

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

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

Name of Principal: Mrs. Pam Kruse

Official School Name: Mason High School

School Mailing Address:  
1105 W College St.  
Mason, TX 76856-1105

County: Mason    State School Code Number\*: 157901001

Telephone: (325) 347-1122    Fax: (325) 347-8045

Web site/URL: http://www.masonisd.net/mhs/site/default.asp    E-mail: pam.kruse@masonisd.net

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*: Mrs. Pam Kruse

District Name: Mason ISD    Tel: (325) 347-1144

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. Jeff Owen

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

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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)
- |          |                                   |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1        | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| 1        | Middle/Junior high schools        |
| 1        | High schools                      |
| 0        | K-12 schools                      |
| <b>3</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>                      |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 12075

**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. 1 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			0
K			0	7			0
1			0	8			0
2			0	9	21	21	42
3			0	10	29	19	48
4			0	11	25	20	45
5			0	12	28	21	49
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							184

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
0 % Asian  
0 % Black or African American  
39 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
58 % 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: 6 %

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.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	7
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	11
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	184
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.060
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	5.978

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 7 %

Total number limited English proficient 12

Number of languages represented: 1

Specify languages:

Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 58 %

Total number students who qualify: 107

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: 16 %

Total Number of Students Served: 30

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>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>6</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</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>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>14</u>	<u>9</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>26</u>	<u>15</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 9 :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	97%	98%	97%	97%	98%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	97%	97%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	9%	16%	18%	11%	17%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

Mason is a very small school district and many of our faculty members serve double duty working both on the high school and elementary or junior high campuses. Our seemingly high turnover rate is actually only six to seven people who, in each of the school years reported here, either retired, moved because of a spouse's job relocation, moved to a full time position on the elementary or junior high campus or took promotional positions with other districts.

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	44	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>61</u>	%
Enrolled in a community college	<u>20</u>	%
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>7</u>	%
Found employment	<u>9</u>	%
Military service	<u>2</u>	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>1</u>	%
Unknown	<u>0</u>	%
<b>Total</b>	<u><b>100</b></u>	<b>%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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*Expecting Excellence* is the motto at Mason High School and this credo is evident in everything from daily classroom instruction to our performances in state competitions in academic and athletic events. At Mason High School we have placed student relationships and character education at the forefront of our program objectives. In doing so, we have reached unparalleled success in academics, individual student growth and the extracurricular arena. From an increase in passing rates and an improvement in student conduct to an increase in student scholarships received, our students prosper because we place their welfare, growth, and development at the center of everything we do.

Located in the Texas hill country, Mason is a rural town of 2500 residents, over 100 miles from the nearest metropolitan area where farming and ranching are the area's only industries. Indeed, Mason Independent School District (ISD) is by far the largest employer in the area, with 134 employees serving 681 students. A strong sense of community is one of our greatest assets. Six years ago taxpayers voted for a bond issue to finance buildings that were previously built and were consuming approximately 11% our operating budget. These resources helped jumpstart our school improvement process. We repay the support of our townspeople by sharing our facilities with churches and community groups. We are proud of our town and our town is proud of its young people and our school. The Mason ISD Education Foundation, an entity made up of community members and supported entirely through the local fundraisers, has given over \$100,000 in grants to Mason ISD teachers in the last five years.

Implementing a total systemic improvement model, we brought our teachers to the table and made them instructional leaders in each of the core areas. We restructured our curriculum to focus on meaningful benchmarks and a scope and sequence that follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which will adjust to the needs of our students for years to come. In addition, we focused on early intervention strategies with the addition of a reading specialist. Changes were made in the leadership of our special education department when we broke ties with a neighboring education cooperative and hired a half-time director to serve only Mason ISD. We now have one of the lowest special education percentages in our education service center area, Region XV. Our Special Education student percentage dropped from 20% to its current 11% level, while our low socio-economic numbers remained steady at over 50%. Our TAKS overall passing percentage has soared from a low of 81% to 96% this past year. Mason High School has the top Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores in Region XV, and is part of an overall district progression that has led to unmatched success. Mason ISD is the only Title I open enrollment "Exemplary" School District in Texas that has subgroups in Hispanic and Economically-Disadvantaged Students. We truly believe that we are the best!

One of MHS's greatest school improvement resources became available when the Comprehensive School Reform Grant was awarded for three years beginning in 2004. Over \$450,000 was made available to improve student performance through professional development and technology. We purchased laptop carts and Promethean Activboards, allowing every teacher access to the latest instructional technologies.

Mason High School students are as competitive on the extra-curricular playing field as they are in the classroom. Our students competed in 12 district athletic competitions last year, and we won nine of those. In addition, Mason High School was the district champion in the 2009 University Interscholastic League District Academic Contest. Because we know that student involvement is one of the keys to our success, we are proud of the fact that almost half of our students are members of the award winning Mason Punter Marching and Concert Bands. The participation numbers at MHS are remarkable, with 92 out of 101 males in athletics, and 69% of females involved in at least one sport. Our students also reap great financial rewards as evidenced by the 44 students in the class of 2009 who were awarded over \$750,000 dollars in scholarships.

This year we have experienced transition within our administration. Our principal of five years was hired as the superintendent in another district, so our junior high principal took over as high school principal. This proved to be a seamless transition, especially since we credit our excellent junior high school as a large part of

our success here at the high school level. But the changes didn't stop there. In December, our superintendent took a position outside the district, so our high school principal became the interim superintendent and was later named superintendent. It has been a period of adjustment with a steep learning curve attached, and our team has stepped up to the plate to exhibit flexibility coupled with a spirit of cooperation. Our new superintendent's longevity with our district, (23 years) makes her the perfect candidate to lead us as we build on the positive things that have been taking place here at Mason ISD.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

A large portion of the successful story line at MHS can be found in our multiple year data trends found on the Texas Education Agency's website at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/cgi/sas/broker>. A simple five year trend does not paint the picture of school improvement as does a careful review of the test scores dating back to 2003. Since the school improvement process began in the spring of that year, passing percentages across all tests and all subjects have improved from 48% passing to 91% passing in 2009. In the economically disadvantaged and Hispanic subgroups of students, passing percentages have almost tripled. In 2003, only 31% of economically disadvantaged passed all tests compared to 89% this past spring and Hispanic passing rates went from 31% to 87%. Specifically in the area of English Language Arts, scores improved from 66% to 100% among eco-disadvantaged students and Hispanic percentages went from 69% to 100%, while all students' passing percentages rose 17%. In the area of math, all students' passing percentages rose from 59% to 96%, while Hispanic percentages doubled from 45% to 92% and the eco-disadvantaged students went from 47% to 95%.

Meeting the minimum standard is a very small part of the MHS success story. Our commended performance trends are equally impressive. In 2003, Mason High School's percentage of students reaching commended performance in math was 14 compared to 41 percent in 2008. The commended performance percentages in English Language Arts also rose dramatically with only 12% hitting the mark in 2003 compared to 61% in 2008.

Our data trends are not simply described by highlighting the passing rates found on the state assessments. Our story is better told through comparisons to regional and state cohorts. Our core subject results were compared to other schools in our region and ranked accordingly. Among the forty-three high schools that comprise the Region XV Education Service Center, MHS went from 22nd in Reading & English Language Arts, 31st in Math and 23rd in Social Studies in 2003 to 1st in all three areas in 2009. We are 5th in Science, so we obviously still have work to do!

MHS was named a *Texas Monthly* High Performing Campus in 2007 and 2008 based on the performance of low-income students, students' college readiness as judged by the National Center for Educational Achievement (NCEA) benchmark and whether they met federal Adequate Yearly Progress requirements in reading and mathematics. Also, for the past three years, MHS was named *US News and World Report* Bronze Medal Winner in that magazine's annual *America's Best High Schools* issue. Additionally, we were named to the Texas Business and Education Coalition's Honor Roll in 2006, 2007 and 2008. And in 2009, the NCEA named MHS a High Performing Campus as part of its Just4theKids Campaign for the third year in a row. This award is based on a higher college and career readiness (CCR) standard in math and reading. MHS received ten Gold Performance Acknowledgements in 2008, and our principal was named Principal of the Year by the Region XV Education Service Center.

### 2. Using Assessment Results:

The curriculum at Mason High School is closely linked to assessment data. Our teachers assess students on a district wide benchmarking program and the results are reported using the AEIS-IT software program, which also reports results from the students' state assessments. Teachers have access to the results broken down by each objective and student expectation on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The teachers use this information to determine which students have mastered the information and which strategies are working. The teachers gear their instruction to the benchmarking results, and lesson plans reflect the

adjustments that need to be made within the instruction framework to adapt to individual students' needs. Our data is used to guide the instructional process.

Remediation, however, remains a critical piece of our instructional puzzle. Students who fail any part of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test are placed in a TAKS tutorial class for one period every day with a teacher who is highly qualified in the core area that student has yet to pass. The teacher works with these students using a variety of teaching strategies including computer based software programs. The extra time devoted to building these skills has made a world of difference for our students. In fact, we have never had a student who was not able to pass the state assessment.

One of the goals we have set for ourselves involves using the results from the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT tests more effectively in order to better prepare our students for college readiness tests. To this end, the principal and teachers from the high school and junior high will attend the ACT College Readiness Conference this year in an effort to begin aligning our curriculum to better address the college readiness standards tested on the ACT test in the areas of reading, writing, math and science, with the goal of reaching advanced implementation by the 2011-2012 school year.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

Communication between the school and the parents and the community continues to be a high priority for the teachers and administrators at Mason High School. Parents receive three week notices and report cards for each six week grading period in addition to a copy of the annual Texas Education Agency school report card. Grades are updated continuously and parents have real time access to those grades through an on-line parent portal. In addition, teachers, the counselor and administrators regularly correspond with parents via phone calls, e-mails and face to face meetings. MHS also sends a copy of each student's individual results from the state assessment.

Also, we communicate our successes through the Mason County News, a weekly paper, which provides coverage of school events, schedules, awards and assessment results. It is unheard of to open the paper and not see stories and pictures of MHS students! Our coaches write weekly reports sharing the results of our athletic and academic teams involved in competitions, the counselor and principal submit timely articles and the superintendent writes a regular column called "Class Notes."

We also use our website to communicate information including student activities schedules, athletic schedules and results, student handbooks and policies, announcements, scholarships, testing, college application and financial aid information, employment opportunities and special programs and opportunities. The superintendent and the counselor maintain e-mail groups, which they use to disseminate important and timely information. In addition, the superintendent, coaches and other faculty members make appearances at the meetings of community groups like the Lion's Club and women's clubs to give talks and share information.

### **4. Sharing Success:**

The faculty and administration of Mason High School has long had a reputation for sharing best practices. After our students' initial successes on the new Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills (TAKS) tests, our English teachers were asked to meet with teachers from a neighboring district to share their teaching strategies and materials they had developed. In 2008, Mason ISD chaired a regional math and science collaboration initiative where seven neighboring schools were invited to create a Professional Learning Community that would expand our system to neighboring schools. Six of the seven schools agreed to participate. Currently, the heads of the math and science departments at MHS are contracting with Rochelle ISD to address deficiencies and provide additional support and resources for delivering quality instruction. They have trained their teachers on how to use the AEIS-IT program to access student test results, and use that data to pinpoint

weaknesses and tailor the instruction to address those weaknesses. In October administrators from Burnet High School traveled to Mason, meeting with the principal and the counselor to find out more about how we structure our Optional Flexible Year Plan (OFYP). In 2008, our principal and superintendent visited Brady ISD to speak to their District Education Improvement Committee (DEIC) about OFYP.

Last year, school administrators and teachers from Lakeview High School spent an entire day visiting MHS to discuss discipline procedures, curriculum and instructional resources. Additionally, the principal of Eden High School, which was rated unacceptable by the Texas Education Agency, was assigned to work with the principal at MHS on concrete ways to improve the curriculum, instruction and assessment programs at Eden. Eden High School was rated Academically Acceptable this past school year.

We have also shared our experiences utilizing our Promethean Activboards, including teacher made lesson plans and curriculum, with other schools in our education service center region, and our technology director is the facilitator of this professional development outreach program. The counselor participates in a Counselor's Networking Group with other 1A and 2A schools from Region XV to discuss changes in legislation regarding graduation requirements and other topics of interest to guidance counselors. The professional relationships made within in this group are tight knit, and the members regularly call on each other for advice and information.

In December of 2008, MHS presented Rachel's Challenge, a program promoting tolerance and acceptance, which brought together not only the students in junior high and high school, but also the entire community of Mason. School personnel from Cherokee ISD and Llano ISD visited during this day-long event. We are honored to share what works for us, and we feel an obligation to be of service to educators interested in helping students.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

Mason High School's course offerings surpass the state requirements for graduation, and extend to upper level, advanced and AP courses such as Pre-calculus, Calculus, Physics and Anatomy and Physiology. Mason High School has an exceptional dual credit program in which more than 50 hours of dual credit classes are offered through a partnership with Central Texas College with 36 of these hours being offered face to face by teachers at MHS. By the 2010-2011 school year, we will have six of our own faculty members who hold master's degrees teaching dual credit classes. Of the students in the class of 2009, 38.6% graduated with at least 30 hours of dual credit classes. This year, Mason students will earn 677 hours of college credit.

We are very proud of our record of student achievement, and we push our students to challenge themselves through academics. The class of 2009 boasted 20 students who graduated under the Distinguished Achievement Plan, almost half the class. In November we were thrilled to be presented with the 2009 College Readiness Award from ACT which recognizes schools which are able to achieve a significant composite score increase while also increasing the total number of students taking the ACT.

In addition to Algebra I, an additional math lab is offered as a block class for freshmen with weaker math skills/greater level of need. Tutorials are offered by all highly qualified math teachers for 60 minutes each class day. A variety of technology is used in classroom instruction, including Activboards, document cameras, student laptops, individualized instruction software, and graphing calculators, which are provided by the district free of charge for each student.

The social studies department sets goals for the state assessment annually: 100% passing and 60% commended performance. This year, we met the passing goal and missed the commended goal by 1%. In 2006, only 27% of tenth graders achieved Commended Performance, and in 2009, 54.5% of students reached this designation. Instruction is delivered through lectures, and students take notes with the aid of power point slide shows and smart board technology. Teachers scaffold the curriculum, always building on prior knowledge, and assign work that allows students to engage in critical thinking exercises with the emphasis on expanding the world view.

The science department at Mason High School focuses on a student centered instructional model to deliver instruction where the student is the creator of knowledge and the teacher is the facilitator. This method of delivery allows the content to be adapted to visual, kinesthetic, and auditory learners by creating a learning community that promotes comprehension. The students utilize a variety of scientific tools, technology, computer software and manipulatives in the laboratory to develop higher-order thinking skills and scientific problem solving ability in order to be successful both inside and outside of school. In this manner, the students actively construct meaning in their learning and develop skills and values that prepare them for college level work.

Foreign language instruction in Spanish is primarily learner-centered, empowering students to have an active, influential voice into a second culture through developing effective reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Our goal is one of life-long language acquisition with an emphasis on the possibilities of studying abroad and obtaining fluency for professional development. Students learn the power of unity tied to soccer, as they engage in games conducted in Spanish and the importance of music and dance within cultures as they learn to dance social tango and salsa. The department dialogues with university professors to align the material offered at Mason High School with comparable courses at the university level.

The visual arts of Mason High School focus on three areas: personal self expression, an exploration of media and technique, and an appreciation of art history and world cultures. Projects center on a theme exploring art, architecture, and religion of cultures. Students tour the San Antonio Museum of Art and complete an assignment that relates to that year's theme. The art department at Mason ISD introduced the VASE (Visual Art Scholastic Event) competition sponsored by the Texas Art Education Association to Region XV. Last year two students qualified for the state competition with one recognized as a state finalist. Extensive dual credit studio projects explore a variety of materials and techniques, and a student created course notebook examines design theories found in advertising and art history.

Students may also choose to satisfy the fine arts requirement with music, and many of our students take band all four years of high school. Although we don't offer a theater class, we do participate in One Act Play through the UIL academic contests. Our plays have competed in area and regional contests and our students routinely win Best Actor and Best Actress and are named to the All-Star Cast and Best Crew.

### **2b. (Secondary Schools) English:**

(This question is for secondary schools only)

English courses at MHS expose students to a wide and rich array of print that reaches beyond the literature book. We teach classic literary selections and culturally relevant contemporary literature through a plethora of genres. In addition, we provide laptops and smart boards to access the Internet. All of our courses focus on the elements of literature, the qualities of written expression through a variety of modes, and the strenuous development of vocabulary. The ELA department emphasizes real world writing and offers a technical writing course.

The English department targets students at their individual levels and works to assist students reading below grade level. Utilizing small class size, instructors are able to deliver lessons more effectively. Teachers assist students with assignments in reading and writing by offering differentiated text, recorded text, oral readings, and modified assessments. Also, students employ the use of mechanical devices which aid with spelling and vocabulary skills. Constantly implementing various research based stratagems such as graphic organizers and visual aids, teachers are able to teach the social vocabulary required to further bolster the understanding of academic vocabulary. MHS effectively uses the school days allowed by the Optional Flexible Year Plan (OFYP) to assist struggling students. Teachers from cross-curricular areas assist the English teachers with students in small settings to generate results that only focused instruction can produce. Furthermore, these students are served by the ACE program after school. Instructors in this program assist students with reading and study skills, fostering confidence and success.

MHS offers Pre-AP at the freshmen and sophomore levels, AP at the junior level, and dual credit English at the senior level. We stimulate interest in reading at the junior AP level through a community reading program. These students participate in an adult/student book club. This interaction has become a worthwhile experience for both the students and adults.

We encourage our students to be outstanding citizens. All of our students, regardless of their learning level, financial status, or cultural status, are treated with the utmost respect by faculty and staff. Our students believe in themselves, and with that self-confidence, they are able to face the world.

### **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Students are required to take four years of Math. Many take two math courses (Algebra II and Geometry) during their sophomore year, allowing for five math credits to be earned. Courses offered include Algebra I and II, Geometry, Pre-calculus, Mathematical Models with Applications, Dual Credit College Algebra, Dual Credit Statistics, and a College Board Certified Advanced Placement Calculus course. MySatori is a web-based program that we use to help students succeed on the TAKS test. Lessons and immediate feedback

make this an excellent tutorial tool to build students' skills before the test. Detailed reporting means that we can keep close tabs on how students are progressing and diagnose areas where students need additional help. The MySatori program also includes resources such as formula charts, an on-screen ruler, and an on-screen calculator.

Computers are amazing educational tools, but they can also be a huge distraction to learning. The Internet, instant messaging, social networking sites, e-mail and games are a constant temptation for students. LanSchool removes these distractions so teachers can teach more effectively. The program allows the teacher to see all student screens at the same time and monitor their activity. LanSchool also enhances learning in a computer lab by replicating the teacher's monitor to all computer monitors as well as allow a teacher to control a student's computer.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

The English as a Second Language (ESL) program is incorporating the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) into every level and area of instruction for all English Language Learners (ELL). All teachers of ELLs are ESL certified along and attend additional training workshops during the academic year. State adopted ESL curriculum is used for English language acquisition. Teaching strategies employed include everything from speaking slowly and repeating, expanding, and rephrasing to improve comprehension to employing linguistically accommodated instruction at each student's developmental level to assure concept comprehension and acquisition of language. Additionally, teachers concentrate on academic vocabulary to assure academic language development and allow for extended processing time. Teachers use visuals, graphic organizers, handouts, and mapping devices for understanding and retention and they translate all posted classroom material. Modifications may include shortened assignment and answer choices, word banks, oral administration, and bilingual help for beginner and intermediate learners and adapted grade level text.

Instruction is differentiated to meet the individual needs of students. Mason High School educators are all highly qualified in their respective teaching fields. Special education students attend general education classes with inclusion support from special education certified teachers. Resource special education classes are also provided when it is more appropriate. Inclusion special education teachers participate in delivery of instruction in the general education classroom and assist teachers by modifying or supplementing the curriculum. Assistive technology is fully utilized to meet diverse student needs. Students and educators employ calculators, laptop stations, Promethean Activboards, magnified desk lamps, CCTVs, and Franklin spellers to meet the visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles of individuals. Special education teachers assist general educators in selecting and creating appropriate supplemental aids for individual students. Supplemental aids provide a visual for students with cognitive efficiency and processing deficits, as well as, long-term retrieval deficits. These include diagrams, charts, and lists of steps and procedures to problem solve and recall information. Students with processing deficits benefit from the use of blank graphic organizers as well. General education and special education teachers work collaboratively to design, deliver, and support instruction to effectively meet diverse individual needs.

#### **5. Professional Development:**

During the spring semester of 2004, Mason ISD began a focused, comprehensive and innovative professional development progression to address some serious deficiencies that were identified throughout the district but primarily at Mason High School. Meetings were held with all four core areas independently as well as K-4 teachers. Those departments elected representatives that would help guide the process of school improvement for the coming years. During the same year the district received the Comprehensive School Reform Grant from the Department of Education. Resources were allocated in the grant to provide stipends for these individuals as well as an opportunity for the district to afford high quality professional development. The campus adopted a continuous improvement model known as the Baldrige Model of Continuous School

Improvement. A Professional Learning Community was being structured at Mason High School; however, the heavy lifting was still to come.

The first step was to provide all teachers the basic structure in which the state's curriculum was written. In correlation with the University of Texas' College of Curriculum and Instruction department, the Dana Center spent a day with all faculty members to provide background information, history and structure relating the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The following summer department chairs from the Birdville Independent School District in Fort Worth worked with each of the five identified core areas to disaggregate data and develop a preliminary needs assessment that was correlated to areas of the state curriculum that were neglected or not evident in the teacher's current lesson plans. In 2004-05 district benchmarks were agreed upon with the Webccat assessment bank being identified as the provider for the assessment pilot. The assessment bank provided through Webccat was structured in a way where teachers were required to learn the expectations of the state curriculum in order to provide assessments that would match their lessons. The following spring, our standardized test scores shot through the roof as MHS became the first "Recognized" high school in the Region.

## **6. School Leadership:**

School leadership at Mason High School is based on a collaborative philosophy with the principal as the primary instructional leader ensuring teachers are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary for student success. An instructional data driven approach has been incorporated using Robert Marzano's research in identified best practices for student achievement. Marzano's nine strategies are present in all walkthrough forms; and although they are not used to grade individual teacher competencies, they do provide a snapshot of current instructional methods so we can target professional development. This practice, coupled with systemic scope and sequence adjustments, helps move Mason High School in a positive direction, always with an instructional focus at its core.

As stated earlier in this application, student relationships are at the foundation of our success. These relationships are fostered both inside and outside the classroom. Our students believe in themselves and their school. Three specific programs are used to help make students partners in the process. First, weekly Monday morning assemblies highlight student and school accomplishments. Student recognition in front of their peers is a powerful motivator and has allowed the accomplishments of the group as a whole to envelop the climate and culture of the school. For the second year in a row, we are utilizing the Optional Flexible Year Program (OFYP) to focus on those students who require extra time and effort to achieve academically. This is a district-wide program, and at the high school, we have had excellent results. During OFYP days, we also provide high achieving students with instruction on college entrance exams using computer software and tutoring for the SAT and ACT tests. We employ periodic extended lunches for a job well done, and this has helped make students feel valued and respected by the faculty and administration. Students are partners in the school's success rather than simply recipients of the product. Successful participation in our school's extra-curricular offerings also complements and in some cases defines our strong student to staff relationships, as does the fact that our faculty and staff members genuinely care about the students and make concerted efforts to support, acknowledge and value them as human beings.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 10 Test: Grade 10 Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Texas Education Agency/Pearson

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	95	83	95	80	87
Commended Performance	37	31	33	11	26
Number of students tested	41	36	39	35	39
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	89	80	94	75	74
Commended Performance	17	35	25	0	0
Number of students tested	18	20	16	20	19
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	100	81	100	50	78
Commended Performance	20	25	50	0	0
Number of students tested	10	16	8	10	9
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	94	85	94	92	84
Commended Performance	42	35	29	16	31
Number of students tested	31	20	31	25	32

Notes:

The largest subgroup not listed in #1-5 is White.

Subject: Reading Grade: 10 Test: Grade 10 English Language Arts  
Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009 Publisher: Texas Education Agency/Pearson

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	100	100	100	97	100
Commended Performance	32	54	34	17	25
Number of students tested	41	37	38	35	40
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	98
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	100	100	100	95	100
Commended Performance	21	57	25	10	12
Number of students tested	19	21	16	20	17
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	100	100		91	
Commended Performance	40	44		18	
Number of students tested	10	16		11	
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	100	100	100	100	100
Commended Performance	29	62	33	17	31
Number of students tested	31	21	30	24	32

Notes:

The largest subgroup not listed in #1-5 is White.

Subject: Mathematics  
Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Grade: 11 Test: Exit Level Mathematics  
Publisher: Texas Education Agency/Pearson

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	92	98	90	95	98
Commended Performance	36	43	19	31	22
Number of students tested	36	40	31	42	45
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	90	93	94	89	94
Commended Performance	40	21	13	17	25
Number of students tested	20	14	16	18	17
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	90	93	94	90	100
Commended Performance	40	21	13	10	22
Number of students tested	20	14	16	10	18
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	95	100	91	97	96
Commended Performance	38	42	27	38	22
Number of students tested	21	31	22	32	27

Notes:

The largest subgroup not listed in #1-6 is White.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 11 Test: Exit Level English Language Arts

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009 Publisher: Texas Education Agency/Pearson

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	97	100	90	93	100
Commended Performance	37	48	29	34	33
Number of students tested	38	40	31	44	45
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	100	100	81	95	100
Commended Performance	33	40	19	26	24
Number of students tested	21	15	16	19	17
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	94		80	90	100
Commended Performance	31		10	10	28
Number of students tested	16		10	10	10
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	100	94	95	100	100
Commended Performance	37	41	38	52	41
Number of students tested	27	34	21	31	22

Notes:

The largest other subgroup not listed on #1-6 is White.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 9 Test: Grade 9 Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Texas Education Agency/Pearson

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	95	77	84	80	84
Commended Performance	47	41	35	11	16
Number of students tested	38	43	37	35	39
Percent of total students tested	100	92	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	95	70	82	85	76
Commended Performance	45	39	39	15	14
Number of students tested	22	23	23	13	21
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	85		87		60
Commended Performance	38		33		10
Number of students tested	13		15		10
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Met Standard Plus Commended Performance	100	84	82	100	93
Commended Performance	52	44	36	14	18
Number of students tested	25	32	22	28	28

Notes:

The largest other subgroup not listed in #1-5 is White.

Subject: Reading  
Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Grade: 9 Test: Grade 9 Reading  
Publisher: Texas Education Agency/Pearson

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Met Standard plus Commended Performance	93	95	94	100	96
Commended Performance	24	69	49	53	29
Number of students tested	42	42	35	36	46
Percent of total students tested	89	91	100	100	93
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Met Standard plus Commended Performance	100	100	95	100	90
Commended Performance	22	59	47	47	29
Number of students tested	23	22	21	13	21
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Met Standard plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Met Standard plus Commended Performance	100		93		82
Commended Performance	15		27		27
Number of students tested	13		15		11
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Met ARD Expectations					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Met Standard plus Commended Performance					
Commended Performance					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Met Standard plus Commended Performance	100	100	95	100	100
Commended Performance	31	69	65	57	33
Number of students tested	26	32	20	28	27

Notes:

The largest other subgroup not listed in #1-5 is White.