

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

11MN4

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 2010-2011 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 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
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

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 6 Elementary schools
 (per district designation) 2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
9 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 11059

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 17
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	44	38	82		7	0	0	0
1	51	42	93		8	0	0	0
2	45	43	88		9	0	0	0
3	57	43	100		10	0	0	0
4	54	46	100		11	0	0	0
5	49	39	88		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								551

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
7 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
90 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 2%

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, 2009 until the end of the school year.	5
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	5
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	10
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	550
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	2

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 1%
 Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 6
 Number of languages represented, not including English: 5
 Specify languages:

The five non-English languages spoken at Highlands include: Dutch, Korean, Malaysian, Somali and Spanish.

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3%
 Total number of students who qualify: 16

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-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

We believe this is an accurate estimate of the percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced-priced school meals.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 9%
 Total number of students served: 51

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>14</u> Autism	<u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>15</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>3</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>20</u>	<u>2</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>15</u>	<u>4</u>
Support staff	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>51</u>	<u>19</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: 26:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	91%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	97%	96%	96%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	6%	6%	6%	12%	6%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

Student attendance- We had a breakout of H1N1 during the fall of 2009-2010 school year resulting in many students being absent due to illness.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other	_____ %
Total	_____ 0%

PART III - SUMMARY

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Highlands Elementary school serves 551 students in kindergarten through grade five. Highlands Elementary school is one of nine schools included in Edina Public Schools. This suburb of Minneapolis serves its population through six elementary, two middle, and one high school.

The mission of Highlands is to educate children in a safe, cooperative, and innovative environment while building long-term, collaborative relationships with families.

Our focus and dedication to the school mission is critical to our success. The mission gives direction to our work and has had an impact on the design and structure of our school. Highlands is structured to ensure long term collaborative relationships with parents. The long term relationships with students provide us an improved ability to understand each student and more effectively personalize learning.

Most students at Highlands begin in our kindergarten program. After kindergarten, students at Highlands continue in one of the two programs offered at Highlands. Continuous Progress and the Discovery Program are two options available to students once exiting kindergarten. The Discovery Program offers single grade classes in a looping model [where] students [remain] with the same teacher and class through first and second grade. In third grade students are introduced to a different teacher and classmates and remain together through third and fourth grade. Students have a different teacher and classmates in fifth grade. The Continuous Progress Program is a district choice program. In the Continuous Progress Program students learn in multi-age classrooms and they have two teachers over the five year period. Both models support our mission of building long term relationships while still providing the valuable diversity of teaching styles and student populations.

Highlands encourages and offers many opportunities for parents to be involved. Parents can be involved in classrooms working directly with students, work on activities of the Highlands Parent Teacher Organization(PTO), and participate in the Highlands Site Council. Parents can help in the classroom by assisting the teacher and working with students. The Highlands PTO helps with enriching the school in many ways. The Highlands PTO helps us coordinate volunteers so we form productive partnerships that benefit our students. The research on parent involvement and achievement is well documented. The Highlands Site Council works to help us live out our mission. The Site Council is made up of parents and staff. The Highlands Site Council is currently focused on helping us enhance our learning environment.

In order to achieve our mission we have designed a learning environment that is based on education research. Our goal is an environment that is safe and nurturing and academically challenging for all students. We have combined a number of different programs, research and ideas to develop our practice. Research on learning and the brain is central to our educational program which includes elements of thematic instruction and inquiry. Students at Highlands have many opportunities to learn at nature centers and environmental camps. Nature centers and environmental camps offer students experiential learning that can not be provided in a classroom setting. Working with our PTO we have developed a number of outdoor classrooms at Highlands. The outdoor classrooms help us to teach the Minnesota science standards in a hands-on manner allowing children to experience the concepts and help develop deeper understanding.

Cooperative learning is well researched and is documented as an effective educational strategy. We have worked extensively with David and Roger Johnson from the University of Minnesota. The Johnsons use Highlands as a model school to demonstrate how cooperative learning should be implemented in a school. Cooperative learning helps students to learn to work together and to know that they are valued at Highlands. Cooperative learning is the foundation for the learning environment at Highlands.

At Highlands Elementary students study a rich curriculum which includes reading/language arts, math, science, social studies, Spanish, physical education, art and music. We use a variety of approaches to meet the individual needs of students. Differentiation in the classrooms is an important and continuous practice. We also have gifted education, special education and intervention programs to help meet the needs of students. We are continuously working to improve the learning environment at Highlands.

Highlands Elementary was named a Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education in 2005. It is an honor for the students, parents and staff to receive the nomination again in 2010.

1. Assessment Results:

Highlands Elementary School participates in Minnesota's state testing program. Minnesota follows the guidelines of the federal government and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment – Series II (MCA-II) is the primary assessment used in Minnesota. Students at Highlands take the MCA-II in grades three, four and five. There is a reading and math test in each grade and a science test in grade five. The school's state assessment results may be found at http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/Data_Downloads/Accountability_Data/Assessment_MCA_II/MCA_II_Excel_files/index.html.

There are four achievement levels for the MCA-II:

- Level 1 – Does Not Meet the Standards
- Level 2 – Partially Meets the Standards
- Level 3 – Meets the Standards
- Level 4 – Exceeds the Standards

We carefully examine the results of the MCA-II. All of the NCLB subgroups at Highlands have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) this year as they have in other years. We look for subgroups that are not doing as well as other subgroups. The following is a list of our subgroups and scores:

All Students – This group includes 285 students. The index rate in reading was 93.13 and the index rate in math was 93.49.

American Indian/Alaskan Native – We do not have any students in this group

Asian/Pacific Islander – This subgroup includes 21 students. The index rate in reading was 95.24 and index rate in math score was 97.62

Hispanic – This subgroup includes 9 students. The index rate in reading was 83.33 and the index rate in math was 77.78. This subgroup is lower than some of the other subgroups and we have interventions in place to help improve the learning of students in this group. These interventions are delivered by the classroom teacher, the instructional specialist and when appropriate by a special education teacher.

Black, not of Hispanic origin – We have two students in this group. The index rate for reading was 100% and the index rate for math was 100%.

White, not of Hispanic origin – This group includes 253 students. The index score in reading was 93.25 and the index score in math was 93.65.

Limited English Proficient – This group includes 3 students. The index rate for this group in reading was 62.5 and in math the index rate was 50. This is a very small number of students, but we are concerned and we need to improve the skills of students in this group. Our ESL teacher and classroom teachers are working together to determine and deliver interventions that will help develop skills the students need.

Special Education – This group includes 26 students. The index rate in math was 79.73 and the index rate in reading was 74.32. The special education subgroup has a substantial number of students and the scores of our special education students were lower than other groups. The scores of our special education students in reading and math were more than ten percentage points below our average. Because these scores are lower we are addressing this subgroup at the school level as part of our School Improvement Plan. As part of our School Improvement Plan our classroom teachers, special education teachers and our instructional specialist are working as a team to address this gap. We have identified strategies to help

students develop their skills and understanding. We have designed specific interventions based on IEP goals and strand information from the MCA-II and MAP tests. We are also addressing this gap by accessing training and materials from our district Special Services Department and Research and Evaluation Department.

Free/Reduced Price Lunch –This category has 10 students. The index rate for this group was 95 in reading and the index score in math was 85.

Each year when the results of the MCA-II results are released, we examine them to see what we can learn about our students and the subcategories defined by No Child Left Behind. It is important that all students in every group are learning and making progress. If we find this is not the case, we make a plan detailing how we will proceed.

2. Using Assessment Results:

At Highlands assessment data is an important tool for school improvement. We use assessment data on the classroom and school level.

In the classroom, we use formative assessments regularly to gauge the progress of students. We use a variety of classroom reading assessments to help us understand the reading skills and vocabulary development of our students. In math we also use assessments to measure student learning on math facts skills and concepts. Teachers use the information they gain from assessments to flexibly group students for instruction. We have been trained on how to interpret data. We have also had training on how to use specific interventions based on the needs of each student

On the school level, the Highlands staff development committee creates a School Improvement Plan each year. The Highlands Staff Development Committee meets to review recent data that we have collected on Highlands. Our data sources include summative assessments including the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and the Measure of Academic Progress assessment.

In addition, we review survey data from students, parents and staff. The survey data is collected each year. The data provides us with school satisfaction levels for each group. The information on the survey includes a variety of topics, but generally they fall into either satisfaction with student learning or school climate at Highlands Elementary.

We combine all of this data to get a picture of where we are as a school and to develop a School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement Plan consists of measurable objectives that become our goals for the school year. We address these goals using our staff development time and our Communities of Practice throughout the school year.

This process is a cycle that happens each year. We collect assessment data and survey information, analyze the information, create a plan, review our results by looking at the new data collected and continue the process. The School Improvement Plan includes overall goals and goals for specific groups of students. The result is that we can identify areas where students need more focus and the result is improved learning and school performance.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

At Highlands Elementary, we believe that communicating our school performance is important. One of the ways we communicate with parents is by using School View, which is an online tool that allows parents to access testing information for their child. The assessment information includes state tests such as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and district tests which include the Measure of Academic Progress and the Cognitive Ability Tests. The fall parent-teacher conferences provide an important opportunity to talk about the test results and how they can be used to personalize and guide instruction.

Edina Public Schools communicates information about school performance to the Edina community using the school district website and direct mailings to residents. The Sun-Current, a community newspaper, is another effective vehicle for sharing information with the community. In addition, the Minnesota

Department of Education website: <http://education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html> is available as an excellent source for finding and analyzing information about the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II.

Communicating assessment information to students is also important because it helps to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. We provide feedback to students in a variety of ways. First, teachers provide regular feedback to students on their learning and the quality of their work. Secondly, students receive feedback from their peers via cooperative learning groups and partner work. Third, we teach students how to give constructive feedback to other students. Finally, we actively teach students how to develop self assessment skills so that they grow in their ability to strive for improvement. One way we accomplish this is by providing students with rubrics that clearly outline expectations for the quality of their work. Last spring, 99% of our intermediate students said they were aware of what they needed to know to meet the standards.

To summarize, we believe it is important for us to help children learn how to be successful in school. Our philosophy is that challenge and feedback in the learning process are critical to student learning. Our job is to provide students with a challenging curriculum and to offer constructive feedback about how they are doing. A standards-based curriculum helps to provide this challenge. Active communication with parents, the community, and students regarding assessment information is vital to our mission.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

At Highlands Elementary, we believe that it is important for us to share our successes and expertise with others. We share with other schools in a variety of ways. We share our successes with people studying to become teachers and administrators. We also share our successes with teachers and parents and in other school districts around the state and the world.

We have a long and rich partnership with the University of Minnesota. We have worked with student teachers and practicum students for the past 20 years. The University of Minnesota has asked us to be a partner school in their Teacher Education Redesign Initiative (TERI). We accepted the invitation and we have been working with the U of M on this project for the last 6 months. The TERI project will change the way teachers are trained and will better prepare them to be ready to teach and meet the needs of students from their first day of teaching. In addition we have had several administrative interns do internships at Highlands as part of the work needed to be licensed as a principal in Minnesota.

Our teachers and administrators are active in training teachers. Every year we conduct cooperative learning training sessions for all new teachers in our school district. Highlands is known in Minnesota as a school that has expertise in multi-age learning and in the use of looping. Each year we have visits from teachers, administrators and parents from other schools who want to learn more about our educational programs. We accommodate these requests and we feel it is our obligation to give back to the educational community.

David and Roger Johnson are known internationally for their work on cooperative learning at the University of Minnesota. They use Highlands Elementary as a model school and they often conduct research on cooperative learning at Highlands Elementary. We have had many visitors from other countries visit to see the work we do with cooperative learning.

Highlands teachers also present at conferences. Last December two Highlands teachers presented at the TIES technology conference in Minneapolis. Sharing our successes and expertise with others is a hallmark of Highlands Elementary.

1. Curriculum:

At Highlands Elementary, students study a rich and rigorous curriculum which is based on the high standards set by the State of Minnesota and by the Edina Public Schools which are rigorous and based on the mission of the Edina Public Schools.

Language Arts: The language arts curriculum used at Highlands is comprehensive and standards based. The Houghton Mifflin Reading Anthology and Leveled Libraries provide the foundation of teacher and student materials to meet the learner outcomes identified in the curriculum. The curriculum includes direct instruction in reading skills and strategies both in whole class and flexible group format. Teachers use a variety of assessments to determine flexible group assignments. The groups are adjusted throughout the year. The 6-Traits of writing is used for instruction, assessment, and communication about writing.

Math: The Everyday Mathematics curriculum used at Highlands provides an enriched mathematics curriculum that empowers students to understand mathematical content far beyond arithmetic. We believe that it is crucial to begin laying the groundwork for mathematical literacy at an earlier age than offered in traditional programs. The scope of the K-6 Everyday Mathematics curriculum includes the following mathematical strands: Algebra and Uses of Variables; Data and Chance; Geometry and Spatial Sense; Measures and Measurement; Numeration and Order; Patterns, Functions, and Sequences; and Operations and Reference Frames.

Science: We use the Full Option Science System (FOSS) to help students at Highlands learn by doing science. Science is an active enterprise, made active by our human capacity to think. Using the FOSS program, students at Highlands observe objects and events, think about how they relate to what is known, test their ideas in logical ways, and generate explanations that integrate the new information into the established order. There is a focus on what we know, which is the content, and how we come to know it, which is the process. The best way for students to understand the scientific process, learn important scientific concepts and develop the ability to think well is to actively construct ideas through their own inquiries, investigations, and analyses.

Social Studies: The social studies program at Highlands is designed to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. The curriculum is a comprehensive program that correlates with the Edina and Minnesota Social Studies Standards, as well as the National Council of Social Studies Standards. Objectives for individual units spiral as students move from grade to grade and build on skills taught in earlier grades. Social Studies units integrate with other core subjects such as reading, science, or math to promote interdisciplinary instruction.

Art: The visual arts program at Highlands helps students develop the skills to understand, appreciate, and create visual arts through creative problem solving and experiences. Opportunities for students to be in plays are also part of our arts program.

Music: The music program at Highlands provides students with the opportunity to discover, learn, develop, and refine their knowledge and skills through comprehensive musical experiences so that students gain a greater understanding of music, the deeper meaning it communicates, and its lifelong value. At Highlands, we offer instruction in recorder, ukulele, as well as band and orchestra instruments.

Health: The goal of our health program is to empower each student to make healthy lifelong decisions that influence self, family, and community by creating opportunities to learn about current, global, community, and personal health issues in a positive and supportive environment.

Physical Education: The goal of the physical education program is to educate students in the importance of physical fitness and activity, the value of cooperation, and the benefits of life-long health by engaging them in physical activity.

Spanish: The Spanish program at Highlands is a standards based Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools (FLES) curriculum. The Edina Public Schools has modeled their world language programs on the beliefs of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. The goal of the Spanish program is to provide students with the linguistic and cultural tools necessary to develop and maintain proficiency in at least one language other than English, modern or classical, so that they communicate successfully in a pluralistic society, at home and abroad.

The Edina Public Schools establishes a curriculum based on standards developed by the Minnesota Department of Education for each of these areas of study. Teachers and administrators at Highlands Elementary determine the instructional delivery systems and strategies used to help students learn. At Highlands, we use a careful blend of instructional models including cooperative learning, thematic instruction, conceptual teaching, inquiry and direct instruction.

2. Reading/English:

The reading curriculum at Highlands is part of the language arts curriculum. The concepts and skills of this program are aligned with the Minnesota Academic Standards and with the curriculum of the Edina Public Schools. We see literacy as the fundamental academic asset and our goal is to develop literate, life-long learners who read, write, speak, listen, and view effectively by engaging them in rigorous, relevant curricula.

The Houghton Mifflin reading program is used throughout the Edina Public Schools. Houghton Mifflin was chosen after a committee studied best practices in reading instruction and visited other schools with successful reading programs. The Houghton Mifflin Reading Anthology and Leveled Libraries provide the foundation of teacher and student materials to meet the learner outcomes identified in the curriculum and Minnesota standards. Research has shown the importance of reading at the appropriate level to achieve maximum growth and the Leveled Libraries allow teachers to match students with reading materials at their level. The curriculum includes direct instruction in reading skills and strategies both in whole class and flexible group format. Teachers use a variety of assessments to determine flexible group assignments. The groups are adjusted throughout the year. This approach allows us to differentiate for students by using materials appropriate to their instructional level.

At Highlands, we work to use a variety of instructional strategies to help children learn. Our cooperative learning model allows students to work together to read and build reading skills. Because we teach thematically, the materials the students read are often related to science and social studies units they are studying. This allows students to apply their reading skills in a meaningful way. Since the reading is meaningful, comprehension is improved.

There are a number of different ways that we intervene with students if they need reading help. We have an instructional specialist at Highlands. The instructional specialist does reading interventions with students and meets with teachers to determine appropriate reading interventions that the classroom teacher can use. The Edina Public Schools offers a Success Centers program to help students struggling with reading. The program meets before school and is taught by licensed teachers.

3. Mathematics:

At Highlands Elementary, we use Everyday Mathematics, which was developed by the University of Chicago Mathematics Project. The goal of Everyday Mathematics is to provide a K-6 enriched mathematics curriculum that empowers students and teachers to understand mathematical content at deeper levels than traditional math programs. Everyday Mathematics begins laying the groundwork for mathematical literacy at an earlier age than traditional programs.

The concepts and skills in Everyday Mathematics are aligned with the Minnesota Academic Standards and with the curriculum of the Edina Public Schools. The goal of the math program in Edina Public Schools is to instill in each student the skills, reasoning and appreciation of mathematics as an integral part of our everyday life by providing a wide variety of opportunities that require creative problem solving, the use of mathematical tools and communication.

The Edina Public Schools has developed a series of assessments for computation skills that include benchmarks of what facts students should master in each grade. At Highlands we use a variety of math materials and manipulatives to supplement the Everyday Mathematics series. We have found Marcy Cook's Try-A-Tile to be very effective. In addition, we have identified a number of apps that students can use on an iPod Touch to help students learn at school and at home.

We offer a number of different interventions for students who need additional instruction in math. Our instructional specialist works with students on math and reading interventions. In addition to working with students, our instructional specialist meets with teachers to determine appropriate math interventions that the classroom teacher can use. The Edina Public Schools offer a before school program called Success Centers to help students struggling with math.

At Highlands we use a flexible grouping model to help us differentiate. We compact curriculum and use a variety of extensions for students who are learning at a faster pace. We use a variety of instructional strategies at Highlands to help children learn. Our cooperative learning model allows students to work together to develop mathematical skills and concepts. We teach thematically so math can often be used in the work students are doing in science and social studies. This allows students to apply their math skills in a meaningful way.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

21st Century Skills will play an important part in the lives of our students. We have all witnessed the rapid expansion of technology in recent years and the change is likely to accelerate. At Highlands, we are using technology in a variety of ways to help students learn 21st Century Skills they will need to be prepared for the world in which we live.

There are several key components to the learning framework of 21st Century student outcomes. The support system is made up of 21st Century Themes and Core Subjects, Life and Career Skills, Learning and Innovation Skills, and Information, Media and Technology Skills.

Information 21st Century Skills can be found on the website of *The Partnership for 21st Century Skills* at: <http://www.p21.org/>

At Highlands, we particularly nurture the development of Life and Career Skills. We teach the 18 Lifeskills described in the Integrated Thematic Instruction model. Restitution Self Discipline is used to help our students learn personal responsibility and reflect upon how to make positive decisions in a variety of life situations. Students experience cooperative learning on a daily basis, as well as training in conflict resolution.

Learning and Innovation Skills is an important part of the education we provide at Highlands. We have partnered with the Design School and the School of Architecture at the University of Minnesota so that our students can learn design skills and creative thinking strategies. Students have the opportunity to use these skills while participating in summer design camps. This year two teachers from Highlands presented information at the TIES conference, a technology conference in Minneapolis. The presentation was about how we use the iPod touch to enhance student learning and curriculum.

Media and Technology Skills are learned and practiced regularly at Highlands. We provide many opportunities for students to work on computers in classrooms, the computer lab and with our portable laptop labs. Our Media Specialist teaches students 21st Century Skills; including how to use particular

computer programs, the internet and internet safety. Students at Highlands are also encouraged to participate in a leadership block, which allows students to explore their strengths and develop their talents. We have several leadership block activities relating to computers and technology.

5. Instructional Methods:

At Highlands, we use a looping model and a multiage model allowing teachers to work with the same students for more than one year. This design has an impact on our instructional methods and enhances our ability to personalize learning for each student. We use a variety of different instructional methods at Highlands Elementary. Two of the most important are cooperative learning and conceptual teaching. We use these research based instructional methods because they maximize learning.

Cooperative learning helps us establish a learning environment where students work together and are involved. There is over 100 years of research on the effectiveness of cooperative learning. The research is clear that cooperative learning increases effort to achieve; psychological adjustment and social competence; and positive relationships. In addition, cooperative learning creates a structure for differentiation and personalized learning.

At Highlands Elementary, we have worked closely with David and Roger Johnson. The Johnsons are professors at the University of Minnesota and the cooperative learning model they have developed is used in many different countries. The Johnsons use Highlands Elementary as a model school to show people how their cooperative learning model should be implemented in an elementary school.

Another important instructional method is conceptual teaching. Conceptual teaching is an effective and well researched instructional model. We have found that the Integrated Thematic Instruction is a practical guide to using conceptual teaching. Integrated Thematic Instruction model is a comprehensive model for implementing brain research in the school setting. There has been a lot of research on learning and the brain and we need to apply this research in our schools. Once we understand how the brain is designed to take in and retain information, it is our job as educators to use this information to help students master and retain information and concepts.

At Highlands Elementary, we use these two programs because they are research based and we have witnessed their effectiveness with our students and their learning. Cooperative learning and conceptual teaching are both effective and the combination of the two has an even stronger impact on student learning. In addition, the design of our school allows teachers to work with the same students for more than one year. This structure impacts our instructional methods and enhances our ability to personalize learning for each student.

6. Professional Development:

Professional development is an important part of any successful school. Professional development at Highlands is a partnership with the Edina Public Schools. The Edina Public Schools has five professional development days a year. Some of the days are district professional development days and others are days that we can plan at Highlands.

The work we do at Highlands on the professional development days is directed by our mission and more specifically by our School Improvement Plan. A new School Improvement Plan is developed each year and then approved by the Edina Public Schools and the State of Minnesota.

The Edina Public Schools uses a Communities of Practice model that allows teachers to select an area to study that is related to our school improvement plan. The Edina Public Schools are part of the Q Comp program developed by the Minnesota Department of Education. This program is part of our professional development efforts. As part of the program, teachers set measurable student achievement goals and during the year they work with a coach who does classroom observations and monitors the student achievement goals.

At Highlands Elementary, we feel that professional development requires more time than the district provides. To meet these needs we meet as a staff every Thursday morning before school. We have a staff meeting about once a month at that time and the other sessions are for staff development. This year we have worked in teams and focused on reading, math and equity issues. We also have an annual staff retreat. This year at the staff retreat we had consultants who taught us about effective practices in reading instruction.

Teachers at Highlands often attend other professional development activities. This year 6 of our staff attended the TIES technology conference and two of our teachers presented. Several of our teachers set up a year long class on the use of science notebooks and inquiry and opened it up to all elementary teachers in our district. A number of teachers at Highlands are taking classes and workshops at universities.

Professional development is critical to an effective school. All of the professional development we do at Highlands has an impact on student achievement and on our spirit as a team.

7. School Leadership:

The mission of Highlands is to educate children in a safe, cooperative, and innovative environment while building long-term, collaborative relationships with families.

Living out this mission requires a shared leadership model. For Highlands to be strong, every member of our school community must be valued and encouraged to contribute. The result of this is a collaborative model in which there are many leaders amongst staff, students and parents.

Our collaborative leadership model works because of our intrinsic motivation and internal drive, two hallmarks of Highlands. Daniel Pink's book, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, describes this leadership model. Pink's book is fairly recent, but Highlands has used the ideas he describes for many years. We are internally motivated to become the people we want to be and to make Highlands the school it can be.

The principal, is one of the leaders at Highlands. He is visible and accessible. He works to know each of the 551 students at Highlands whom he greets by name as they arrive in the morning. He leads by building strong, trusting relationships with staff, students and parents, supporting them as needed, and encouraging them to use their individual strengths to contribute to Highlands.

At Highlands, students, staff and parents are encouraged to develop their strengths and to use them to benefit the school as a whole. There are numerous examples of programs that have been developed by staff, parents and students. Some include the development of outdoor learning areas (rain garden, produce garden, natural play areas), service learning initiatives, recycling and energy saving initiatives, the Highlands Day of Service, Design Camp, the use of iPod touches to help students learn and connect to the world, Theaters of Learning in which teachers lead a class to share their spark with students, weekly student-run news shows, teacher-led after-school programs like Math Olympiads, Chess Club, Sport Stacking and Lego League, and grant writing to support initiatives at Highlands.

We have many successes to celebrate at Highlands including a shared vision, trusting relationships, high student achievement, encouraging students to learn about and develop their personal passions, our effective interventions to service struggling students, our belief that we are all learners, supportive teams and our passion for equity work. Our success can be directly attributed to our leadership model and our work as a cohesive team.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: MCA

Edition/Publication Year: II

Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets or Exceeds	92	94	94	91	95
Exceeds	65	61	52	57	56
Number of students tested	95	90	91	92	95
Percent of total students tested	100	98	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	2	0	2	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets or Exceeds	64				82
Exceeds	46				18
Number of students tested	11				11
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian/Pacific Islander					
Meets or Exceeds	100				
Exceeds	73				
Number of students tested	11				
NOTES:					

11MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: MCA

Edition/Publication Year: II

Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets or Exceeds	88	96	93	92	94
Exceeds	67	77	80	73	77
Number of students tested	95	91	91	95	93
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets or Exceeds	54			45	64
Exceeds	27			18	54
Number of students tested	11			11	11
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian/Pacific Islander					
Meets or Exceeds	91				
Exceeds	73				
Number of students tested	11				
NOTES:					

11MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: MCA

Edition/Publication Year: II

Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets or Exceeds	92	93	92	91	86
Exceeds	56	41	54	51	44
Number of students tested	90	94	91	96	90
Percent of total students tested	98	99	98	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets or Exceeds		75	54	62	57
Exceeds		17	8	23	29
Number of students tested		12	13	13	14
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: MCA

Edition/Publication Year: II

Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets or Exceeds	91	87	90	94	91
Exceeds	67	57	60	70	69
Number of students tested	92	95	93	97	87
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets or Exceeds		58	54	71	69
Exceeds		25	38	50	46
Number of students tested		12	13	14	13
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: MCA

Edition/Publication Year: II

Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets or Exceeds	86	94	88	86	90
Exceeds	49	51	49	51	61
Number of students tested	97	90	94	90	82
Percent of total students tested	99	100	98	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	2	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	2	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets or Exceeds	50	38	67	70	54
Exceeds	0	31	42	30	38
Number of students tested	10	13	12	10	13
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: MCA

Edition/Publication Year: II

Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets or Exceeds	92	89	94	91	95
Exceeds	51	57	72	59	77
Number of students tested	98	90	95	91	82
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets or Exceeds	40	54	69	60	69
Exceeds	0	31	54	30	62
Number of students tested	10	13	13	10	13
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets or Exceeds	90	94	91	89	90
Exceeds	57	51	52	53	53
Number of students tested	282	274	276	278	267
Percent of total students tested	98	99	98	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	3	4	4	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	2	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets or Exceeds	80				
Exceeds	30				
Number of students tested	10				
2. African American Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets or Exceeds	62	66	68	59	63
Exceeds	27	28	29	41	30
Number of students tested	26	32	34	34	38
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian/Pacific Islander					
Meets or Exceeds	95	93	85	87	92
Exceeds	71	57	54	67	50
Number of students tested	21	14	12	15	12
NOTES:					

11MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets or Exceeds	90	91	92	92	93
Exceeds	62	64	71	67	74
Number of students tested	285	276	279	283	262
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets or Exceeds	90				
Exceeds	30				
Number of students tested	10				
2. African American Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets or Exceeds	67	59	63	63	66
Exceeds	19	34	44	34	57
Number of students tested	21	29	32	35	29
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets or Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian/Pacific Islander					
Meets or Exceeds	95	93	100	89	0
Exceeds	71	71	79	72	100
Number of students tested	21	14	14	18	11
NOTES:					

11MN4