

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. Susan Shene

Official School Name: Clifton-Fine Elementary School

School Mailing Address:

11 Hall Ave.

P.O. Box 75

Star Lake, NY 13690-0075

County: Saint Lawrence State School Code Number*: 510401040002

Telephone: (315) 848-3333 Fax: (315) 848-3350

Web site/URL: cfeagles.org E-mail: sshene@cliftonfine.org

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

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Paul Alioto

District Name: Clifton-Fine CSD Tel: (315) 848-3333

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. Brian Dolan

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

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)

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

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 20193

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. 2 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	10	8	18	6			0
K	18	10	28	7			0
1	11	9	20	8			0
2	13	14	27	9			0
3	13	12	25	10			0
4	11	14	25	11			0
5	7	9	16	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							159

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
95 % White
 % 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: 15 %

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.	10
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	15
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	25
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	163
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.153
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	15.337

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

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 69 %

Total number students who qualify: 110

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: 9 %

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> </u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u> </u> 1 Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u> </u> 4 Specific Learning Disability
<u> </u> Emotional Disturbance	<u> </u> 10 Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> Hearing Impairment	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> </u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u> </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u> </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> </u>	<u> </u> 1
Classroom teachers	<u> </u> 12	<u> </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u> </u> 2	<u> </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u> </u> 3	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total number	<u> </u> 17	<u> </u> 1

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 13 :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	95%	94%	94%	99%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	5%	0%	5%	5%	17%
Student dropout rate	%	%	%	%	%

Please provide all explanations below.

In 2004-2005 there were two teachers who retired at the end of the school year and one teacher moved from teaching to administration. All other years the turnover rate is a result of teacher retirements.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Clifton-Fine Central School District is located at the gateway to the Adirondack Mountains in the hamlet of Star Lake, in Northern New York. The area has some of the most beautiful lakes, rivers, wilderness and mountains in the world. The school serves six small hamlets located within a twenty-five mile radius; the school itself is located in Star Lake. According to information published by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000, the school service area is considered “frontier land,” which indicates the population per square mile equals less than seven people. There are only two such designated areas east of the Mississippi River.

Thirty years ago Clifton-Fine Central School served over 1200 students. Today, the enrollment is about 340 students, with 159 students in grades PK-5. Since the closing of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation and the Newton Falls Paper Mill, the region experienced a double-digit unemployment rate and a per capita income equating to 37% below the New York State average. Even with the reopening of the paper mill, the unemployment rate continues to be about 10%. The school is the largest employer within a 60 mile radius. The Free and Reduced Lunch rate has increased from 42.2% in 1999-2000 to 57% this school year. The community is isolated with the closest large grocery and fast food stores over 40 miles away and the nearest shopping mall over 65 miles away. Because of the economic depression, we have had contingency budgets in 2000 and 2001, causing us to look closely at our educational program in order to reduce costs. The past 3 years we have had tax levy increases of less than 3%.

The Administration has been dedicated to providing the students with technology to experience a global society. We have dramatically improved computer labs at all levels (Pre-K-12). Distance learning labs now connect us to surrounding colleges, (SUNY at Canton and Potsdam) and our neighboring school districts. Every classroom has computers for student use and interactive boards are being installed at the rate of two classrooms per year.

In the past we have received the 21st Century Learning Grant and implemented the America’s Choice Model with a grant through the National Center of Education and Economy. We continue to strive to improve student achievement with the goal of meeting standards specified by the No Child Left Behind legislation.

In 2005 our district began the process of curriculum mapping. With the assistance of a SETRC consultant the elementary school focused upon English/Language Arts and Math as the first two curriculum areas to be mapped. These curriculum maps are continually revised, and the Science curriculum has also been mapped. The consultant also led our teachers through the process of test-item analysis, using data to drive instruction. At this time, in 2009, all our teachers use assessment data to modify their instruction. Currently our teachers are aligning curriculum, both horizontally (across the grade level) as well as vertically (K-12 alignment).

Our elementary teachers also were trained in Response to Intervention (RtI) in 2007. All students in grades K-5 are benchmarked using DIBELS three times per year. Assessment data is used to determine necessary interventions, either in the classroom or in a small group. Teachers were provided with PALM hardware to make the assessment process easier.

Since 2005 our teachers and administrators have been focused upon using data to increase student achievement. We have not wavered from this commitment to student success. Every staff development day and every faculty meeting was devoted to high levels of achievement. Our hard work has paid off. Our students are performing at high levels and our teachers are effectively reaching all students.

Our vision statement reflects our hope for the future: Clifton-Fine students will have the skills and confidence necessary to compete in a global society.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

New York State implemented an assessment program in 2005-06 for students in grades 3-8. The goal of the testing program is to measure and evaluate student and instructional program performance on the New York State learning standards. Every student in grades 3-8 is tested in English/Language Arts and Mathematics each year. Students are also tested annually on Science skills in grades 4 and 8 and Social Studies skills in grades 5 and 8. Student performance is divided into four performance levels based upon a scaled score. The four performance levels are:

- Level 1 Not meeting the learning standard
- Level 2 Partially meeting the learning standard
- Level 3 Meeting the learning standard
- Level 4 Meeting the learning standard with distinction

Student performance on the NYS tests is used to determine instructional goals for individual students. Students who score at Levels 1 and 2 are given additional instructional time in the weak subject area(s). We refer to this additional instruction as Academic Intervention Services (AIS). The AIS teachers individualize instruction for students based upon the analysis of test items that were answered incorrectly.

All teachers at Clifton-Fine have been trained to complete test item analysis of each state assessment. The analysis serves to individualize instruction and identify gaps in the curriculum. Teachers meet to discuss test results, and then discuss the implications for the curriculum. Curriculum maps are adjusted based upon test analysis.

After analysis of our test results over the past four years, we saw some significant gains in meeting the learning standards in ELA. With the exception of grade 4 in 2008-09 the overall scores for ELA have remained high or increased over a four year time period. We have also seen an increase in the percentage of students achieving a Level 4, Meeting the learning standard with distinction. It has been a concentrated effort at Clifton-Fine to raise every student's scale score; i.e. move students at Level Two to Level Three and move students at Level Three to Level Four. We are witnessing this increase in achievement and attribute it to the work teachers have completed with curriculum mapping and test item analysis.

Clifton-Fine Elementary School has scored phenomenally well on The NYS testing program in Mathematics. Our scores in the past four years have improved to the point that all students in grades 3-5 scored at Level 3 or Level 4 in 2008-09. What is even more impressive is that our percentage of students scoring at Level 4 has increased each year. Again, our concentrated efforts to align curriculum and focus upon student mastery of learning standards is reflected in our assessment results.

Our subgroup scores in Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students show that poverty is not a barrier at Clifton-Fine. Students in this sub-group continue to meet or exceed the scale score cut-point. Our students may live in poverty, but they come to school ready and able to learn. Their assessment scores show their ability to score as well or better than students not economically disadvantaged.

Information on the New York State Testing Program may be found on the following websites:

www.nystart.gov/publicweb

<http://www.nysparents.com/nys>

www.emsc.nysed.gov

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

During the 2005-06 school year the entire faculty at Clifton-Fine Central School began the process of using state assessment data to guide instruction. A consultant from St. Lawrence-Lewis SETRC guided our teachers through training in October 2005, during which time he introduced the eight steps leading to instructional change.

Teachers learned how to collect and display student test data. They then learned how to identify the gaps between our school and the state cut-points. Alignment of gap test items to the corresponding performance indicators was the next step, and then it was determined if the performance indicators were high or low frequency test items.

Teachers then engaged in frank conversations about the skills and abilities students needed to correctly answer the test questions. Actual student responses were reviewed, hypotheses were developed about necessary skills a student needed to answer particular questions correctly, and these hypotheses became the basis for instructional change.

During this same time all teachers were engaged in Curriculum Mapping. English-Language Arts was the first curriculum to be mapped, with Math following the next year. After four years of Curriculum Mapping the teachers focused upon aligning the curriculum, both at and across grade levels. Alignment, along with test-item analysis, has led to instructional change.

Teachers in grades K-5 have also been trained to use PALM handhelds equipped with mClass software to benchmark every student three times per year using *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS). The five early literacy measurements assessed by the DIBELS are: Phonemic Awareness; Alphabetic Principle; Accuracy and Fluency; Vocabulary; and Comprehension. Results from each benchmark are used to determine Response to Intervention (RtI) tiers and appropriate reading interventions.

All the initiatives described above have led to instructional change and improvements in student test scores.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

Each year Clifton-Fine Central Elementary School communicates its test results in a variety of ways. We communicate to families, the school community, the larger community, and the region.

Each family of tested students receives a detailed letter explaining the test, the score their child received on the test, and an easily understood explanation of the results. These family letters are sent (via the U.S. Postal Service) as soon as we receive them from the regional information center. Parents/guardians are invited to talk with their child's teacher if further explanations are needed or if there is a concern. Parents may also access information about test data on the nySTART public website (www.nystart.gov/publicweb) and the New York Parent Website (<http://www.nysparents.com/nys>)

Test results are shared with the school community in at least five ways. Results are discussed at monthly Board of Education meetings. Graphs usually accompany the results, comparing Clifton-Fine's results with other schools in the region and comparing grade level results from year-to-year. Our monthly school newsletters describe test results with charts, graphs, and written articles. The results are also posted on our

school website. At faculty meetings during the year staff members are provided with test data and time to analyze the information. Test data is also accessible on the nySTART website (www.nystart.gov)

News articles in the daily newspaper report test results to the larger community. Our New York State school report card shares test data and other district information with all who visit the website (www.nystart.gov).

Finally, test data is used to compare our rural elementary school with other rural elementary schools in New York State. This data is shared with Board of Education members and the school community and is helpful when determining budgetary decisions and/or staffing considerations.

4. Sharing Success:

Principal Susan O. Shene and Superintendent Paul J. Alioto share and receive information on best practices with school leaders from the eighteen component school districts of the St. Lawrence-Lewis Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). The superintendents group meets twice each month and the principals meet once per month.

Clifton-Fine CSD has a strong web presence. Please visit us at www.cfeagles.org. Our website is linked to others through the SLL BOCES website. Our goals, our foundation in effective schools research and our action plans have continually been available to the public from our website.

We are currently applying to present at the Annual School Leadership Conference held in Lake Placid, NY. This year's conference is scheduled for July 7-9, 2010. Hundreds of school leaders from across central and northern NY attend. The conference is sponsored by the four regional BOCES of Northern New York.

We also anticipate submitting presentation proposals to the New York Rural Schools Association (RSA) sponsored by Cornell University, the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) and the New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS) for their annual conferences.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The English/Language Arts curriculum at Clifton-Fine Elementary School is based upon the four New York State Standards for ELA. These four standards are: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding; Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression; Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation; and Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction. Teachers always address one or more of these standards in their daily ELA lessons. English/Language Arts is taught in the morning in each elementary classroom, with an uninterrupted hour-long block for reading and an uninterrupted hour-long block for writing. Teachers use the *Houghton-Mifflin* English/Language Arts program, and supplement their reading curriculum with extensive classroom libraries and leveled books. Students are tested at the end of each theme using examinations that are modeled after the NYS ELA Test. Three times a year each student in grades K-5 is benchmarked using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS assesses Phonemic Awareness; Alphabetic Principle; Accuracy and Fluency; Vocabulary; and Comprehension. Results from each benchmark are used to determine Response to Intervention (RtI) tiers and appropriate reading interventions. A reading incentive program encourages students to reach the goal of reading twenty-five (25) books per year. Each class presents one assembly per year, based upon the book-of-the-month or the character trait of the month. During these assemblies students read original poetry, sing original songs, or dance to original choreography. Reading benchmarks are celebrated and students receive certificates of achievement.

There are ten strands in the New York State Mathematics Core Curriculum, divided into process strands and content strands. Elementary teachers integrate these strands as they develop their daily lessons. Mathematics instruction combines textbook materials, *Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley*, with various manipulatives. Students have a sixty-minute math block each day. Concepts are introduced at the appropriate developmental level for each student, with writing in relation to math incorporated into every grade level.

Profile cards listing each math strand have been developed and are used to determine student mastery of mathematics skills.

The Social Studies Core Curriculum in New York State is divided into four key concepts: History; Geography; Economics; and Civics, Citizenship, and Government; with essential elements listed for each of the key concepts. The Social Studies curriculum at Clifton-Fine closely follows these concepts. Teachers integrate Social Studies concepts into their Reading and Writing blocks. Students read historical novels, take field trips, learn about their communities, and develop an understanding of the global society. In the primary classrooms students learn about self and their role in their family and their community. Third grade students begin to explore other cultures and peoples. The fourth grade curriculum focuses upon New York State history and in fifth grade students learn about the United States and our neighbors, Canada and Latin American countries. Fifth grade students also take a New York State Social Studies Assessment in the fall of each school year. We actively recruit assembly speakers and performers to bring cultural and ethnic diversity to our students.

The elementary Science curriculum at Clifton-Fine is student-centered, based upon inquiry, analysis, and design. Using a problem-solving approach, students learn about buoyancy, astronomy, plant and animal life cycles, electricity, etc. Several Elementary Science Kits are leased each year, at least two per classroom. These kits enable students to use hands-on learning as an approach to science and are aligned with the NY State Science Core Curriculum. Kits are supplemented with non-fiction books and videos about Science. Several field trips are planned each year to acquaint students with real-life scientific principles. Fourth grade students are assessed by means of a New York State Science Test each spring.

All students, including Pre-Kindergarten students, enjoy Physical Education, Music, Art, and Library classes. Some meet every other day, some once or twice during a six day cycle, and all last forty-two (42) minutes. In Physical Education students learn movement exercises with emphasis on small-motor and large-motor skills. In addition, the P.E. teachers incorporate reading and math instruction into their daily

lessons. Our art students learn to create, evaluate, and appreciate artistic works. The art teacher is adept at weaving the core curriculum into art projects. She meets regularly with regular education teachers to plan interdisciplinary projects. Our Library-Media Specialist is also adept at planning and implementing interdisciplinary projects. In music students learn movement exercises, as well as an appreciation for different types of music. And, of course, students are excited to learn to play an instrument, beginning in the fourth grade!

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

Clifton-Fine Elementary teachers have chosen the *Houghton-Mifflin Reading Series*, the best-selling reading textbook program in the United States, as their basis for a balanced literary program. Each morning students have a one-hour block of reading and a one-hour block of writing. During the reading block students work on literacy skills, such as decoding, blending, and comprehending. Lessons may include the whole group or may be focused on smaller groups based upon skill level. There are learning centers in the primary classrooms. Every classroom is equipped with an extensive classroom library, and book baskets with leveled books are also available. Many classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards, which are used to enhance reading instruction. Students are assessed at the end of every theme (about once every six weeks) with an assessment that closely mirrors the NY State ELA assessment.

The entire elementary school participates in the 25 Book Campaign. To encourage students to read 25 books per year there is an incentive program with a different theme each year. Reading benchmarks are celebrated in school-wide assemblies. Parents and family members flock to these assemblies, where students perform original poetry, songs, and dances. Each assembly is based upon the book-of-the-month: a book chosen to communicate a character trait or that mirrors the reading incentive theme.

All students in grades K-5 are assessed using *DIBELS, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*, three times per year. If a student scores in Strategic (yellow) or Intensive (red) areas of the benchmarked test teachers will progress monitor the student up to four times per month. Careful and constant monitoring of student literacy skills ensures students will not fall behind in their achievement of literacy goals. Research-based reading resources are used to supplement instruction for struggling students.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

Students at Clifton-Fine are excited about Science, since they get to “do” Science. The curriculum is hands-on, based upon inquiry, analysis, and design. One of the most important resources in the Science curriculum is the Elementary Science Program (Monroe2-Orleans BOCES). The ESP leases fully-stocked science kits to classroom teachers around New York State. Our teachers love the program because it provides all the materials necessary to conduct a hands-on science unit in the classroom. Accompanying the kits are student workbooks, in which students write down their hypotheses, calculate data, and write about results. The science units encourage inquiry, but also demand analysis. It is real-life science in the classroom.

To supplement the ESP kits, classroom teachers use a variety of non-fiction books. Students are introduced to the world of non-fiction through picture books and reference libraries. Scientific websites are also widely used, opening up new worlds for our students to see and experience.

Field trips are encouraged at Clifton-Fine. We live in the largest state park east of the Mississippi and we love to have our students explore the park. Teachers take students on mountain hikes and sliding trips. They explore the natural world outside their classrooms. Students visit science museums and zoos, and then come back to write about their experiences.

Science is intertwined with Reading instruction. Some Reading passages are science-related, which leads to an interdisciplinary approach to Reading instruction. Students read, write, and think about Science. It is one more way we prepare our students for the global society.

4. Instructional Methods:

Differentiated instruction is the key to accomplishing our goal of moving students from Level two to Level three or Level three to Level Four in the New York State testing program. We use several methods to determine necessary interventions.

All students in grades K-5 are assessed using *DIBELS*, *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*, three times per year. If a student scores in Strategic (yellow) or Intensive (red) areas of the benchmarked test teachers will progress monitor the student up to four times per month. Careful and constant monitoring of student literacy skills ensures students will not fall behind in their achievement of literacy goals. Research-based reading resources are used to supplement instruction for struggling students.

Our School-Based intervention Team (SBIT) analyzes student performance on DIBELS and other assessments. The team then plans intervention strategies for individual students. Members of the team include the school psychologist, the AIS teacher, the elementary special education teacher, the principal, and the classroom teacher. SBIT meets about once every three months for a full day. Interventions include small-group instruction within the classroom, small-group or one-on-one instruction with the AIS teacher, or intensive instruction with the special education teacher.

The STAR Reading test is used by teachers to assess reading levels of students. Students are then introduced to book baskets filled with books at their independent reading level. Small-group instruction also centers on the instructional reading levels of students. Students are encouraged to meet their goal of reading 25 books per year. A reading log of books read is kept by every student and is monitored by the classroom teacher. Teachers continually challenge their students to not only read every night, but to choose books at their independent reading level.

Student progress in Mathematics is closely monitored, also. The NYS Mathematics test is analyzed for each student, and those who do not meet the standard (Level three) are referred to the AIS program in Mathematics. Students in primary grades receive differentiated instruction within the classroom, by the classroom teacher and the AIS teacher. Individual needs are documented and addressed.

5. Professional Development:

Professional development at Clifton-Fine is based upon a philosophy of shared decision making and research on effective schools. In 2004 and 2005, the Clifton-Fine Shared Decision Making Team (SDMT) conducted a comprehensive school-community needs assessment. The study was designed to measure the degree to which CFCS demonstrated the nine science-based essential elements of effective schools. One of those essential elements is "Focused Professional Development." Survey, interview and student performance data were analyzed and yielded findings that the SDMT used to develop professional development goals and subsequent action plans designed to improve student performance.

Our self study determined that for years the school suffered from a lack of focused professional development. SDMT members then set out to devise a plan that was aligned with the following ideals:

1. Professional development is based on a needs assessment and sustained over time.
2. Deliberate decisions are made to ensure resources are allocated to maintain and sustain professional development.
3. Leaders have focused much of their time in planning, implementing and monitoring professional development activities.
4. Professional development engages all stakeholders.
5. Professional development reflects the National Staff Development Council standards.
6. Professional development models best practice instruction.
7. A variety of professional development offerings are customized and based on individual and organizational needs.

The SDMT is uniquely responsible for prioritizing needs and shaping professional development at CFCS. The team developed a long range plan and remained steadfast in achieving student performance goals through extensive curriculum development, curriculum mapping, curriculum alignment and data analysis activities. Almost 100% of our professional development time is dedicated to these purposes.

Another critical piece of our professional development plan originated from the 2004 Special Education Quality Assessment that we conducted at CFCS. The SDMT discovered that our special education population disproportionately under-performed in comparison to general education students. We then learned that the kinds of interventions that would help students with disabilities would also benefit the larger student population.

This led the SDMT to agree on a science-based process by which we monitor elementary student progress in math, reading and ELA. The process includes formative standards based assessments, benchmark testing, observation and content specific pedagogical interventions. Each of our elementary teachers participated in professional development activities to master these new strategies.

Employing this systemic approach yielded data that demonstrated evidence of more robust learning. There was another benefit as well. Because of our early interventions, our special education rate has dropped from about 14% to 9% over the past five years.

6. School Leadership:

Leadership at Clifton-Fine is a shared endeavor that places the needs of students at the forefront of all we do. The Shared Decision Making Team (SDMT) represents all stakeholding groups in our school-community. Representative teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, students and administrators all participate in the decision making process. The SDMT developed school improvement goals in 2004 that were adopted by the CFCS Board of Education. Our highest priority has been improved student performance in mathematics and English language arts.

The school principal, Susan O. Shene, plays an integral role on the SDMT. As the "principal teacher and principal learner" at CFCS, Mrs. Shene models those attributes that she desires to see in teachers and students. Those attributes include high expectations, a commitment to achievement, curiosity and dedication. Mrs. Shene's observations, vision and leadership shaped our school improvement initiatives at Clifton-Fine.

SDM requires an investment from all stakeholding groups in the school-community. However, school improvement also requires accountability in the form of an organizational hierarchy with the principal providing educational oversight.

Mrs. Shene has excelled in attending to her accountability responsibilities. She worked through the SDMT to develop measurable performance objectives. Mrs. Shene then worked to provide professional development opportunities in curriculum development, mapping, alignment and data analysis. She stayed focused on curriculum and instruction and refrained from leading staff through the myriad of workshops that promise the world but lack research based evidence to support the claims.

Mrs. Shene further worked with the teachers' union to develop a performance and evidence based teacher appraisal system that provided educators with support and standards based expectations. Over the past few years, Mrs. Shene has used the appraisal system to improve teacher and, consequently, student performance. As a former teacher at Clifton-Fine, Mrs. Shene is well respected and her leadership is enthusiastically received.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: New York State Grade 3 Mathematics
Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2009 Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meeting the learning standards and meeting the learning standards with distinction	100	100	100	84	
Meeting the learning standards with distinction	41	33	56	32	
Number of students tested	27	15	16	25	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meeting the learning standards and meeting the learning standards with distinction	100	100	100	79	
Meeting the learning standards with distinction	50	40	45	29	
Number of students tested	12	10	11	14	
2. African American Students					
Meeting the learning standards and meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meeting the learning standards and meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meeting the learning standards and meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meeting the learning standards and meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Meeting the learning standards and meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Meeting the learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					

Notes: The new testing program for grades 3-8 began in 2005-06 in NYS.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2009

Grade: 3 Test: New York State Grade 3 ELA
Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction	96	87	81	58	
Meeting learning standards with distinction	22	7	44	0	
Number of students tested	27	15	16	24	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
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					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction	100	90	73	54	
Meeting learning standards with distinction	8	10	18	0	
Number of students tested	12	10	11	13	
2. African American Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The new testing program for grades 3-8 began in 2005-06 in NYS.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: New York State Grade 4 Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2009 Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meeting the learning standard and meeting the learning standard with distinction	100	91	77	78	
Meeting the learning standard with distinction	47	23	12	30	
Number of students tested	15	22	26	23	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meeting the learning standard and meeting the learning standard with distinction	100	87	64	82	
Meeting the learning standard with distinction	50	7	14	29	
Number of students tested	10	15	14	17	
2. African American Students					
Meeting the learning standard and meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meeting the learning standard and meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meeting the learning standard and meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meeting the learning standard and meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Meeting the learning standard and meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The new testing program for grades 3-8 began in 2005-06 in NYS.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Grade: 4 Test: New York State Grade 4 ELA
Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction	73	82	73	70	
Meeting learning standards with distinction	0	0	4	0	
Number of students tested	15	22	26	23	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction		73	71	65	
Meeting learning standards with distinction		0	7	0	
Number of students tested		15	14	17	
2. African American Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The new testing program for grades 3-8 began in 2005-06 in NYS.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: New York State Grade 5 Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2009 Publisher: CTB/McGraw-Hill

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meeting the learning standard and Meeting the learning standard with distinction	100	88	88	85	
Meeting the learning standard with distinction	35	25	13	30	
Number of students tested	20	24	24	27	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meeting the learning standard and Meeting the learning standard with distinction	100	79	88	86	
Meeting the learning standard with distinction	30	36	19	29	
Number of students tested	10	14	16	14	
2. African American Students					
Meeting the learning standard and Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meeting the learning standard and Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meeting the learning standard and Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meeting the learning standard and Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Meeting the learning standard and Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Meeting the learning standard with distinction					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The new testing program for grades 3-8 began in 2005-06 in NYS.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Grade: 5 Test: New York State Grade 5 ELA
Publisher: CTB-McGraw-Hill

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction	100	83	79	88	
Meeting learning standards with distinction	38	0	4	12	
Number of students tested	21	24	24	25	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction	100	79	69	85	
Meeting learning standards with distinction	17	0	6	0	
Number of students tested	12	14	16	13	
2. African American Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Meeting learning standards and meeting learning standards with distinction					
Meeting learning standards with distinction					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The new testing program for grades 3-8 began in 2005-06 in NYS.