an average of 77.6% of all students scored *advanced proficient* and in grade four mathematics over the same period, an average of 75% of all students scored *advanced proficient*.

In the five years before 2009-2010, the Grade 5 and Grade 6 NJ ASK have been administered in language arts literacy and mathematics only four times, dating back to 2005-2006. In spring 2008, the NJ Department of Education revised them. As with the Grades 3 and 4 NJ ASK, the Grades 5 and 6 NJ ASK were made more challenging and the proficiency standards were raised. In that year, with the exception of a decline in grade six language arts literacy, grade five scores in language arts literacy were 100%; grade five mathematics scores were 100%; and grade six mathematics scores were 100% passing. In the next year (2009) grade 6 language arts literacy scores returned to 100%. Except for a slight decline in grade six mathematics scores from 100% to 93.3%, grade five mathematics and language arts literacy scores remained at 100%.

Upon inspection of the test scores, it is evident that the scores of the subgroups reported, including the Free and Reduced-Price Meals students and Racial/Ethnic subgroups, are congruent to and mirror the school score data above. What may not be quite so evident is the change in the demographics of our school's enrollment over the past five years. There has been a decline in the White population (down approximately 9%); and an increase in the Hispanic population (up approximately 13%). Also, there has been an increase in the percentage of free and reduced-price meal students (up over 7%). Although there have been very few, small declines in grades three and four subgroups, their scores have remained steady or improved, especially having risen in grades five and six in virtually all subgroups in both language arts literacy and mathematics.

The levels of NJ State performance standards on all assessments are in two ranges of scale scores; 200-249 is *proficient* and 250-300 is *advanced proficient*. In the five year range of school scores reported, the scale score mean of every one of our assessment scores have been above the State scale score mean. On ten separate occasions out of a possible thirty six, the scale score mean for Grant School students was in the *advanced proficient* range.

The Web site where information on the NJ State assessments can be found is <http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/>

2. Using Assessment Results:

New Jersey ASK scores are eagerly awaited each year! The results are used in several different ways. ASK results determine class assignments for the upcoming year as the range of student learning abilities helps us to balance the composition of each class in a given grade level. Students who excel and score *advanced proficient* may be offered gifted and talented instruction, while those who score *proficient* or *partially proficient* could be candidates for basic skills instruction. If a student continues to struggle after services have been provided or minimal improvement has been made, our I&RS (Intervention and Referral Service) team will meet to determine why the student is struggling and design a plan of action to ensure academic success.

ASK test scores and classroom performance determine testing group sizes and corresponding examiners for the next tests. Some students need small testing groups and perform better when they are less anxious and proctored by teachers with whom they are more familiar.

Teachers use ASK results as a springboard for professional growth. They focus on and improve their teaching of topics or skills where student performance was lower than expected. Teachers examine the test scores of their upcoming class to determine their strengths and challenges, and then concentrate on areas where students are experiencing difficulties.

Ongoing assessment takes place at all grade levels. Prescreening is done of prospective kindergarten students, and the basic skills teacher assesses them early in the school year. The second graders take a staff-developed test similar to the ASK. Learnia, the State provided web-based test preparation program, is used in third through sixth grades.

ASK test results and teacher referrals determine the roster of students for the thirteen week after school Mathematics and Language Arts Program. The participation rate is high because parents and students realize that these classes are extremely helpful.

ESL teachers administer W-APT tests to new students who speak other languages. In the spring they administer the ACCESS for ELLs to all ESL students to measure growth and assess future needs. Students who successfully exit ESL often continue to receive help through basic skills instruction.

From the time children enter Grant School they are assessed and evaluated on a continual basis. Assessment data help determine placement, remediation, enrichment, and guidance. They also provide direction to professional growth and appropriate instruction. Effective use of assessment data ensures that no child will be left behind—and gives each one the opportunity to be successful and happy at our school.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Open lines of communication between home and school directly contribute to the success of Grant School. Several steps are involved in public reporting of assessment data. Stakeholders are always kept apprised of our school scores and any changes or modifications in the state assessments. The dissemination of scores in the past five years has not only been announced, but celebrated! The moment we receive results the data is published in our weekly school newsletter, the *Bulldog News*. Information is disseminated by our superintendent and building principal at every opportunity including *Back-to-School Nights*, *P.T.A meetings*, *Winter and Spring Concerts*, and *Parent-Teacher Conferences*. The school data is also shared by the Central Office Administration at Board of Education meetings and on the Superintendent's weekly television program, *Chalk Talk*.

As a means to maintain open communication with the community at large we take several approaches. Parents have access to an online web-based program, a public website with teacher email listings, local newspapers, and special mailings directly from our school and the Central Office. This provides the community with many

opportunities to gather information. Grant School utilizes the PTA as a means to collaborate on important issues and as a venue to publicize and analyze valuable assessment data. The community has visible access on a daily basis to the awards and accolades of our school as we proudly display our accomplishments inside and outside the building.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Through a wide professional network, Grant School has been and will continue to be helpful to school administrators, principals, teachers, and students throughout New Jersey. Many Grant School teachers are attending or have completed graduate school. Some are members of Boards of Education, PTA's, and other professional organizations. Several of our teachers are instructors at the Gifted Child Society or adjunct professors on the college level. These activities provide us with frequent opportunities to share our success.

Neighboring districts, as well as educators and administrators from all over the state, contact us on a regular basis. They have a continued interest in our school and look to our administration to share "our secrets of success"! Local colleges demonstrate an interest in sending their aspiring teachers to visit and frequently arrange to have them complete their teacher preparation with our faculty.

Our administrator believes in sharing her knowledge not only with our students but with colleagues as well. She belongs to several organizations at various levels. She is an adjunct professor at Ramapo College of New Jersey in the Master of Science in Educational Technology Program, in addition to being an instructor and a mentor for NJ EXCEL, a New Jersey accredited organization for aspiring administrators. Through the advancement of Web 2.0 technology, sharing has become easier. Our principal also sits on the Bergen County Executive Board of Elementary and Middle School Administrators, a ready outlet for sharing successes. Inter-visitations are always encouraged, scheduled, and welcomed through that organization.

We are a school dedicated to sharing information and providing guidance to others. *Blue Ribbon* status would greatly enhance our reputation which would enable us to assist more administrators and teachers and ultimately help a greater number of students succeed over a much wider geographic area. The honor of receiving this award will afford us an opportunity to expand our open-door policy as we cultivate an enthusiastic rapport with many new colleagues.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Curriculum and Instruction

Grant School ensures that each student develops "...an active and inquisitive mind, strong self-esteem, ethical values, and respect for and acceptance of others". To accomplish this, great emphasis is placed on presenting core curriculum that will help students "...meet the academic and social challenges of today's society."

Mathematics

Teachers build a conceptual foundation of basic mathematics. Primary grade students (kindergarten to grade two) begin the scaffolding process by using the calendar. They progress towards skip-counting and place value. Students count along while performing physical exercise. Reinforcement activities include sorting, baking, graphing, participation in the 100 Day Celebration, and the Math-a-thon. Problem solving that requires critical and higher-level thinking skills is evident in all grades. Grades three through six develop advanced understanding of measurement, numeration, properties of whole, fractional, and decimal numbers, geometry, spatial sense, and complex problem solving.

Language Arts

Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing of media are the basic elements of our dynamic language arts program. Students experience more than just textbook learning. Selected novels reinforce fluency and comprehension. Use of paper and pencil is complemented with today's technology. Because of the multi-cultural makeup of our student body, writing focuses on basic skills and grammar. Students become competent oral speakers through creative activities, projects, and teacher guidance. Components of reading and writing effectively provide relevant skills for the twenty-first century. New literacies build upon, but do not replace, traditional skills.

Poetry, patterning, and rhyming serve as the foundation for figurative language. The upper grades learn hyperbole, simile, metaphor, and alliteration for example by analyzing words of their favorite songs. Creativity in teaching traditional subject matter to our diverse students makes learning effective and enjoyable!

Social Studies

Students learn about family, community, continents, and oceans in the lower grades while upper grade students research New Jersey, the United States, and how our government works. Current events are incorporated into all grade levels through *Scholastic News* and several appropriate news websites. Students are presented with guest speakers including local veterans, community-based programs, members of the fire and police departments, and educational assemblies.

PowerPoint presentations bring history to life. *SmartBoard* and newspaper lessons encourage student interaction with map skills and geography. Classes focus on topics such as Black History Month. Students participate in mock elections with results printed in the newspapers. Because social studies is interdisciplinary it is frequently tied to other academic areas.

Science

Science curricula uncover topics ranging from color blending in pre-kindergarten to testing Newton's Law of Gravity in grade six. The entire student body cheers as the sixth graders challenge the Law by packaging and dropping eggs from the third floor window. One textbook series is used throughout the school to provide consistency among grade levels. Science in kindergarten through grade four includes instruction in areas of physical and earth sciences as indicated by district proficiencies. Students study a butterfly's life cycle and set real butterflies free. They see live animals at a farm, read thermometers, learn about animals and habitats through *United Streaming* video clips, create models of the earth, and erupt volcanoes. Fifth and sixth grade students use *WebQuests* to gather information on assigned topics. Chemical reactions and properties are tested by comparing "mystery substances" with a known one. Students produce their own videotaped weather broadcasts. During the annual Science Fair student-created projects fill the entire gym where younger students can view projects and learn from the presentations by their older peers.

Visual and Performing Arts

The visual and performing arts provide students with rich experiences. Fifty-seven per cent of our students participate in the instrumental music program and every student is a member of the chorus. Enthusiastic audiences attend concerts, the *Arts Festival*, moving up celebrations, the *Talent Show*, and the *Pre-kindergarten Through Grade Three Musical*. The *Arts Festival* includes dancing, tumbling, singing, instrumental music, and exhibits where artwork from every student is displayed. Fourth graders participate in a production of *Charlotte's Web*. Students have opportunities in special assemblies to see drama groups, multicultural music presentations, and talented storytellers.

World Language

Lower grade students participate in Spanish-speaking *Espanol Para Ti* video lessons that help students to learn basic Spanish. Upper level students receive two periods of Spanish instruction weekly. Puppets, movies, and other visual aids give insights into the culture of Spanish-speaking people.

Health/Physical Education

The health and physical education curriculum promotes healthy lifestyle choices, physical fitness, and sportsmanship. It emphasizes concerns regarding the use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, and prescription medicines by students and adults. The *G.R.E.A.T. Program* (formerly D.A.R.E.) and *Heroes and Cool Kids* (a peer modeling program) enrich the curriculum. The nurse educates students on the five food groups. Our lunch provider presents an assembly to examine the food pyramid and discusses how to read package nutrition labels. Physical fitness and sportsmanship are implemented daily in physical education, at *Field Day*, and during intramurals. State-of-the-art fitness video games promote in-school exercise. *Wellness Wednesdays* and *Fitness Fridays* are popular among students.

Technology

Technology drives our curriculum. Our technology teacher works closely with staff to implement technological advances daily into classroom activities. In technology classes students learn keyboarding and *Internet* etiquette. They do research and use specific software programs to improve their academic skills and knowledge.

How Instruction is Delivered

Faculty instruction addresses the learning styles of all students. Teachers have a clear understanding of the essential questions for each unit. Information is presented through textbooks, websites, specialized centers, hands-on activities, interactive demonstrations, and cooperative groups. Interdisciplinary instruction is frequently incorporated. Technology consistently motivates auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners.

Our diverse population is an asset celebrated through multicultural activities, assignments, and assemblies. New literacies are embraced by teachers. Laptop computers are used to conduct *WebQuests* and *Internet* workshops, projects, and inquiries. Developing research techniques fosters problem-based learning and higher level critical thinking skills.

How Students Are Engaged

Twenty-first century teaching strategies heighten student attention and engage student participation. Teacher-created lessons incorporate exposition, questioning, discussion, artwork, photos, charts, diagrams, computer-generated projects, and practical exercises involving hands-on experiences. Our goal is to engage all students helping them to reach their “full potential” and encourage a “life-long commitment to learning.”

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

The reading program is structured to meet the needs of our diverse student body. The children come from different countries and educational backgrounds. We use a balanced approach to reading. The teachers build on students’ prior knowledge and experience, introduce traditional literature from basal readers, and incorporate phonics skills. ESL, basic skills, and special education teachers help their students read with fluency and comprehension. Vocabulary is stressed at every grade level and developed in the context of the literature that is read. Teachers enhance traditional materials with an active use of today’s technology and enjoyable hands on activities. All kindergarten through grade three classes visit the public library. The district’s Best Practice, *Family and School Backpack Program*, further encourages students to read at home.

Our basic skills, ESL, and primary teachers incorporate *Orton-Gillingham* multisensory reading techniques into lessons. Kindergartners recognize rhyming through monthly action poems and read online from *Learning A to Z* and *Raz Kids*. Each morning first graders warm up with alphabet letters and sounds and each week they learn six *Dolch* words. Using singing, dancing, tasting, tallying, and graphing with the reading of stories such as “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie” increases students’ enjoyment of reading. More advanced comprehension skills like story structure, summarizing, and sequencing are reinforced in second grade. The *Green Eggs and Ham Breakfast* to celebrate Dr. Seuss’s birthday features celebrity readers who show primary students how much fun reading is!

Third graders love reading Mr. Popper’s Penguins and designing model penguins to be displayed at the *Annual Arts Festival*. Fourth graders enjoy a multicultural experience while reading The Cricket in Times Square. They visit Times Square on a live online website, use chop sticks, and read the messages inside fortune cookies at their own Chinese luncheon. Fifth and sixth grade students alternate reading novels and short stories. At the conclusion of each novel, a themed celebration takes place. Students create story-based projects which coincide with the chapters. Hieroglyphics are used to create student names after reading The Egypt Game while island food is prepared after reading The Island of The Blue Dolphins. Novels and stories vary from year to year so that students look forward to reading class.

Grant School teachers work hard to instill an enjoyment of literature in every child. They guide students in developing phonemic awareness, understanding new vocabulary, comprehending what is read, and practicing fluent reading. Our teaching approach varies according to the literary selection, but is always presented with an awareness of the learning style of each student.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

Today’s lifestyle is enriched by the use of technology. Our mission is to be sure our students use their “inquisitive minds” to develop a “respect and acceptance of others” because we have become a global society easily connected at our fingertips.

Grant School provides an enriched learning environment that promotes the use of technology and supplies the resources to integrate technology into daily instruction. Our teachers are independent users of technology, regularly utilizing computers and presentation hardware to engage and motivate students to become active participants. Project-based computer lessons are developed and delivered collaboratively by classroom teachers and technology instructional specialists. Technology is used as a transparent tool to improve understanding.

In the classroom teachers engage students by using presentation projectors and *SmartBoards* to deliver lessons enhanced with images, videos, and online interactive websites. Instant assessment quizzes are given to measure comprehension. Access to electronic field trips through video conference equipment provides interactive lessons with students from other states.

Students learn to use electronic research tools such as the *Internet*, online library catalog, and subscription-based multimedia sites to gather and analyze information for developing today's necessary life skills. *Internet* safety and ethical issues are addressed beginning in the first grade and continually reinforced. All students use *Microsoft Office* software, as well as *Kid Pix*, *Inspiration*, and online curriculum subscriptions.

Our technology specialist creates and presents in-house professional development to staff, offers technology infused lessons, and provides troubleshooting services. A staff technology committee meets regularly to assess ever-changing technological needs including hardware, software, supplies, maintenance costs, subscriptions, and replacement of equipment as needed. Teachers have immediate access to request assistance and supplies through *School Dude*, an online maintenance website.

Together we provide an environment where students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and community members work as one to ensure a quality academic program supported by the meaningful use of instructional technology.

4. Instructional Methods:

At Grant School differentiating instruction and meeting the needs of student subgroups are no different than reaching out to our entire student body. The school enrollment is small in number resulting in even smaller subgroups. The intimacy of our school allows us to pay deliberate attention to all learning styles, multiple intelligences, and levels of maturity. Testing grades have the luxury of small class sizes that enables teachers to address the needs of all learners. Teachers use a variety of methods to engage students so they all access the curriculum standards no matter what their subgroups are.

All teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual learners. They challenge students appropriately, while giving them the necessary support so they can achieve success. Different strategies are selected according to subject matter and student ability. Instruction is delivered in short sessions and frequently includes opportunities for movement so that kinesthetic learners become engaged. Time is adjusted and extended if necessary. Instructions are often written as well as presented aloud so both visual and auditory learners understand the task at hand. Teachers use technology to allow students with all learning styles to access content. Students respond in a variety of ways: highlighting main ideas, formulating questions, using dry-erase boards, and collaborating with a partner or in small groups.

During the summer months, teachers work closely with the principal and guidance counselor to review test data and confirm student placement. As the class lists are formed each student's performance is examined closely so that individual needs are met, whether it is for placement in ESL, basic skills, and/or the gifted and talented program. Teachers also look at test results to identify areas of need. By reviewing questions commonly misinterpreted by students, teachers are able to define areas for their further clarification.

An example of differentiated instruction is our fifth and sixth grade *Science Fair* project. While the underlying requirements of the project are discussed with the class as a whole, students are offered a choice of topics varying in difficulty level. Student creativity determines final project design. A balance is struck between a student's freedom of choice and teacher-guided requirements. Our science teacher continually monitors students' progress ensuring they remain on track while allowing for continuing formative assessment. It is evident during the annual *Science Fair* that students of varied abilities and learning styles achieve a clear understanding of the scientific method.

Because teachers communicate regularly with each other no student is left behind in lesson planning. Students who need differentiated instruction receive it in their classroom, at their "specials", and in small groups. This is why former students at Grant School frequently return to visit, tell us how much they miss us, and share their successes at Junior High – and beyond!

5. Professional Development:

Among many important goals, high student achievement is the main objective of teaching and learning at Grant School. Quality professional development provides staff members with the knowledge, motivation, and current strategies needed to help all students meet this objective. Student needs help shape professional development workshop instruction. Our Professional Development Plan includes district-wide workshops, staff training on technology and current educational trends, turn-key presentations, and out-of-district workshops.

The Ridgefield Park School District provides many professional resources on its intranet website. Available are helpful resources for teachers, links to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, current professional development schedules, an evaluation form for professional workshops, and other pertinent district information. Staff professional development concerns and interests are surveyed annually to indicate professional learning priorities.

Grant School frequently mentors student teachers and hosts college students for their field experiences. Several North Jersey universities and colleges have chosen Grant School to train future educators. Working with novice teachers brings new ideas and strategies to our classrooms. Current methods and approaches are combined with successful past practices through the mentoring process. Grade level curriculum meetings, educational subscriptions, information, and technology lessons continue to be assets.

Several professional development opportunities have had a direct impact on improving student achievement. When New Jersey offered free participation in *Learnia* for grade three through grade six, Grant School eagerly invited state presenters to train our teachers. The upper grades also use *eFolio*, a writing program created and scored by the originators of the NJ ASK materials. Completing the *eFolio* assignments gives students writing experience evaluated by using a rubric consistent with the NJ ASK. Both *Learnia* and *eFolio* are aligned with the NJCCCS. As documented by excellent student performance on the NJ ASK tests over the past five years, professional training in *Learnia* and *eFolio* has positively impacted student achievement.

Other technology training is often provided at staff meetings. For example, advanced *SmartBoard* training was demonstrated at a recent faculty meeting. Teachers now create more effective lessons utilizing the *SmartBoard* to actively engage all types of learners. All lessons are aligned with appropriate content standards.

Teachers regularly share materials, ideas, and techniques gathered at professional workshops. Their enthusiasm is contagious prompting colleagues to try new approaches! Who benefits? Our students! Our goal is not just to improve student achievement, but to foster "a life-long commitment to learning for all"!

6. School Leadership:

Encouraged by a knowledgeable Central Office Administration, the principal, Mrs. Bender, provides strong leadership at Grant School. She accepts responsibility for making difficult decisions. Her style has led to an outstanding rapport with many professionals outside the school. She is an excellent role model for teachers, parents, and students.

No one will ever hear Mrs. Bender say, “I don’t have time.” Instead her open door policy welcomes concerns, questions, and suggestions. The non-threatening environment she has created encourages teachers to develop new skills. Brainstorming, guidance, and professional education are provided. Worthwhile programs are consistently updated.

Believing that the best results come from collaborative efforts, Mrs. Bender looks to the faculty for input and is comfortable delegating responsibilities. The master schedule provides for common grade level planning periods which gives opportunities to mentor, value, and assess future lessons. Monthly staff meetings include helpful professional development delivered by outside presenters or turn-keyed by staff members.

Mrs. Bender is well-respected by students. She is aware of their strengths and weaknesses and is sensitive to their needs. Her sensitivity and caring attitude make children feel safe and secure and often prompts them to care for and protect each other.

Mrs. Bender is an exemplary resource and stays current in all facets of education. Her love for instructional technology has become contagious. Her expertise in technology has ensured that our school has the latest equipment—*SmartBoards* throughout the building, laptops on a mobile cart, flat screen TVs, and updated computers. Through her vision and persistence she has secured an illuminated outdoor message board and a flat panel TV with *PowerPoint* presentations showing current school happenings to visitors entering the building.

The Grant School principal is in regular contact with the leadership of the PTA, always encouraging parental support and participation. Mrs. Bender’s leadership style is classic “dynamic supportive”. She has a passion for educating all students. The staff describes her as “user friendly” because of her hands on approach to technology.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: New Jersey Assessment of Skills & Knowledge

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measurement Incorporated

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Mar	Mar	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	100	100
% Advanced	81	69	72	90	76
Number of students tested	31	16	29	31	25
Percent of total students tested	100	100	97	97	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	100		100	100	100
% Advanced	75		82	81	73
Number of students tested	16		11	17	15
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	100	100
% Advanced	76	75	72	86	71
Number of students tested	21	12	18	22	14
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: In 2008-2009, the assessment was revised - made more challenging and the proficiency standard was raised. In 2006-2007, the percent of total students tested reflects one student who was not present. In 2005-2006, our percent of total students tested reflects one or more students which were LEP exempt.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: New Jersey Assessment of Skills & Knowledge

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measurement Incorporated

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	100	97	87	100
% Advanced	0	13	3	7	4
Number of students tested	31	16	29	31	25
Percent of total students tested	100	100	96	97	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	88		95	81	100
% Advanced	0		6	0	7
Number of students tested	16		11	17	15
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	91	100	94	86	100
% Advanced	0	17	0	5	7
Number of students tested	21	12	18	23	14
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:

In 2008-2009, the assessment was revised - made more challenging and the proficiency standard was raised.

In 2006-2007, the percent of total students tested reflects one student who was not present.

In 2005-2006, our percent of total students tested reflects one or more students who were LEP exempt.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: New Jersey Assessment of Skills & Knowledge

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measurement Incorporated

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Mar	Mar	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	87	100	100	100	100
% Advanced	44	97	100	83	51
Number of students tested	23	31	27	36	41
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	3	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	85	100	100	100	100
% Advanced	46	100	100	81	35
Number of students tested	13	10	10	22	17
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	83	100	100	100	100
% Advanced	39	96	100	81	30
Number of students tested	18	22	18	22	23
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:

In 2008-2009, the assessment was revised - made more challenging and the proficiency standard was raised.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: New Jersey Assessment of Skills & Knowledge

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measurement Incorporated

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Mar	Mar	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	100	100	97	100
% Advanced	5	3	19	11	8
Number of students tested	22	31	27	36	38
Percent of total students tested	96	100	100	97	93
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	3	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	95	100
% Advanced	0	0	24	10	13
Number of students tested	13	10	10	22	17
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	100	100	100	100
% Advanced	0	0	17	10	15
Number of students tested	18	22	18	22	20
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:

In 2008-2009, the assessment was revised - made more challenging and the proficiency standard was raised.

In 2004-2005, one or more students LEP exempt.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: New Jersey Assessment of Skills & Knowledge

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measurement Incorporated

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Mar	Mar	Apr	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	92	98	
% Advanced	44	59	24	22	
Number of students tested	36	29	37	46	
Percent of total students tested	100	97	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	3	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	94	95	
% Advanced	31	63	24	21	
Number of students tested	16	12	17	19	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	86	96	
% Advanced	33	45	23	18	
Number of students tested	21	22	22	28	
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:

In 2007-2008, the assessment was revised - made more challenging and the proficiency standard was raised.

In 2004-2005, no state standardized assessment was available for grade five.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: New Jersey Assessment of Skills & Knowledge

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measurement Incorporated

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Mar	Mar	Apr	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	97	95	
% Advanced	14	4	6	5	
Number of students tested	36	30	35	44	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	95	96	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	94	94	
% Advanced	0	10	0	0	
Number of students tested	16	12	16	18	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	92	
% Advanced	5	5	5	4	
Number of students tested	21	22	21	26	
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:

In 2007-2008, the assessment was revised - made more challenging and the proficiency standard was raised.

In 2006-2007 and 2005-2006, one or more students LEP exempt.

In 2004-2005, no state standardized assessment was available for grade five.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: New Jersey Assessment of Skills & Knowledge

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measurement Incorporated

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Mar	Mar	Apr	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93	100	87	94	
% Advanced	40	18	14	15	
Number of students tested	30	38	37	48	
Percent of total students tested	100	97	97	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	3	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	100	90	92	
% Advanced	38	10	11	13	
Number of students tested	16	10	19	24	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	91	100	86	91	
% Advanced	35	16	10	9	
Number of students tested	23	25	21	23	
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:

In 2008-2009, one student voided for medical emergency. In 2007-2008, assessment revised - made more challenging and the proficiency standard was raised. In 2006-2007, one or more students LEP exempt. In 2004-2005, no state standardized test was available for grade six.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: New Jersey Assessment of Skills & Knowledge

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measurement Incorporated

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	May	Mar	Mar	Apr	
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	74	84	92	
% Advanced	28	3	11	6	
Number of students tested	29	39	37	48	
Percent of total students tested	97	97	97	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	3	0	0	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	70	84	96	
% Advanced	13	0	11	8	
Number of students tested	15	10	19	24	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	72	86	91	
% Advanced	23	0	14	4	
Number of students tested	22	25	21	23	
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:

In 2008-2009, one student voided for medical emergency. In 2007-2008, the assessment was revised - made more challenging and the proficiency standard was raised. In 2006-2007, one or more students LEP exempt. In 2004-2005, no state standardized test was available for grade six.