

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

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

Name of Principal: Mr. Dave Wheat

Official School Name: Albert Sidney Johnston Middle School

School Mailing Address:
10410 Manhattan Drive
Houston, TX 77096-5299

County: Harris State School Code Number*: 101912055

Telephone: (713) 726-3616 Fax: (713) 726-3622

Web site/URL: http://www.johnstonmiddleschool.org/ E-mail: dwheat@houstonisd.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. Terry Grier

District Name: Houston Tel: (713) 556-6005

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. Greg Meyers

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)	170	Elementary schools (includes K-8)
	<u>42</u>	Middle/Junior high schools
	<u>55</u>	High schools
	<u>31</u>	K-12 schools
	<u>298</u>	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 8418

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

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

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

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	6	246	275	521
K			0	7	220	250	470
1			0	8	202	233	435
2			0	9			0
3			0	10			0
4			0	11			0
5			0	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							1426

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
4 % Asian
34 % Black or African American
45 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
16 % White
1 % 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: 9 %

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.	47
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	74
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	121
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	1345
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.090
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	8.996

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 10 %

Total number limited English proficient 136

Number of languages represented: 4

Specify languages:

Spanish, Arabic, German, Vietnamese

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 61 %

Total number students who qualify: 873

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: 6 %

Total Number of Students Served: 90

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>7</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>14</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>51</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>4</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>7</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>85</u>	<u>7</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>111</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%	97%	96%	97%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	95%	96%	97%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	1%	1%	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	<u>0</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0</u> %
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u> %
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u> %
Found employment	<u>0</u> %
Military service	<u>0</u> %
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u> %
Unknown	<u>0</u> %
Total	<u>0</u> %

PART III - SUMMARY

Albert Sidney Johnston Middle School is a vibrant and exciting professional learning community known throughout the Houston area as a bastion of excellence in academic achievement, the performing and visual arts, physical education and athletics.

One key ingredient to our success has been the complete and uncompromising fidelity to our mission. Our mission at Johnston Middle School is to educate *ALL* of our students to very high standards academically, in the performing and visual arts, and in physical education and athletics, and it is to these ends that we devote our energy. The key word in the aforementioned statement of our mission is the word *ALL*, and it is this laser-like focus on every individual student we serve that has made us an extraordinary urban school.

A magnet school for the performing and visual arts, Johnston offers intense training to students in grades 6-8 in the areas of art, theatre, music and dance. Our students have the opportunity to specialize in any two of the following art areas: band, jazz ensemble, mariachi, choir, theatre, orchestra, guitar, dance, hand bells, piano, art, and broadcast journalism. Indeed, many of our students, after three years of being pushed by skilled directors and conductors, audition for and are accepted to Houston's prestigious High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, one of the nation's most decorated public high schools.

Johnston Middle School is a diverse school located in the heart of a vibrant community. This glorious diversity includes students from many ethnicities, religions and socio-economic backgrounds. The largest single student group is our Hispanic group, which comprises 45% of our student body. Next is our African American group at 34%. Whites comprise 16%; Asians total 4%.

Johnston Middle School is located in Meyerland, home to one of Houston's historically Jewish communities. Many of our students and faculty are Jewish, which adds yet another fascinating layer to the diversity of our school. We also have a significant number of students and faculty who practice Islam and Christianity.

Finally, Johnston is a school community teeming with socio-economic diversity. We educate the sons and daughters of doctors, lawyers, and university professors. We also educate some of the poorest and most deprived students in the city of Houston.

With students from so many different backgrounds learning together, often for the first time, we are proactive in creating a culture of acceptance. We have been a *No Place for Hate* school for eight years, longer than any middle school in the Houston Independent School District. Our *No Place for Hate* Club, affiliated with the Anti-Defamation League, sponsors many activities throughout the year designed to celebrate the different cultures found in our school.

Johnston Middle School opened its doors in August of 1959 at its current Meyerland location. Fifty years later, we have many reasons to celebrate. Our school earned *Recognized* status from the Texas Education Agency in the spring of 2009 for the first time in the history of the school. Also based on the state testing in the spring of 2009, our students earned TEA Gold Performance Acknowledgements in reading, writing, and social studies. In order to earn a Gold Performance Acknowledgement, at least 25% of all students and all student groups must score at the *commended* level or higher. This data means that our students are not merely passing state tests, but they are achieving at very high levels. Most recently, our entire school community was electrified with the news that we had been nominated as a Blue Ribbon School, the highest honor an American school can achieve.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

In the State of Texas, students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the state's curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). All students in grades 3 – 11 are assessed annually by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in reading and math. Additionally, students in grade seven are tested in writing, and students in grade eight are tested in science and social studies. In the Houston Independent School District, students at all grade levels must meet the standard on the reading and math TAKS in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Schools earn accountability ratings based on the percentage of its students meeting the standards set for the four core areas. In order to earn the rating of *Exemplary*, 90% of a school's total population must meet the standard on the reading, math, writing, social studies, and science TAKS tests. Furthermore, 90% of each student group must meet the standard as well. In order for a school to earn *Recognized* status, the targets are 80%. The *Acceptable* standard varies from test to test. The *Acceptable* standard for reading, writing, and social studies is 70%. For math, it is 60%, and for science, 55%. Generally speaking, students earn *commended* status by answering at least 90% of a test's questions correctly. Additional information may be found at the Texas Education Agency website at www.tea.state.tx.us/.

Johnston Middle School's test data has been trending sharply upward for the last five years. This trend is true for both the "met standard" and the "*commended* standard." In reading, the grade level with the most spectacular growth over the last five years is the 6th grade. Only 68% of our 6th grade students met the standard in 2005. In 2009, the most recent test administration, 94% of our 6th grade students met the standard, including 96% of our African American students. This was one of the highest passing rates in the Houston Independent School district. Only 57% of the Hispanic students, our most challenging student group, met the standard in 2005. In 2009, 90% of our 6th grade Hispanic students met the reading standard. Reading at the 7th grade level showed robust growth over the last five years, though not as spectacular as 6th grade. Our Hispanic 7th grade students grew the most at that grade level, going from 76% in 2005 to 86% in 2009. Our eighth grade reading students posted relatively high scores in 2005 and had even higher scores in 2009.

As proud as we are of our reading scores, we are even prouder of our math scores. Math scores have presented huge challenges to schools all across the city of Houston and the state of Texas. They have presented huge challenges to us too, but we have met that challenge head-on, and the results are remarkable, particularly at the 7th and 8th grade levels. Our 7th grade students saw an increase from 64% to 92% passing over the last five years, including 91% of our African American students. At the 8th grade level, our students went from 62% to 88% passing, including 90% of African American students. As is the case in reading, our Hispanic students lagged behind the other student groups in a not-too-distant third.

Our growth at the *commended* level of performance has been more moderate over the last five years, and it is our area of focus for the 2009-2010 school year. This trend is true for all grade levels and all student groups, though our *commended* growth in reading is much higher than in math. One overarching trend from the data is the performance of our Hispanic students. While they have shown tremendous growth over the last five years, they remain slightly behind our other student groups, particularly at the *commended* level. It is a challenge to which we are committing our energy and our attention, and we expect that the gap will be completely closed in a short period of time.

2. Using Assessment Results:

At Johnston Middle School, data drives our instruction on a daily basis. All English, reading, math, science and social studies teachers who teach the same grade level form collaborative teams of three and meet for 45

minutes every other day. These teams plan units and lessons, share best practices, examine student work, and most importantly, review student data. Data sources include, but are not limited to, previous years' TAKS results, Stanford 10 results, benchmark assessments, common assessments, and other formative assessments. We believe strongly in Rick DuFour's Professional Learning Community model, and a shared mission and vision have been collaboratively developed. Respectfully pushing our kids in a rigorous and nurturing environment is certainly one of our core values. Additionally, each content team developed three to four *S.M.A.R.T.* goals at the beginning of the school year to focus and guide their work and unite them as members of the team. These goals are aligned with the larger school goals developed by a task force comprised of members from each content area.

In reading, the previous year's TAKS results are used to schedule students into *Read 180* or our outstanding reading program. Students who earn a high enough scale score on the state test can be exempted from the reading requirement and granted the opportunity to take two years of a foreign language for high school credit. These students are still enrolled in an English class, and reading skills are integrated into these courses. Benchmark and common assessment data is evaluated throughout the year to schedule students into required tutorials during the school day, after school, and on Saturdays.

In math, we have developed an intervention math program, and the previous year's TAKS data is used to make these decisions. Students who need additional assistance in math receive two math classes, one that follows the regular district curriculum, and one that allows the intervention teacher to focus solely on the skills in which a student is deficient. Our math teachers also use benchmark and common assessment data to assign students into required tutorials within the school day, after school, and on Saturdays.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

At Johnston Middle School, we believe that communication is a key component to reaching our collaboratively set goals. We believe that all stakeholders must be fully informed in order to support the learning and progress of our students. Johnston Middle School ensures that all members of the learning community are continually updated on all events that are occurring at our campus.

At Johnston, all of our students and teachers are part of a team. In the 6th grade, groups of approximately 150 students share the same five core teachers. In grades seven and eight, groups of 150 students share the same four core teachers. Our teaming model, in which our teaching teams share common planning time, allows for excellent communication with our parents about the progress of individual students. Indeed, a parent with concerns can make one appointment, come to the school, and meet with his or her child's teachers all at the same time. Parent conferences are scheduled through each team leader, and our teams are available every other day. Our teaching teams routinely communicate TAKS data, Stanford 10 data, benchmark, and common assessment data with individual students and parents. Interpreters are always provided if conferences need to be conducted in Spanish.

We place an emphasis on communicating our goals to our community. Therefore, we believe we have an obligation to share the progress of our students, both our successes and challenges. We routinely use our website, electronic marquee, call-out system, and E-blasts to keep our community updated on student achievement and other important events in the life of our school.

In addition to the traditional Open House event, each grade-level content area hosts an Academic Spotlight Night for parents. These events highlight the best practices being used, the curriculum being taught, and provide crucial strategies to parents on how they can assist their child at home in that particular content area. Translators are also present on these nights to assist our Spanish-speaking parents. In addition, parents and community members are invited to serve on our Shared Decision Making Committee (SDMC) and Parent Advisory Council (PAC), where assessment results are shared regularly.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Since our mission at Johnston is high levels of learning for all students, it is vitally important that we both celebrate and share our successes with our own learning community and other schools.

In November of 2008, Houston was the host city for the National Middle School Association's (NMSA) annual conference. Given our history of excellence in both academics and the performing and visual arts, we were chosen to be a school to which visitors from across the country could come and visit. We were eager to share our best practices with our guests, and many wrote letters thanking us for our generous hospitality and for sharing the strategies that led to the success of our students.

Our ongoing partnership with Houston A+ Challenge, a non-profit organization whose mission is to assist urban schools and urban educators, grants us many opportunities to share our approaches with other schools. For many years, schools from across the Houston region have sent administrators and teachers to our campus to learn from us. Likewise, we have sent teachers and administrators to other A+ schools to learn from them.

We are leaders within our own district as well. We have hosted and shared with teams from other HISD schools on several occasions. Principals from around the vast Houston Independent School District contact the school often requesting to send teachers to observe our instruction in the various content areas, including the visual and performing arts and physical education. We are always honored and delighted to say, "Yes!"

Should we receive the highest honor of all, a Blue Ribbon Award, we would continue this tradition of sharing with humility and enthusiasm. With the publicity that would come from this most meritorious award, we would establish a monthly day for school visits and advertise it well in advance so that schools from surrounding regions and states could put a visit to Johnston Middle School in their plans.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Johnston Middle School's English/Language Arts/Reading program combines the best of several research-based approaches with the district's curriculum to achieve terrific results. Our reading department uses high-interest novels to generate a love of reading as well as to teach the traditional reading skills of author's purpose, main idea, predicting outcomes, drawing conclusions, etc. Approximately 1/3 of our students are fully immersed into Nancie Atwell's Readers/Writers Workshop model. The hallmarks of this approach include student choice, mini-lessons, reading conferences and writing conferences. Allowing students to choose their own books stimulates interest in reading, and both reading and writing skills are enhanced and honed through individual conferences with the teacher. We also participate in the *Writers in the Schools* program through a partnership with the University of Houston. This partnership allows our English students to collaborate with published authors and stimulates an interest in writing.

The math curriculum at Johnston Middle School promotes the mastery of basic concepts and the use of higher level strategy and problem solving skills. It is our goal to prepare all of our students for our highest-level math course, Algebra I, in the 8th grade. Students taking Algebra I in the 8th grade enter high school with one credit already under their belts, and they are empowered to go deeper into the high school math curriculum. Both content and academic vocabulary is emphasized in our math curriculum, assisting students in making connections with other disciplines. Our teachers use graphic organizers such as Problem Solving Mats and the Frayer Model to teach concepts that have traditionally been troublesome for students. Cooperative Learning groups are used to increase student engagement and help differentiate the curriculum for the various levels found within our math classrooms.

In grades six, seven, and eight, Johnston science students conduct field and laboratory investigations using the scientific method, analyze data, make informed decisions, use tools, demonstrate safe practices during field and laboratory investigations. They learn to construct graphs, tables, and charts to organize, examine, and evaluate information. As with the math curriculum, academic and content vocabulary is emphasized. The 5 E Model of Instruction is used extensively in our science classrooms in order to stimulate engagement with the material as well as help students evaluate their own learning of concepts.

The curriculum for our social studies students varies dramatically from grade to grade. Sixth grade students learn about world cultures, and our 7th grade students are guided in an in-depth study of Texas History. Finally, our 8th grade students explore United States History to 1877. Both academic and content-specific vocabulary is taught, and writing is used to explore key concepts using the RAFT (role, audience, format, and topic) protocol. In all three grade levels, students use APPARTS (author, place and time, prior knowledge, audience, reason, the main idea, and significance) to examine primary source documents.

Johnston Middle School's International Languages Academy offers students the opportunity for advanced study in Spanish, French, Chinese and Japanese. The 6th grade curriculum for the academy is a course called Exploring Languages, in which students explore the language and culture of the aforementioned four languages. Upon completion of the course at the end of the 6th grade year, students select one language to study for the next two years for high school credit. In our two-way immersion program (Dual Language), students take advanced Spanish classes at all three grade levels, culminating in the Advanced Placement test at the end of the 8th grade year.

Our performing and visual arts program is well known around the Houston area for its excellence. Our magnet students have to audition to get into the program, and they study two art areas intensely for three years. Many

of our students are equipped and ready to perform at Houston's prestigious and nationally renowned High School for the Performing and Visual Arts.

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

(This question is for secondary schools only)

The Johnston Middle School English curriculum is aligned with the Houston Independent School District's curriculum and focuses on reading, writing, speaking, listening, oral and written conventions, and research. With virtually every aforementioned area, we enrich the learning experience for our students with engaging programs and partnerships. A basic value we share is that high-interest novels and student choice in reading creates life-long lovers of reading. The use of high-interest novels makes the teaching of traditional reading skills and literary elements engaging. Furthermore, many of our teachers have been schooled in the Nancie Atwell approach, in which student choice of books is central. Our school participates in the annual *Name That Book* contest, and our students do very well.

Our partnership with the University of Houston has stimulated much interest in writing among our students. Published authors visit our classrooms twice a week and work with our students on their writing. We encourage our students to enter writing contests, and many do. Our Odyssey of the Mind students work in teams to research problems and design solutions

For our students who come to us far below grade level in reading, we offer the research-based *Read 180* program. This program has proven to increase the reading comprehension and related language arts skills of students who are below grade level. *Read 180* emphasizes individual attention for each student, targeting their particular area of weakness. We assign students to *Read 180* based on their previous year's TAKS and Stanford 10 scores, and these students take reading every day, even with our block schedule. We have two teachers who have been fully trained in *Read 180*. For our students who are right at grade level or slightly below, we enroll them in our regular reading program, discussed above. Our students who have demonstrated that they are strong readers based on assessment data are allowed to select a foreign language to study and are exempted from the reading requirement. For these students, reading skills are integrated in their English course, a required subject for all Johnston students.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

With our mission being high levels of learning for all students, it was important for us to offer a comprehensive, rigorous foreign language program. Johnston Middle School students have the opportunity to study Spanish, French, Chinese or Japanese, and they are pushed to do so. All of these courses are for high school credit, so the rigor is quite high. All of our 6th grade students who are not enrolled in our performing and visual arts program are automatically enrolled in a course called Exploring Languages. These students study the aforementioned foreign languages for nine weeks each. At the end of the year, students select one of these languages to study for two years for high school credit. Currently we have 204 6th grade students studying a foreign language, 313 7th graders, and 239 8th graders. The total number of Johnston Middle School students involved in the study of foreign language is 756. We firmly believe that this approach prepares our students for the rigors of high school and allows them to go deeper into language study when they get there.

A second component of our languages program is our two-way immersion program (Dual Language). Approximately 25 students at each grade level begin taking an advanced Spanish course for high school credit in the 6th grade. Upon completion of 7th grade, these students already have high school credit in Spanish I. The most amazing thing happens for these students when they enter the 8th grade: they take an advanced Spanish course that prepares them for the College Board-endorsed Advanced Placement (AP) exam. Students who score a three or higher on the AP exam earn high school credit in Spanish I-IV and earn up to 16 hours of

college credit! We are in our 6th year of offering AP Spanish, and approximately 80% of our middle school students have earned a three or higher each year.

4. Instructional Methods:

Teachers at Johnston Middle School employ various forms of differentiated instruction to assist students. Our students come to us from all over the city of Houston, and many arrive at different levels. All of our teachers are Gifted and Talented certified and use multiple instructional strategies to reach our students.

One key strategy we use to differentiate instruction is the use of technology. Our teachers were recently trained on Renzulli, a web-based program that specializes in differentiated instruction for all levels of learners, including the gifted and talented. We use a computer-based program in reading and science called Study Island. This program, used in a computer lab individually by students, allows the teacher and learner to collaborate and target a student's particular area of weakness. Students are able to enter a specific learning objective in which they need extra practice, and within seconds, learning activities are created around those objectives. This allows each student to focus on specific areas to improve their achievement. Study Island is used in our classrooms and computer labs during the school day, and we open our computer labs after school to allow students even more practice.

In mathematics, we use two computer-based programs to differentiate instruction for all learners: Larson's Math and Nuefeld Math. These programs operate in much the same way for our math students as Study Island does for our reading and science students. Teachers and individual students collaborate and target specific objectives in which the student needs improvement. These objectives are then entered in the computer, and learning activities are instantly created. These programs, too, are used both in classrooms and computer labs during the school day, after school, and during Saturday tutorials.

Providing differentiated instruction has proven to be a vexing issue for educators. We believe that technology holds great promise, both within the classroom and computer labs, by providing our students with the targeted instruction they need.

5. Professional Development:

Professional development is a data-driven activity at Johnston Middle School, and it occurs in many forms. We use both quantitative and qualitative data in order to plan our learning for the year. The quantitative data sources are the previous year's TAKS and Stanford results as well as benchmark and common assessments. We drill down into the student achievement data, identify opportunities for growth, and then plan our professional development accordingly. For example, our data from last year showed that we need more of our students to achieve at the commended level. Therefore, the theme for professional development for the 2009-2010 school year is rigor and differentiation. All of our professional development activities for the year, including our August inservice and early dismissal activities on Wednesdays, have focused on rigor. We held a Rigor Summit this past summer and invited our parents and community to our school to collaborate on how rigor can be improved at Johnston Middle School.

A second source of data we use to plan professional development is qualitative data culled from faculty surveys. Each spring, the Professional Development Committee, a permanent committee attached to our SDMC, crafts a survey to be taken by all teachers. Questions are asked to ascertain what they feel their professional development needs are. The use of this data and quantitative data has enabled us to have a more targeted, effective professional development program.

One other source of professional development we routinely use is the dedicated and talented teachers we have at Johnston Middle School. Sprinkled throughout the professional development calendar are what we call Best Practice Seminars, in which teachers demonstrate specific ways in which they have implemented Robert J.

Marzano's best practices in the day-to-day instruction of their classrooms. These seminars have proven to be very effective and popular with the teachers.

6. School Leadership:

We believe in respectful relationships among students and staff, and we believe in a diffusion of leadership throughout the organization. Our leadership structure reflects these priorities and beliefs. In order to push students in a nurturing environment and build meaningful relationships with students and parents, Johnston Middle School has been divided into three smaller middle schools. Each small middle school contains approximately 450 students, its own principal, dean, secretary, and faculty. Each small middle school has a teacher who serves as House Coordinator who plans activities for the staff and students within his or her house.

Each house contains a teaching team at each grade level. Each of these teams has a team leader who coordinates parent conferences and plans activities to recognize student achievement on their particular team.

In keeping with our philosophy of building meaningful relationships with students and parents, we employ the deans system of student management. Instead of having three assistant principals and three counselors take care of the discipline issues and counseling services for a large number of students respectively, we employ six Deans of Students to look after the entire needs of a much smaller number of students. It is a "one-stop-shop" for parents and students. Students and parents remain with one dean throughout their three years at Johnston Middle School.

With this diffusion of leadership in place, the principal of Johnston Middle School is then freed to be a learning leader, constantly seeking out and finding sources of excellent learning and teaching throughout the organization. Additionally, this structure allows the principal to keep his or her gaze strategically focused on the overarching mission of Johnston Middle School: pushing all students, no matter what their race, ethnicity, religion or income level, to high levels of learning in a nurturing environment.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year: 2005 - 2009

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	83	82	73	75	68
Commended	32	36	25	17	21
Number of students tested	435	447	431	0	0
Percent of total students tested	0	0	0	0	0
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					
Met Standard	81	75	65	70	62
Commended	26	28	17	14	14
Number of students tested	264	276	248	279	308
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	85	83	75	74	68
Commended	29	28	24	15	18
Number of students tested	150	188	172	170	189
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard	78	75	64	66	57
Commended	27	28	17	12	12
Number of students tested	219	183	180	188	200
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	0	0	43	0	0
Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	23	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Met Standard	67	43	36	0	0
Commended	16	16	4	0	0
Number of students tested	69	51	25	0	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Met Standard	83	82	73	75	68
Commended	50	62	45	33	49
Number of students tested	64	77	74	70	79

Notes: Participation rates by grade level unavailable. School-wide math participation rates available: 2005 – 99% All Students, 2006 – 99% All Students, 2007 – 99% All Students, 2008 – 99% All Students, and 2009 – 99% All Students. Zeros in cells means either the data could not be found after an exhaustive search, or the data was unavailable.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2005 - 2009

Grade: 6
Publisher: Texas Education Agency

Test: Reading

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	94	94	91	89	86
Commended	48	54	52	39	37
Number of students tested	434	445	432	0	0
Percent of total students tested	0	0	0	0	0
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					
Met Standard	91	91	87	85	81
Commended	39	44	40	31	26
Number of students tested	264	275	246	278	311
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	96	96	93	92	91
Commended	53	53	57	42	36
Number of students tested	150	189	172	172	192
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard	90	89	87	81	78
Commended	37	43	38	24	24
Number of students tested	219	183	180	187	201
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	65	67	71	0	0
Commended	22	27	13	0	0
Number of students tested	23	15	24	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Met Standard	76	62	60	0	0
Commended	18	8	4	0	0
Number of students tested	68	50	25	0	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Met Standard	100	100	97	99	99
Commended	77	80	75	70	73
Number of students tested	64	75	75	70	79

Notes: Participation rates by grade level unavailable. School-wide math participation rates available:
2005 – 99% All Students, 2006 – 99% All Students, 2007 – 99% All Students, 2008 – 99% All Students, and 2009 – 99% All Students. Zeros in cells means either the data could not be found after an exhaustive search, or the data was unavailable.

Subject: Mathematics
Edition/Publication Year: 2005 - 2009

Grade: 7 Test: Mathematics
Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	92	79	83	75	64
Commended	19	15	14	0	0
Number of students tested	408	412	389	0	0
Percent of total students tested	0	0	0	0	0
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					
Met Standard	89	88	87	81	81
Commended	12	10	9	7	3
Number of students tested	221	233	217	283	254
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	97	95	93	89	93
Commended	13	13	14	8	6
Number of students tested	169	160	147	168	168
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard	86	88	81	82	76
Commended	9	10	5	7	2
Number of students tested	162	185	175	196	175
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	0	0	62	0	0
Commended	0	0	15	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	13	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Met Standard	63	45	43	0	0
Commended	5	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	19	31	14	0	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Met Standard	99	93	97	90	84
Commended	51	28	28	26	18
Number of students tested	73	74	68	80	79

Notes: Participation rates by grade level unavailable. School-wide math participation rates available:
2005 – 99% All Students, 2006 – 99% All Students, 2007 – 99% All Students, 2008 – 99% All Students, and 2009 – 99% All Students. Zeros in cells means either the data could not be found after an exhaustive search, or the data was unavailable.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2005 - 2008

Grade: 7
Publisher: Texas Education Agency

Test: Reading

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	93	92	89	87	86
Commended	39	34	26	20	22
Number of students tested	407	416	395	0	0
Percent of total students tested	0	0	0	0	0
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					
Met Standard	89	88	87	81	81
Commended	35	23	19	12	14
Number of students tested	220	235	219	286	256
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	97	95	93	89	93
Commended	42	36	29	18	22
Number of students tested	171	160	150	168	169
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard	86	88	81	82	76
Commended	25	21	13	12	11
Number of students tested	163	187	174	200	177
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	60	61	68	0	0
Commended	10	4	16	0	0
Number of students tested	10	28	19	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Met Standard	45	56	27	0	0
Commended	5	6	0	0	0
Number of students tested	20	32	15	0	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Met Standard	100	99	92	99	91
Commended	51	28	28	26	18
Number of students tested	73	74	68	80	79

Notes: Participation rates by grade level unavailable. School-wide math participation rates available:
2005 – 99% All Students, 2006 – 99% All Students, 2007 – 99% All Students, 2008 – 99% All Students, and 2009 – 99% All Students. Zeros in cells means either the data could not be found after an exhaustive search, or the data was unavailable.

Subject: Mathematics
Edition/Publication Year: 2005 - 2009

Grade: 8 Test: Mathematics
Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	88	83	81	79	62
Commended	20	18	15	0	0
Number of students tested	387	356	388	0	0
Percent of total students tested	0	0	0	0	0
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					
Met Standard	86	77	77	76	55
Commended	15	13	8	11	8
Number of students tested	198	176	228	232	199
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	90	83	88	84	61
Commended	14	13	13	11	6
Number of students tested	147	148	147	151	155
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard	82	77	73	68	50
Commended	15	11	8	10	7
Number of students tested	175	147	180	149	121
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	0	0	50	0	0
Commended	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	14	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Met Standard	65	56	19	0	0
Commended	6	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	17	16	16	0	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Met Standard	97	95	88	88	81
Commended	42	37	34	25	19
Number of students tested	71	63	67	76	64

Notes: Participation rates by grade level unavailable. School-wide math participation rates available:
2005 – 99% All Students, 2006 – 99% All Students, 2007 – 99% All Students, 2008 – 99% All Students, and 2009 – 99% All Students. Zeros in cells means either the data could not be found after an exhaustive search, or the data was unavailable.

Subject: Reading
Edition/Publication Year: 2005 - 2009

Grade: 8
Publisher: Texas Education Agency

Test: Reading

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	96	96	94	92	91
Commended	62	66	51	0	0
Number of students tested	390	361	394	0	0
Percent of total students tested	0	0	0	0	0
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					
Met Standard	94	94	92	90	86
Commended	49	53	41	39	35
Number of students tested	200	176	233	238	207
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	98	98	98	95	96
Commended	64	67	53	47	38
Number of students tested	149	147	148	152	156
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard	93	92	91	86	79
Commended	45	54	38	33	34
Number of students tested	176	147	182	154	125
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	0	33	78	0	0
Commended	0	11	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	9	18	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Met Standard	71	60	24	0	0
Commended	12	20	0	0	0
Number of students tested	17	15	17	0	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Met Standard	99	98	97	95	98
Commended	83	81	71	66	62
Number of students tested	72	63	69	77	66

Notes: Participation rates by grade level unavailable. School-wide math participation rates available:
2005 – 99% All Students, 2006 – 99% All Students, 2007 – 99% All Students, 2008 – 99% All Students, and 2009 – 99% All Students. Zeros in cells means either the data could not be found after an exhaustive search, or the data was unavailable.