

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

11NE4

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

11NE4

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 2 Elementary schools
 (per district designation) 1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
4 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 9301

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	31	23	54
3	0	0	0		10	37	35	72
4	0	0	0		11	36	37	73
5	0	0	0		12	26	31	57
Total in Applying School:								256

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 6 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
85 % White
7 % 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: 7%
 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.	3
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	19
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	22
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	295
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.07
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	7

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 0%
 Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 0
 Number of languages represented, not including English: 0
 Specify languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 46%
 Total number of students who qualify: 118

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.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 16%
 Total number of students served: 42

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>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>22</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>9</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>19</u>	<u>5</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>
Total number	<u>33</u>	<u>12</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: 11:1

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	94%	94%	94%	92%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	98%	97%	97%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	5%	9%	9%	0%
High school graduation rate	90%	90%	88%	94%	93%

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

The contributing factors of the student attendance rate under 95% are the socio-economic rate of the student population and the related lack of parental importance placed on school attendance. The Administrative Council has already discussed improving attendance rates as a district goal during our next AdvancED School Improvement cycle.

Daily teacher attendance in the four oldest years is an estimate based on the 2009-10 school year and the current year. A comparison of the amount spent on substitutes was made. Since this information has never been requested before and is not required to be kept by the Nebraska Department of Education, records have not been saved.

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:	<u>74</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>49%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>24%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>6%</u>
Found employment	<u>20%</u>
Military service	<u>1%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

The informal motto of Falls City High School is "It's Great to Be a Tiger." The staff and students are committed to learning, and each day the students are encouraged and challenged to do their best. The principal is proud to walk into the building each day and meet and greet the students and staff. Each day the staff helps students set goals and see the big picture, make their parents proud, and pave the way to a successful life. The students' future is the school's mission.

Falls City has a population of about 4,500 people. Falls City High School is classified by the Nebraska School Activities Association as C-1. The high school underwent a 6 million dollar renovation in 2001. The three-story building combines the wonderful architecture of an older building with the modern amenities of a new building. The campus has a beautiful row of oak trees that flank the building to the west and set it apart from many of the schools in the area. Falls City is located in the Missouri River valley in beautiful southeast Nebraska. The town is considered to be a rural community. District 56 covers most of Richardson County with a total school population of 856 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, served by nine bus routes on a daily basis. The high school currently serves 256 students in grades 9-12.

Falls City High School has had a proud academic and athletic tradition. It is impressive that this community has fought the problems faced by most rural communities in the state of Nebraska. The new hospital, library, and water park prove that the town is committed to making Falls City a great place to live and work.

Falls City Public Schools recently completed a successful AdvancEd visit. As a result, Falls City High School was accredited for their 100th year. Through the School Improvement process, the district developed new mission and vision statements. The new vision is "Falls City Public Schools is the educational gateway to our ever-changing world. By providing instructional experiences, we guide our students in pursuit of knowledge and enjoyment of life-long learning, ultimately enriching our entire community." The new mission is "Falls City Public Schools inspire our students to become innovative, resourceful, resilient, and responsible citizens." The School Improvement team spent countless hours and sought input from all the stakeholders in developing a vision and mission that would help guide the school and unite the students and staff.

Following the lead of the new mission, there has been a big push at Falls City High School to instill respect, responsibility, and resiliency into the student population. PBiS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support) was started here two years ago, and students benefit from the universal expectations and the positive learning environment that has been created in the building. R.O.A.R.S. is a mnemonic used to keep respect, on-time, achievement, responsibility and safety in the students' daily thoughts. As a result, the students are respectful of themselves, each other, the staff, and guests who visit our school. It is an expectation and something on which the students pride themselves.

The student population is comprised of a high percentage of students who face socio-economic challenges each day. It is truly rewarding to work with a staff who help and encourage students to want more for themselves and push these students to achieve. It is a goal that all of the students have a connection with someone in the building—someone who will help provide support and encouragement throughout each day. This rapport with staff and connection to our school, coupled with high expectations and encouragement, has resulted in our students scoring well on assessments and consistently meeting AYP.

Falls City High School is a special learning environment and has tremendous educational opportunities for the youth in the community. The district is committed to having a rigorous and focused curriculum, along with a caring and dedicated staff. Community involvement and support has been tremendous, which helps motivate the hard working and dedicated students. Without hesitation, "It is great to be a Falls City Tiger!"

1. Assessment Results:

Falls City High School is in the middle of a transitional period in which a major assessment change is being made. The state of Nebraska is switching from determining student achievement based on locally developed criterion referenced assessments to determining student achievement based on a state test. Prior to the 2009-10 school year, Nebraska followed a different direction in terms of assessment than any other state. While other states were focusing on student achievement results based on a single test, Nebraska school districts were given the freedom to develop assessments based on individual classroom curriculum aligned to the state standards. These locally developed assessments, called STARS, were originally given throughout the year in reading, math, and science. At the end of the 2009-10 school year, Falls City High School juniors (the grade tested in Nebraska high schools) took two state assessments: 1) the state writing assessment, scored by independent out-of-state reviewers, and 2) the NeSA-Reading test, an online state test taken in April. Starting in the 2010-11 school year, a third assessment will be added: the NeSA-Math test. In the 2011-12 school year, a fourth assessment will be added: the NeSA-Science test.

Over ten years ago, staff members of the Falls City Public Schools began the ongoing process of assessing student learning in relation to the Nebraska standards. The first step was to align the District 56 curriculum with the state standards. Following that, local assessments were created both independently and with the cooperation of Educational Service Unit consortiums made up of instructors from throughout southeast Nebraska. The assessments were drafted and revised over a period of 6-18 months depending on subject area and were rigorously scrutinized for adherence to six quality criteria required by the Nebraska Department of Education. All of the assessments were created to promote progress toward mastery at grades 4, 8, and 11. Local control over curriculum and assessments maximized our ability to adjust to changing requirements while emphasizing core standards relative to our community and changing world.

The assessments were criterion-referenced tests in which students were scored either beginning, progressing, proficient, or advanced. In order to meet the standard, students must test either proficient or advanced. Classroom teachers having students who do not meet the standard initially re-taught the material to the students and provided another assessment for the student to take. Falls City High School has used these assessments to routinely demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) as required by NCLB. Moreover, the data generated by the assessments has allowed us to recognize how two growing subgroups of our school's population, lower socioeconomic students and special education students, will challenge our ability to continue meeting AYP.

Trends in the past five years, after an initially high scoring class of students in 2005-06, show steady improvement in assessment scores in both reading and math. Due to the change in the testing system in reading last year, the scores for reading dip dramatically. Once students get used to taking the tests online and teachers learn to adjust teaching methods toward a one-time test, we anticipate that these scores will steadily increase once again. Writing scores of Falls City High School students have continued to be outstanding and surpass all other assessment results. In two out of the last five years, 100% of the students have met or exceeded the writing standards – on a single test that was scored by outside experts. In the other years, the lowest score was 94% met or exceeded the standards, along with 98% and 96% success rates in the other years. These are the scores for ALL students, including the special education students and those who received free or reduced lunch.

Information on Falls City High School's state assessment results may be found in the "State of the Schools Report" at <http://www.education.ne.gov/>.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Falls City High School has a systemic data assessment system to enhance teaching effectiveness and inform decision makers throughout the district. This data is accumulated continuously as teachers administer a variety of formative and summative assessments and the data generated is disaggregated.

Formative assessments include the STARS locally created criterion referenced assessments, vocabulary pre-test and post-test data, as well as unique indicators applicable all respective classrooms. These are examined immediately and allow for timely decision making at the point of instruction. Summative assessments in the form of the Terra Nova, and now, the NeSA-Reading, NeSA-Writing, NeSA-Math, and NeSA-Science are also administered. These results are delivered to teachers, students and parents as they are received and help nurture the discussion of students' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, each June, members of the School Improvement Data Team attend a two-day retreat where the results are disaggregated and scrutinized to establish trends and identify potential challenges. The data team is comprised of administrators, the guidance counselor, and teachers.

To illustrate, last year the data for the first time indicated that our SPED population was growing at a rate that was likely to negatively impact AYP. A recommendation for intensive mediation was made, and the results of that mediation will be reflected in this year's assessment results. The team also seeks to identify learners who do not fall neatly into identified at-risk sub groups by examining quartile scores in math and reading assessments and comparing them with Terra Nova normal curve equivalents. The idea behind this approach to using data is that administrators, teachers, and students have the benefit of short and long term planning. Classroom decisions can be made to immediately address deficiencies and curriculum can evolve to meet the ever-changing educational environment.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Falls City High School communicates student performance results through an electronic student information system, printed materials, and in person.

Technology has afforded the parents and students with the ability to access their assessment information on-line. PowerSchool Student Information System allows parents and students to log in and have immediate access to formative assessment information, class assignments, and grades. Reports are still mailed to parents who may not have access to a computer or internet access. These reports have information about what state standards are accessed and at what level their child performed. With the implementation of the NeSA testing in the state of Nebraska, this information is reported to the public as a district and parents receive individual reports as well.

Falls City Public School District creates and distributes an annual report. This report provides information to the public about the financial status, enrollment, and a district profile which includes demographics, staff information, and, most importantly, the assessment and norm referenced testing results. ACT scores are included in this report as well. Falls City High School students have exceeded or equaled the state and national average over the last several years. The district is currently working on releasing even more information in a tabloid "place mat" format in addition to the tri-fold annual report, which will give the stakeholders immediate information about assessment results. In addition, the assessment results are communicated to all stakeholders through the local media when they are published in the local paper and are announced on the local radio stations.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Falls City High has achieved academic successes because of the effort and commitment at all levels of the community and school. It starts with the students. They are the ones who come ready to learn each and every day. Their parents are next, providing them with the support they need and instilling in them the value of education. The successes continue because of a dedicated and committed staff who guide the students through their curriculum and ensure they are successful.

These successes, especially with the PBiS program, have been shared by the principal in his Principal Learning Communities sessions at Educational Service Unit 4. The ESU has also hosted teacher cadres in almost every department area, so the math teachers, for example, share their successful strategies at the Math Cadre held twice a year. Teachers and technology staff have shared how technology has been successfully integrated into curricular areas at the Nebraska Technology Association Spring Conference. Several staff members hold leadership positions in district and state organizations, so they disseminate information about the school and its strategies during meetings and workshops. The students even share successes during events, such as the Drug Free Leadership training and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes conferences.

If Falls City High School would be awarded Blue Ribbon status, it would be a tremendous honor and a testament to all of the stakeholders that their contributions are making a difference for the students. The school would continue to be involved in professional development through the educational service unit, school improvement, curriculum alignment, data analysis, and all of the best practices that have made the school successful. The staff would be glad to continue sharing any and all of the strategies implemented here that make the students successful. It is hopeful that anything done at Falls City High School could help other schools also improve their student achievement.

1. Curriculum:

The curriculum at Falls City High School has been aligned to the Nebraska State Standards. Language arts, math, science, and social science make up the core curriculum. The school offers a variety of elective classes, which allow students the opportunity to explore and develop other areas of ability and interest. Instrumental and vocal music groups, physical education and wellness, art, industrial technology, agriculture science, family and consumer science, computers, business education, and foreign language round out the course offerings.

The visual and performing arts program contains classes in Art I, II, III, and IV as well as band, stage band, chorus, and show choir. The physical education, health, and nutrition programs offer students opportunities to take health and physical education, team sports, individual sports, weight training, wellness, and introduction to health. 43% of the students at Falls City High School take Spanish classes. The school offers Spanish I, II, III, and IV, which prepare them to meet the foreign language requirements of universities. The students understand the importance of learning a second language in a state with quickly changing demographics. Falls City High School is also participating in a pilot project with the University of Nebraska Extension Educator Program. An extension agent/educator works closely with existing staff members to provide enrichment activities within the core and elective curriculum.

The language arts curriculum provides students with the opportunity to enhance reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Teachers lead the instruction of underclass students with priorities placed on grammar, punctuation, sentence and paragraph structure, and six-trait writing skills. Upperclass students practice in-depth reading in literature, persuasive writing, and the MLA and APA methods used for in-depth research. The writing scores on state assessments have been a source of pride in the district; and, as data indicates, the students push themselves to write at a high level. All students receive instruction on effective speaking skills. Appropriate voice, topic, selective audience analysis, speech presentation, and organization, as well as effective listening skills are incorporated throughout the language arts classes. College speech is offered as an elective students can take to receive college credit prior to graduation.

The math curriculum emphasizes algebraic operations, problem solving techniques, geometry, data analysis, inductive and deductive reasoning, as well as probability and statistics. The staff at Falls City High School is investigating the possibility of every student taking algebra and geometry as a graduation requirement. This could be accomplished with differentiation of instruction, especially in regard to pacing. With the change from the STARS assessment to NeSA-Math assessments, an emphasis is being placed on presenting key concepts that align with the state standards and then continuing to keep these key concepts in front of students as they progress through the curriculum. This will ensure students with the best opportunity to reach assessment goals.

The science curriculum provides students opportunity to investigate physical sciences, life sciences, earth sciences, meteorology, environmental studies, chemical concepts, and mechanics to interrupt phenomena. Students are given an opportunity to learn from direct instruction, in-depth reading of texts and enrichment materials, study guides, written and oral questioning, demonstration, and lab investigation and research. The students have access to well-equipped labs to carry out and analyze data that is generated from individual and small group experimentation. The student's access to a lab with hands on experimentation is vital to the learning process. The science curriculum includes a strong application of math and measurement to help students solve problems.

The social science curriculum covers world history, economics, geography, American history, and government/civics. Students learn about the historical, geographic, and cultural perspective of early civilizations. They are introduced to major concepts of the executive, legislative, and judicial branch. Society and culture, social organization and structure, social institutions, and social problems are

important topics covered in advanced classes. It is a strong belief of this school district that students should gain and develop a greater appreciation of their community, state, and country. Students are encouraged to learn about and participate in the governmental process. More involvement at the local level of government and participation in local projects will enhance the student's knowledge of what has made the community, state, and nation so successful. The community Veteran's Day program that is hosted at Falls City High School is a tremendous example of the cooperation between our community and school district. The district schedules field trips, guest speakers, and takes advantage of technology to enhance students' interests and knowledge of history.

Falls City High School students have been successful and will continue to have the opportunity to achieve because of the district's commitment to provide an environment that is conducive to learning, a staff that is committed, a curriculum that is rigorous and appropriate, and a community that is supportive.

2. Reading/English:

The English Department at Falls City High School over the last several years has diversified its curriculum with the addition of classes and content concentrating on the area of reading. Raising the reading level of the student population is a priority in the district.

Falls City High School supplemented their students' learning by implementing the Boys Town "Reading is FAME" program for incoming freshmen who read below grade level. The FAME program is designed to increase the vocabulary of students. This is accomplished through the repetition of sounds as well as the sight of words. The concept is that if students repeat the words over and over while reading, they will recognize the word through sight as well as contextual meaning.

Another program implemented in the last two years to increase the reading level of Falls City High School students is the Silent Sustained Reading period. Students are required to read for at least twenty minutes of their study hall hour each day. Materials that can be read include library books, books linked to course work, and magazines. The high school Media Center is well equipped to serve the reading needs of the students. Silent Sustained Reading has greatly increased the student use of the Media Center.

The School Improvement Committee has also made vocabulary retention a priority throughout the entire district. Every nine weeks each teacher must insert new and challenging vocabulary into his or her curriculum. This allows every student to be introduced to a minimum of one hundred new words in every class they take. Students are required to take a pre and posttest to determine prior knowledge and retention of the vocabulary.

Improving writing skills has also been a goal in all high school classes. Teachers in every department have been trained in Six Trait Writing and utilize the traits in writing assignments for their classes. This enhances writing across the curriculum at the high school. The results of the increased emphasis are evident through the excellent students writing scores on the state NeSA-Writing assessment.

English I, II, III, and IV courses offer a variety of reading materials during the school year. Throughout the year students are required to read short stories, novels, plays and technical articles. The literature spans several nations and genres. Assessment tools include quizzes, tests, graphic organizers, question and answer practices, and essays over the read material. Higher-level learners are afforded the opportunity to take part in college bound classes such as speech and composition. Students earn college credits that transfer to most of the colleges across the country.

3. Mathematics:

Falls City Public High School offers a college preparatory sequence of courses for students performing on grade level, including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Precalculus/Trigonometry, and Calculus or Statistics. Typically, students complete the sequence through Precalculus/Trigonometry with top students

continuing on to Calculus and/or Statistics for college credit. Multiple sections are provided to accommodate all students working at grade level.

Another sequence of courses is available for students performing below grade level, including Pre-algebra, Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II. Typically students complete this sequence by their junior year. In these alternative courses, students still have the opportunity to learn all of the Nebraska State Standards, including most algebra and geometry topics. The pacing is altered and the focus is narrowed to keep students working toward grade level ability with the hope of catching them up by their junior year. Students are placed in this sequence based on Individual Education Plans, 8th grade math scores, standardized testing results or a recommendation. Students are challenged to achieve and take the level of math appropriate for them. If students struggle in upper level courses they receive differentiated instruction and have access to instructors during the floating study halls. If students complete the sequence by the junior year, they may take the Algebra II course in the other sequence.

When appropriate, students with an Individual Education Plan will take a Functional Math course in the Special Education Department taught by a highly qualified staff member, not a member of the regular Math Department.

All students regardless of the sequence of courses are provided the opportunity to learn all Nebraska State Standards and NeSA-Math standards and are assessed on those standards in their junior year regardless of which sequence of courses they are currently in. This will be the first year NeSA-Math test scores will be reported at the state level. We have been required to report or STARS testing results prior to this year.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Falls City High School takes pride in the technology infrastructure currently in place to advance teaching and learning. During AdvancEd accreditation review in November 2010, the visitation team gave the district a commendation for implementation of technology.

Curriculum in all areas is strengthened by having LCD projectors in every classroom and SMART Boards in many classrooms. All students and staff have Google mail accounts and have received training in the use of Google mail, forms, and documents. This allows the students and staff to collaborate effectively and extends the learning day significantly. Students with internet access at home can utilize their Google accounts to work on assignments outside of the school day. The Falls City Library & Arts Center has a computer lab which is open daily to students who don't have internet access at home. The students can not only complete homework by themselves, but they can collaborate on group projects, and communicate with their teachers outside of school.

Current technology courses offered at Falls City High School include, Information Technology, Web Design, Digital Media, Mobile Applications and Designs, Computer Assisted Drawing, and Making Music with Computers. Teachers also utilize iPods, digital cameras, and two mobile laptop labs to enhance the students' curriculum. This fall two instructors began piloting Sakai, an open-source collaborative learning system similar to Blackboard, which allows students and teachers to exchange materials digitally. They can collaborate or blog on educational threads posted by the instructors. The utilization of Sakai will better prepare students for their futures because it will familiarize them with software and technology that is used for coursework at most universities or for acquiring online degrees.

The technology in place has allowed District 56 to more effectively communicate with parents and stakeholders in the district. The schools' website is updated daily with menus, announcements, activities, scholarship information, and news. PowerSchool, the student information system, allows parents and students to access lunch balances, grades, missing assignments, and communicate directly with instructors. It has been an invaluable tool leading to more parental involvement and helping hold the students more accountable.

Falls City High School is helping students become 21st century learners and increasing their technological literacy.

5. Instructional Methods:

Falls City High School understands that not all students learn the same way. If instruction is not differentiated, students will not be motivated to learn and the learning environment becomes negatively impacted. As a result, the high school utilizes differentiated instruction throughout the curriculum and in every classroom. Every student deserves to receive appropriate instruction in the appropriate manner in the appropriate setting.

Teachers meet to discuss assessment results on formative and criterion referenced tests and offer recommendations on student placement in appropriate math and language arts classes. Teachers prepare their lessons to incorporate student readiness and individual preference and interest. These lesson plans are shared, and teachers provide feedback on the instruction and suggestions for improvement. This is accomplished in small groups and as a whole during the Professional Learning Communities time. The teachers work hard to identify individual students who may be struggling. They also monitor identified students' progress and can appropriately decide if changes are needed in instructional methods, materials used, or services provided to the students.

Extending time to complete assignments, getting support from paraprofessionals or student mentors in the classroom, or using technology to record or type instead of writing are just a few of the examples of how Falls City High School ensures that students who require differentiated instruction can be successful.

The school's involvement in Positive Behavior Intervention and Support has created a learning environment that is conducive to academic success. The students respect themselves, each other, and their teachers. A culture of high expectation and accountability is becoming more and more evident each year. Many students face adversity on a regular basis, yet come to school and choose to achieve.

6. Professional Development:

Falls City Public Schools believes there is a positive correlation between the amount of professional development a teacher attends and that teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Realizing that "one-shot" staff development is ineffective over time, a professional development calendar is designed by the District Administrative Council to reflect the importance of ongoing training. As a result, this four-part Professional Development Plan has been formatted: 1) district inservices, 2) after-school trainings, 3) professional days, and 4) noncontract time stipend-paid workshops.

There are six teacher inservice days built into the district calendar. Three days are pre-service days at the beginning of the school year, and the other three days are inservice days throughout the year. Some of the training topics in the past year have been Google mail, Google Docs, and Google Sites (the district moved to Google for Education last year), curriculum updates, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Professional Learning Communities, new language arts textbook training, and assessments. As needs arise, short training sessions are held after school throughout the year. Some topics for these sessions have been Google mail questions, using Sakai classroom management, and SMART Board tips.

Falls City Public Schools also provides teachers with two professional to attend workshops or conferences outside the district. The superintendent or principal can also request a teacher to attend a training, which doesn't count toward the two professional days. Some of those workshops attended by high school teachers were the following: Nebraska Math Professional Development Series, One-to-One Computer Workshop, Nebraska Educational Technology Association Conference, Aligning Math Curriculum to New Nebraska Math Standards, Instructional Strategies, AdvancED Conference, All-State Music Convention, and FCCLA State Leadership Conference. The final part of the plan is paying teachers stipends to attend noncontract time workshops either on weekends, in evenings, or during the summer. The stipends come from district funds, NCLB funds, or grant funds. Some of those stipend-paid sessions

attended by Falls City High School teachers have included Technology Mentor training, Data Retreat, Drug Free Leadership training, Bullying workshop, Bill of Rights Institute, and Nebraska Stock Market Game workshop.

Training attended by the high school teachers leads to increased student achievement because they learn new teaching methods designed to enhance classroom effectiveness. Research has shown educator quality is an important influence on what students learn and also increases learning at high levels. Falls City High School's multi-faceted professional development plan leads to teacher training that is results-oriented, standards-based, and data driven.

7. School Leadership:

Falls City Public school is structured like most schools in the state of Nebraska. The governing board is a six-person Board of Education that includes two members with over 20 years of experience. A superintendent, whose office is not located at the high school, a 9-12 principal, a guidance counselor, and an activities director complete the high school's leadership team. All of these individuals are responsible for leading the staff and students to meet their achievement goals.

Falls City Public Schools is a progressive district. The strong board and district-wide administrative team encourage all principals to attend professional development and continue to grow as learners and leaders. The Administrative Council, made up of the superintendent, the four principals, and technology/curriculum coordinator, meet weekly to discuss goals and make plans to lead the district toward the future. This has been a key element to the success the school has achieved.

As the leader of the high school, it is the principal's job to continue to challenge his staff to grow and learn. The district is embracing the use of technology to engage and motivate students' learning. The principal and teachers model the use of technology and encourage its use and integration in the curriculum.

The principal is visible in the hallways and classrooms, allowing him to build rapport with students and staff. His presence also makes it easier to monitor and evaluate curriculum and instruction. He believes that when students know that someone cares for them, they will naturally work harder and achieve more. The high school staff works hard to build rapport with their students and engage them in learning in the classroom. The most important tasks are to motivate all students, engage the disengaged, and instill an appreciation of the value of an education today.

The school leadership is involved in the curriculum alignment, instructional methods, and assessments that are administered at the high school. By being knowledgeable in these areas, the principal can help lead the staff and ensure that the students are being given every opportunity to be successful.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 11

Test: STARS

Edition/Publication Year: 2003

Publisher: Falls City Public Schools

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standards	96	96	93	84	90
Exceeded Standards	83	89	81	73	80
Number of students tested	54	73	62	74	71
Percent of total students tested	100	100	92	97	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standards	96	93	92	95	95
Exceeded Standards	73	85	76	75	72
Number of students tested	26	27	25	24	25
2. African American Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standards				74	
Exceeded Standards				64	
Number of students tested				11	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
6. No other subgroup has over 10 students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
NOTES: Nebraska only assesses high school students in the 11th grade, so that is why Falls City High School has scores for only one grade. As described in the Assessment section, Nebraska did not develop a single state test, but rather allowed districts to develop assessments on each Nebraska Math Standard. The above results are from those criterion-referenced assessments.					

11NE4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 11

Test: NeSA-Reading

Edition/Publication Year: 2009 Publisher: Nebraska Department of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standards	77	97	85	80	91
Exceeded Standards	17	90	54	55	72
Number of students tested	54	73	62	74	71
Percent of total students tested	100	100	92	97	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standards	69	100	72	92	100
Exceeded Standards	4	89	44	46	64
Number of students tested	26	27	25	24	25
2. African American Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standards				58	
Exceeded Standards				18	
Number of students tested				11	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
6. No other subgroups have more than 10 students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
<p>NOTES: Nebraska only assesses high school students in the 11th grade, so that is why Falls City High School has scores for only one grade. In 2009-10, the NeSA-Reading state test was given. Prior to that, as described in the Assessment section, Nebraska did not develop a single state test, but rather allowed districts to develop assessments on each Nebraska Reading Standard. The above results, except for the 2009-10 year, are from those criterion-referenced assessments. While April was chosen as the month of testing, classroom assessments were given all year up through April. A NeSA-Writing test is given to all students in the 11th grade, too. Those results are reported in the Assessment section.</p>					

11NE4

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					
Met Standards	96	96	93	84	90
Exceeded Standards	83	89	81	73	80
Number of students tested	54	73	62	74	71
Percent of total students tested	100	100	92	97	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standards	96	93	92	95	95
Exceeded Standards	73	85	76	75	72
Number of students tested	26	27	25	24	25
2. African American Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standards				74	
Exceeded Standards				64	
Number of students tested				11	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
<p>NOTES: The school average scores are identical to the 11th grade scores because Nebraska only tests one grade in high school. While April is listed as the month given, Nebraska used classroom developed criterion referenced assessments that were given all year long. Starting in the spring of 2011, students will take the single state assessment called NeSA-Math for the first time. No subgroups others than the Free/Reduced lunch students are above 10 students except for the Special Education Students in 2006-07.</p>					

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					
Met Standards	77	97	85	80	91
Exceeded Standards	17	90	54	55	72
Number of students tested	54	73	62	74	71
Percent of total students tested	100	100	92	97	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standards	69	100	72	92	100
Exceeded Standards	4	89	44	46	64
Number of students tested	26	27	25	24	25
2. African American Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standards				58	
Exceeded Standards				18	
Number of students tested				11	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Met Standards					
Exceeded Standards					
Number of students tested					
<p>NOTES: The school average scores are identical to the 11th grade scores because Nebraska only tests one grade in high school. The scores in 2009-10 dropped considerably because the test changed. In previous years, Nebraska used classroom developed criterion referenced assessments. Last year for the first time, 11th graders took the NeSA-Reading test, a state assessment that was a single test. No subgroups others than the Free/Reduced lunch students are above 10 students except for the Special Education Students in 2006-07.</p>					

11NE4