U.S. Department of Education
2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School

School Type (Public Schools): (Check all that apply, if any) ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Mr. Joe Schwan

Official School Name: Hamlin Jr. High School

School Mailing Address: 44577 188th St
Hayti, SD 57241-5408

County: Hamlin State School Code Number: 02

Telephone: (605) 783-3631 E-mail: joe.schwan@k12.sd.us

Fax: (605) 783-3632 Web URL: http://www.hamlin.k12.sd.us/

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

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. Joel Jorgenson Superintendent e-mail: Joel.Jorgenson@k12.sd.us

District Name: Hamlin Public School District District Phone: (605) 783-3631

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

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mrs. Jill Opdahl

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

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

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

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

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 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

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 1 Elementary schools
   (per district designation) 1 Middle/Junior high schools
   1 High schools
   0 K-12 schools
   3 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 5576

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

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	23	23	46
K	0	0	0		7	19	20	39
1	0	0	0		8	19	28	47
2	0	0	0		9	0	0	0
3	0	0	0		10	0	0	0
4	0	0	0		11	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		12	0	0	0
							Total in Applying School:	132

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

1 %	American Indian or Alaska Native
0 %	Asian
1 %	Black or African American
1 %	Hispanic or Latino
0 %	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
97 %	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 ***to*** the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	3
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	0
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	3
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	146
(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: 2%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 2

Number of languages represented, not including English: 1

Specify languages:

Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 52%

   Total number of students who qualify: 68

   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: 12%

    Total number of students served: 16

    Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

0	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	3	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	12	Specific Learning Disability
0	Emotional Disturbance	0	Speech or Language Impairment
0	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	1	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	0	Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	Full-Time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	1	0
Classroom teachers	4	3
Special resource teachers/specialists	1	6
Paraprofessionals	3	0
Support staff	1	1
Total number	10	10

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: 15:1

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	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	3%	5%	5%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

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

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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Hamlin Middle School is located four miles west of Hayti, a small community located in Hamlin County in northeast South Dakota. It is located 25 miles southwest of Watertown. The district consists of 365 square miles of total area. Students are bussed from throughout the school district to the Hamlin Education Center, a K-12 facility. The Hamlin School District consists also of the communities of Bryant, Hazel, and Lake Norden. The Hamlin School District is composed of a rural, farming community, not dissimilar to other districts in South Dakota. Our district is also home to excellent hunting and fishing. The typical family size is above average in this district.

In the spring of each school year, the Hamlin Middle School Principal and the Elementary and Middle School Counselors host an orientation session with the following years' sixth grade class. The purpose of our time is to ease the anxiety that some of our fifth grade students have about the change they are about to experience as a result of their transition into Hamlin Middle School. Time is spent discussing what our new expectations will be, where their classes will be held, how their school day will look in comparison to their elementary school days, and steps that they can take in order to be successful as middle school students. After our brief discussion and question/answer session, we take the fifth graders on a tour of the Hamlin Middle School introducing them to their instructors for the following year. We believe strongly that by creating an educational environment where our students feel comfortable and valued is a very important component of those students reaching their potential.

Also, in the spring of each year, the Hamlin Middle School hosts an eighth grade graduation in conjunction with a Middle School Awards program. The purpose of these activities is to highlight the individual achievements of our students and to incentivize our students to work consistently hard throughout the year. This is a public awards program and has been well attended by the families of our students. We congratulate our eighth graders on their middle school successes, encourage our sixth and seventh graders to aspire to good things and wish our graduating eighth graders continued success as high school students (part of building the cohesive K-12 school experience for our students).

The mission of the Hamlin School District is "to prepare and equip our students to become responsible citizens and succeed in an ever-changing world." There is an acknowledgement, both in statement and in practice, that our world including the opportunities our students will have post-school, is ever-changing. Hamlin Middle School instruction consistently focuses on problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration in addition to the content standards as prescribed by the state of South Dakota. By teaching our students to become thinkers, we feel they will be capable of adapting to the new situations and opportunities that they will encounter after they've left our building.

The Hamlin Middle School has been designated as a "Distinguished School" for the testing years 2005, 2006, 2009, and 2010. This classification is a testament to the quality of the education that the students of Hamlin Middle School receive. Our students work hard and have been recognized for their efforts by this designation. The Hamlin Middle School staff, 100% of which is "highly qualified" instructors must also be commended for the continued successes of the school and its students. The instructor's attention to the diverse needs of individual students, the continued development of their curriculum and pedagogical techniques, and their constant attention to doing what is right for our students have enabled our school to be very effective in preparing our students.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

The four named categories that have been used by the state of South Dakota in labeling students' standardized assessment results are basic, below basic, proficient, and advanced. Those students who are categorized as "proficient" are determined to have met the standards as prescribed by the state. Those students who are categorized as "advanced" have been determined to be ahead of those students who are scoring at the proficient level. The Hamlin School District's assessment results can be by accessing https://nclb.ddncampus.net/nclb/index.html and following the links.

Hamlin Middle School is primarily a very non-diverse student population. As such, over the course of the past five years, the only sub-group that has been disaggregated for each grade level has been in the sub-category of economically disadvantaged, which is calculated using the number of students eligible for free and reduced-priced lunches. On the mathematics tests, the economically disadvantaged subgroup has scored similarly to that of the whole class. The largest difference seen was in grade 7 in 2005-2006 where 66% of the economically disadvantaged sub-group was proficient or advanced compared to 77% of the group at-large.

With the exception of the 2006-2007 school year, when the n size of the economically disadvantaged sub-group was only thirteen, the school wide results for this sub-group was very comparable to that of all students. On average, the economically disadvantaged sub-group had 75% of its population scoring proficient or advanced compared to 82% of whole group. In fact, in the most recent years testing data, the 81% of the economically disadvantaged subgroup scored proficient or advanced compared to 80% of the whole population. Moving forward, it will be important for us to recognize the disadvantage that some of our students may be at as we progress towards utilizing more web-based curriculum. We are very cognizant of the need to modify work and allow students equal opportunity to success regardless of whether or not they have access to a computer at their home.

Overall themes that appear in the mathematics data for Hamlin Middle School are that we very consistently are achieving well above the state average, both when you examine our data for the whole population (73.2% proficient and advanced at the state level compared to 82.2% proficient and advanced locally) and when the data is disaggregated for the subcategory of economically disadvantaged (58.8% proficient and advanced at the state level compared to 75.2% locally). It is also clear to see that as curriculum has been refined and areas of concern have been addressed, our students have generally achieved better year after year. Over the past five years, grades six, seven, and eight have seen improvements in the number of students scoring proficient or advanced of 11%, 12%, and 11% respectively.

It is even easier to see, by quick examination of the reading data for Hamlin Middle School that assessment results have improved steadily over the past five years. The notable exception is in the 2008-2009 year when the assessment was changed. This has apparently been remedied as scores rebounded nicely in the 2009-2010 year.

As with mathematics, Hamlin Middle School students are scoring above the state average both when taking the data for the whole population and with the economically disadvantaged subgroup. On average, the economically disadvantaged subgroup at Hamlin Middle School had 10% more of its sub-group categorized as proficient or advanced (75.8% average over the five year period) when compared to the economically disadvantaged subgroup of the state (65.8% average over the five year period).

In terms of the school average (all students), Hamlin Middle School saw a 5% improvement (from 80%-85%) in the number of reading students scoring proficient or advanced between 2006 and 2008. Scores

fell 7% in the 2009 testing year – also the year in which the assessment was changed. Between 2009 and 2010, scores improved 9%. At the grade level, results were very similar to those of the whole school.

It is clear to see that the teaching techniques and efforts of the staff at Hamlin Middle School are making a positive impact on our students. We will continue to strive to make improvements each year on behalf of our students.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The Hamlin School District and Hamlin Middle School relies strongly on our students' assessment data from the Dakota STEP, Write-to-Learn, and other local assessment data to help determine the strengths and weaknesses of our current curriculum plans. Each area of our curriculum has a written curriculum plan, or map, containing information such as the content that will be taught, the state standards which that content meets, and any assessment tools that will help indicate whether or not instruction was effective.

After our Dakota STEP assessment results are returned, we go through a thorough process of evaluating our performance as a district where we disaggregate our state assessment results. We evaluate our district and school performance on three main levels: individual students' strengths and weaknesses, course specific strengths and weaknesses based on data trends over time, and district or school wide strengths and weaknesses based on data trends over time.

By examining individual students' strengths and weaknesses we can help to determine the appropriate course paths for students as well as acknowledge that all of our students achieve at different levels and should, therefore, be afforded the opportunity to continue learning at their own level. In the spring of 2010, based on assessment results from the previous school year and the acknowledgement that our students were achieving at different levels, our math instructor sought out an online program, IXL, which closely matches the South Dakota Content Standards and provides students a differentiated approach to learning specific skills.

In looking at strengths and weaknesses over time for an individual course, our instructional staff can determine which content areas need more attention or perhaps just attention to a particular topic earlier in the school year. We are also looking for items in our curriculum that we no longer need to address to a high degree based on high student achievement in that particular area. The Hamlin School District and Hamlin Middle School provide staff with professional development time to examine their curriculum maps and modify them to address any areas determined by the test data to need improvement.

By looking at school-wide trends of our students' achievement results, we can better determine programming needs. The most notable systemic change made to address weaknesses in the reading test score results, was the hiring of 1 FTE for the purpose of teaching reading class in addition to our English language arts curriculum. Hamlin Middle School students are fortunate enough to have two distinct, albeit related, courses for English language arts and reading.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Upon return to school in the fall of the year, the Middle School counselor is responsible to send Dakota STEP results for individual students home via US Postal Mail to each family to fulfill part of the reporting requirements of No Child Left Behind. We encourage parents to examine their children's test scores <u>with</u> their children and to contact their teachers, counselor, or principal if questions arise.

Each year, as assessment data is evaluated and compiled, Hamlin School District Title Director, Mrs. Gail Krause, makes a public presentation of the results and interprets those results and answers questions for all in attendance. These meetings serve multiple purposes (e.g. to fulfill Title I responsibilities), but the primary effect should be an increased understanding of the school wide test results for the Hamlin School District and each of its schools. Attendance records of those meeting are kept on file with the Title I director. As a part of this presentation and data analysis district goals are shared with parents and well as

measurable objectives, instructional strategies for teachers, and further assessments for both reading and mathematics for each grade level in Hamlin Middle School.

In past school years, the Region I ESA has compiled a District Profile for the Hamlin School District including a wealth of information from the demographic information and school mission statement, to test results separated by standard, grade level, and year. This publication is available to district patrons in print and by visiting our District website, www.hamlin.k12.sd.us.

School data is also available on the state report card website, https://nclb.ddncampus.net/nclb/portal/portal.xsl?&extractID=12. This is advertised on the front page of the district web-site when updated results become available.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The Hamlin School District and Hamlin Middle Schools value meaningful professional development. Our staff has the ability to attend professional development and networking opportunities that school administration believes will result in development of our teachers' skills thereby improving the instruction provided to our students. One important component of any out-of-district professional development that we send our teachers to is networking with instructional staff of other schools. We find it very valuable for our staff to be able to gain ideas from other professionals in their content areas and fully expect that when our staff is in attendance at these opportunities that they take the initiative to share their many success stories with those in attendance.

To specifically allocate time for our instructional staff to share their strategies and success stories, we've held district wide inservices where we've invited the instructional staffs of other districts into our school for the singular purpose of sharing with one another their instructional techniques and methods. Our staff has indicated to the administration that they find the time informative, useful, and refreshing.

In addition to district-wide inservices, the Hamlin School District and Hamlin Middle School has teachers currently participating in 21st Century Skills Cohorts, Northern State University's Graduate Studies Cohorts, and the TIE Conference all of which provide opportunities for our staff members to share their successes with other educators from around the state.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The curriculum of the Hamlin Middle School is a composition of five core courses and a combination of supporting curriculum that we feel provides our students a well-rounded educational experience that provides for them the content necessary to be successful moving into high school and provides exploratory exposure to them in a multitude of other areas. The five core content areas taught to every student in each grade level (six, seven, and eight) at Hamlin Middle School are mathematics, reading, language arts, social science, and science. The supporting curriculum that is offered to students at Hamlin Middle School includes courses in the use of technology, physical education and health education, courses in current events, drivers education, Consumer Technology, Art (visual art), vocal music, and instrumental music.

The mathematics curriculum at Hamlin Middle School is designed and taught to prepare students for their subsequent courses in mathematics acknowledging that all students will eventually be required to take courses in Algebra and Geometry. In the mathematics program, there is a nice balance between direct instruction, project-based learning including the use of appropriate educational technologies, individual practice, and collaborative practice.

Hamlin Middle School is fortunate enough to be able to offer its students a unique course focused strictly on reading and the state standards set for reading. This is one content area where goals are set annually for the district based on state assessment results. Instruction is delivered through a wide variety of methods allowing the information to be accessible to all students. Recently, there has been an increased effort to infuse the use of technology with the reading content standards.

The language arts curriculum at Hamlin Middle School is mostly aimed at our students' writing abilities. Hamlin Middle School recognizes that writing is an essential part of our students' education and their futures outside of education. Instruction is given primarily through drill and practice methods and supplemented with more project-based activities.

The science curriculum at Hamlin Middle School is a combination of physical science, earth science, and biology. The overarching theme for all of the science courses are the science fair projects worked on either individually by students or collaboratively. The science instructor does a nice job of infusing the standards-based instruction into the science projects that are chosen by the students (which would imply interest) and therefore provide a platform for teaching them.

The physical education curriculum at Hamlin Middle School is directly related to the health education courses offered. Each student in grades six through eight at Hamlin Middle School is enrolled in these courses. The physical education component of the course work places an emphasis on general physical, emotional, and social well-being through a variety of individual and team activities. A goal of the program is to provide students with the skills and information necessary to make healthy decisions and lifestyle choices moving forward with an acknowledgement that when healthy options are chosen our students are more likely to remain in school and be more successful in school. We continue also to inform our students of the health issues that they are likely to face in their worlds and how they can avoid some of the pitfalls associated with making unhealthy decisions.

The visual arts program at Hamlin Middle School is offered to and taken by all sixth grade students. The basics of the different components of art, such as elements of color and styles of art and art techniques are discussed and practiced by those students. We feel that this course provides our students with good exposure to information and culture that they may not otherwise be made aware of.

The performing arts at Hamlin Middle School are comprised of vocal music (required of all sixth grade students and optional to seventh and eighth graders) and instrumental music (optional to all middle school students). Similar to the visual arts, this is an opportunity for us to teach culture to our students. Students enrolled in the performing arts courses at Hamlin Middle School perform two concerts annually and instrumental students perform individual solo pieces once annually.

The course in current events offered at Hamlin School is for eighth grade students and is a course designed to make our students aware of the world in which they live. Students spend time researching current news events and evaluating the content and presentation of different news sources, which overlaps very well with certain language arts standards. We feel this course is a good addition to our curriculum in that it supports our language arts curriculum as well as our social sciences curriculum.

The Hamlin Middle School computer course is currently offered to all students for a period of one semester each year. The intention of the course is to provide students with the technological skills and awareness necessary to effectively and efficiently complete other required components of their coursework. Hands-on courses by nature, these courses are well-liked by the students and provide our core course instructors the ability to use technology in their classrooms without spending a great deal of time teaching the students how to use the technology (e.g. student work can be content focused as opposed to process focused).

In prior school years, the Hamlin Middle School offered Spanish language instruction to all students in grade seven. The Hamlin School District is primarily Caucasian/white and has very few Spanish speakers. The primary purpose of the course was to provide students with a cultural awareness of the Spanish/Mexican cultures and to expose them to the Spanish language acknowledging that many of them would eventually enroll in an optional Spanish course at the high school level. In the 2010-2011 school year, we were unable to offer Spanish to the middle school students due to an increased demand for the Spanish courses at the high school level which created an issue where we could not staff a seventh grade Spanish course.

2. Reading/English:

The reading curriculum for the Hamlin School District's middle school program is a mixture of authentic tasks, reading for information, and reading for enjoyment. A typical day might include reading and discussing a grade or ability appropriate high interest novel, instructing reading to correlate with state standards, and practicing state standard skills. For each novel, instruction and connections to non-fiction activities occur. As an example, while reading the novel, The Cay, students research cays and make a travel brochure as an authentic task. They also research the history and geography of Curacao.

Hamlin middle school reading instruction focuses specific state standards as laid out by the South Dakota Department of Education. Some of these specific state standards include summarizing stories, reading and responding to nonfiction information and stories, collaborating with peers, creating deeper thinking using authentic tasks and projects that incorporate 21st Century Skills, and practicing fluency and vocabulary. Enjoyment of reading is encouraged as students use websites to choose books to read based on descriptions of the book and peer input. Reading for information is also taught as students are constantly using reference materials such as atlases, maps, dictionaries, encyclopedias, thesauruses in both an online situation and a paper/book situation.

To encourage students to read from different genres, short readings of high interest fiction and nonfiction passages are also used. Various comprehension questions are used in order to encourage focused reading. As a school district, reading practice, vocabulary instruction, and comprehension instruction helps students become better readers. South Dakota Department of Education teacher trainings, such as Reading UP, are also attended by many Hamlin Education Center educators in order to better train teachers in the reading process. Not only are all students helped by our many educators who participate in this training, but also those students performing below grade level are helped from focused training on how to support them in their travels through reading comprehension and fluency training in our

school. Special services aides who come into the classroom add extra support to struggling learners not able to perform at the same rate as other students. This support allows for more success on the part of those struggling learners. The Accelerated Reader Program is also used to encourage students to read more literature of their own choosing. Because of this, better comprehension skills are built and a wider variety of literature is gained.

Educators in the Hamlin Middle School encourage performance and success of the students by helping them set goals and encouraging them to meet their goals. Specifically, in the reading program, students are provided with real life, authentic tasks that are both meaningful and challenging. Because of this, the reading program supports our school's mission statement of better equipping our students for the future. Students are encouraged to be specific when they speak, write and think. In order to accomplish this, students are encouraged to produce more than standard work. Instead, students are encouraged to go above and beyond and be critical thinkers of their own work. They cannot do tasks for "the teacher" but for themselves and make are encouraged to make it meaningful.

3. Mathematics:

The Hamlin School District has completed the curriculum mapping process in each content area. This was a cooperative project between the Hamlin School administration, the content area teacher, and the ESA. The curriculum maps were created as a blueprint for the content to be taught based on the content standards set forth by the state of South Dakota. Those curriculum maps give the content area instructors, including mathematics the guidelines needed to be the founding blocks of what will be taught and when. In the years following the creation of the curriculum maps, data continues to be reviewed on a group basis as well as an individual basis to see if there are gaps in what we are teaching or perhaps errors in how or when we are teaching certain content.

The majority of the resources that are used in the Hamlin Middle School mathematics classroom come from the Harcourt and Brace middle level math series. We have found there to be a very nice correlation between this series and the content standards for South Dakota. As always, no one series will fit perfectly the needs of our individual students. As such, we continue to augment our curriculum with other sources such as online tutorial programs (IXL), individual assessments from the Achievement Series site which can help to determine which students have specific weaknesses in certain areas, and project-based learning which can often provide opportunities for our more novice math students to succeed and learn from our more advanced students.

During the 2010-2011 school year, the mathematics curriculum has made extensive use of the IXL online tutorial program. This program teaches, on an individual basis, the content standards as prescribed by the state of South Dakota. It allows students to progress through their standards with guidance from their instructor and online resources at a pace that is comfortable for them. We have been able to demand a higher level of mastery from all of our students by requiring students to score a certain percentage on a given standard prior to moving on. During this school year, our students have spent many, many hours working on their mathematics skills, in part, because of this program – they really seem to enjoy working with this very interactive program. It has enabled the most advanced students to remain challenged, yet allowed for the less advanced students to have success without being frustrated.

One additional way that Hamlin Middle School provides assistance for those students performing below grade level is by having paraprofessionals (2 FTE) circulate the classrooms helping students at the same time as the classroom teacher. Having two adult educators circulation a room with classes ranging in size from 18-25 students can be very effective. Each of the students in Hamlin Middle School is also provided with at least one 40-minute study period daily in which to work on their areas of weakness or to meet with their content area instructors.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

At Hamlin Middle School, science students become comfortable with the science concepts of observing, recording, organizing, measuring, predicting, hypothesizing, inferring, estimating, classifying, and analyzing. Learning areas are interrelated so emphasis is placed on enabling students to make connections between the learning areas as well as connect what is learned at school with their own experiences and the activities of everyday life. Hamlin Middle School Science Classes provide enrichment through a hands-on approach where discovering takes place through investigation and experimentation using the scientific method. Using the scientific method helps students investigate systematically in order to clarify hypotheses, test explanations through measurement, make observations, and use their findings to establish worth of their ideas. As students develop competence in scientific inquiry and practical skills, they also develop computer skills to aid them in the use of critical thinking and problem solving. This active involvement in science fosters curiosity and inspires a sense of wonder, which in turn, provokes respect for life and the environment and helps students develop a clearer understanding of aspects of the world around them.

Science at Hamlin helps students increase the ability and confidence to approach problems analytically and promotes creative thinking. Learning is a continuous process. Students are given control of their own learning which encourages high self-esteem and confidence. The middle school science classroom sets high expectations for students to succeed which enables all students to learn fairly and successfully. Science provides information about our ever-changing world which instills students with respect and appreciation. This education prepares them to participate in a society where science plays an increasingly important role.

5. Instructional Methods:

Hamlin Middle School recognizes that all of our students come from different backgrounds and abilities. They come to us with inherent differences that dictate we differentiate our instruction in order to effectively teach to them at an individual level. At Hamlin Middle School, we do not have many diverse subgroups of students in terms of minority students or things of that nature. Rather, we see each individual student as someone who brings different learning preferences and abilities to the table.

The primary way that our instructional staff provides for differentiated opportunities for our students is through the use of education technology. We feel that the use of technology in our academic environment has been an effective way for us to reach students who have been less successful with more traditional strategies. Hamlin Middle School has five classrooms that use Promethean Boards. We also have ActiVote and ActivExpression tools that allow each student to actively engage with the content. In addition, we have ample mobile computer labs available for our teachers to use.

We also have two full-time paraprofessionals in Hamlin Middle School that are available to assist students in many of the classes. This allows teachers to teach at a pace appropriate for their grade level, yet provides the support necessary for those students who need additional assistance. We feel that these two individuals are absolutely vital to the success of many of our students.

The math curriculum has been heavily supplemented this year through the use of an online tutorial program which is aligned with the South Dakota Content Standards and allows students to move through the curriculum at their own pace providing the assistance to them as needed. This has also provided important information about which areas our students need more assistance in to our instructor.

The social sciences have used many authentic tasks, such as conducting a jury-trial, which provides students with opportunities to play on their strengths and work on their weaknesses. These tasks place less emphasis on rote-learning and allow those students who are not always successful with traditional educational strategies to succeed and be proud of their contributions to the school.

6. Professional Development:

A major key to bringing about student improvement is a professional development plan that identifies the school district's areas of need and addresses those specific needs. It was decided that professional development will be prioritized according to goals for student performance and growth plans for staff.

The Hamlin School District has a committee made up of the Superintendent, Elementary Principal/Title I Director, Middle School Principal, High School Principal and teacher representatives from each of the buildings. Professional development needed for each of the Board approved in-service days is planned by this committee and is based on the needs of the staff and students and goals that are set for the district, goals which are determined largely by the Dakota STEP results that we receive.

In addition to district-wide professional development, several professional development opportunities specifically for the middle school staff occurred. The language arts department has completed a yearlong class entitles "Pre-AP" through the Laying the Foundation course work for TIE. Three instructors have committed to a course on 21st century skills, a program funded through a grant. Three instructors will attend the state TIE convention in April. Hamlin Middle School currently has four instructional staff members actively working on obtaining their masters degrees in teaching in learning or administration from Northern State University.

As difficult as it is for staff to balance their needs for meaningful professional development with the time constraints placed on them by scheduling necessities and the regular demands of the profession, it is clear to see that the instruction staff at Hamlin Middle School has taken some very real steps toward improving their art for the ultimate benefit of their students.

7. School Leadership:

The Hamlin School District administration team consists of a superintendent, a business official, and three building principals, one each for the elementary school, the middle school, and the high school. As with any district, policy decisions are made ultimately by the Hamlin Board of Education with input and recommendation provided by administrators and instructional staff. The building principals work together to create a cohesive school system in which our students can transition successfully from grade to grade and school to school (elementary to middle school and middle school to high school).

The role of the Middle School Principal is to provide direction and leadership as well as supervision to the instructional staff responsible for teaching middle school students. The general philosophy of our administrative team is to provide our staff with the resources, supervision, support, and encouragement needed to carry out their instructional duties to an exceptional level. Providing a visible presence to our students and staff is an important component of creating an atmosphere of support and accountability for students and staff.

Any decision made within a school must be made with the students' interest in the forefront. When our administrative team feels that a change in policy is necessary for improving our district, we work together with our teaching staff by seeking their input, and provide a written policy document to the Board of Education for their consideration and provide them with any other pertinent information. During the past two years, we've implemented new policies concerning bullying and other more minor discipline issues with the intention of creating a more positive and safe environment for our students – which we believe will result in improved student achievement.

One major factor in student achievement is overall school climate. Our administrative team understands this and shows by example the need for our staffs to be visible to our students, compassionate, yet firm, and perhaps above all else - to hold high expectations for behavior and academic learning.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 6 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	80	86	93	63	69
Advanced	30	22	25	2	6
Number of students tested	39	49	53	41	51
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	3	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	2	2	7	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	81	78	95		62
Advanced	14	15	24		4
Number of students tested	21	27	21		26
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. White/Caucasian					
Proficient and Advanced	89	87	93	64	71
Advanced	32	22	28	2	6
Number of students tested	37	49	53	40	51
NOTES:					

11SD3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 6 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	92	82	92	83	78
Advanced	30	24	26	27	25
Number of students tested	40	50	53	41	51
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	1	3	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	2	2	7	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	91	84	100		81
Advanced	10	15	0		23
Number of students tested	21	27	21		26
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. White/Caucasian					
Proficient and Advanced	94	83	92	83	78
Advanced	32	24	26	28	25
Number of students tested	37	49	53	40	51
NOTES: The reading assessment was changed for the 2008-2009 school year.					

11SD3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 7 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	89	85	72	73	77
Advanced	32	8	17	16	19
Number of students tested	47	53	41	51	48
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	3	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	2	7	4	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	83	83	68		66
Advanced	21	4	12		14
Number of students tested	24	24	24		21
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. White/Caucasian					
Proficient and Advanced	90	85	73	73	77
Advanced	33	8	17	16	19
Number of students tested	46	53	40	51	48
NOTES:					

11SD3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 7 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	86	75	85	85	81
Advanced	26	28	26	16	23
Number of students tested	47	53	41	51	48
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	3	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	2	7	4	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	85	67	72		81
Advanced	17	21	16		19
Number of students tested	24	24	24		21
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. White/Caucasian					
Proficient and Advanced	85	75	78	85	81
Advanced	26	28	27	16	23
Number of students tested	46	53	40	51	48
NOTES: The reading assessment was changed for the 2008-2009 school year.					

11SD3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 8 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	95	89	90	81	84
Advanced	22	10	16	0	9
Number of students tested	51	42	50	43	44
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	3	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	7	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	89	83	85		77
Advanced	12	8	14		8
Number of students tested	26	24	28		26
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. White/Caucasian					
Proficient and Advanced	95	89	90	81	86
Advanced	22	10	16	0	9
Number of students tested	43	42	50	43	43
NOTES:					

11SD3

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 8 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	82	75	84	84	81
Advanced	25	25	18	5	11
Number of students tested	51	42	50	43	44
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	3	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	7	2	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	81	75	79		70
Advanced	12	21	18		12
Number of students tested	26	24	28		26
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. White/Caucasian					
Proficient and Advanced	82	76	84	84	84
Advanced	25	26	18	5	12
Number of students tested	51	42	50	43	43
NOTES: The reading assessment was changed for the 2008-2009 school year.					

11SD3

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					
Proficient and Advanced	91	86	85	73	76
Advanced	28	13	19	7	11
Number of students tested	138	145	144	135	143
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	5	5	5	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	3	3	4	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	84	81	82	61	68
Advanced	15	9	16	15	8
Number of students tested	71	74	73	13	73
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced	80	58	23	21	20
Advanced	7	5	8	0	0
Number of students tested	13	15	12	14	15
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. White/Caucasian					
Proficient and Advanced	91	87	85	73	76
Advanced	91	13	19	7	11
Number of students tested	134	144	143	134	142
NOTES:					

11SD3

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					
Proficient and Advanced	87	78	85	84	80
Advanced	27	26	23	16	20
Number of students tested	138	145	144	135	143
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	5	5	5	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	3	3	4	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	86	72	83	61	77
Advanced	14	19	19	15	18
Number of students tested	71	75	73	13	73
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced	60	37	54	43	40
Advanced	7	5	0	14	0
Number of students tested	13	15	12	14	15
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. White/Caucasian					
Proficient and Advanced	88	78	86	84	81
Advanced	28	26	24	16	20
Number of students tested	134	144	143	134	142
NOTES: The reading assessment was changed for the 2008-2009 school year.					

11SD3