

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

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

Name of Principal: Mrs. Karen Noble

Official School Name: Hillcrest Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 220 N 17th Street
 Nederland, TX 77627-5029

County: Jefferson State School Code Number: 123905103

Telephone: (409) 772-3484 E-mail: knoble@nederland.k12.tx.us

Fax: (409) 726-2690 Web URL: http://www.nederland.k12.tx.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. Robert Madding Superintendent e-mail: rmadding@nederland.k12.tx.us

District Name: Nederland Independent School District District Phone: (409) 724-2391

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

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Craig Belaire

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

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 4 Elementary schools
 (per district designation) 2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
7 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 7314

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 18
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	26	25	51		6	0	0	0
K	30	46	76		7	0	0	0
1	43	45	88		8	0	0	0
2	27	55	82		9	0	0	0
3	39	39	78		10	0	0	0
4	38	58	96		11	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								471

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
11 % Asian
15 % Black or African American
19 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
45 % White
9 % 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: 19%

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.	42
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	44
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	86
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	457
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.19
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	19

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 20%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 96

Number of languages represented, not including English: 8

Specify languages:

Arabic, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Spanish, Telugu, Urdu, Vietnamese

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 63%
 Total number of students who qualify: 293

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: 11%
 Total number of students served: 51

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

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>32</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>22</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>48</u>	<u>2</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: 21:1

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%	97%	97%	97%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	95%	95%	96%	95%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	9%	0%	6%	6%	3%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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%

Hillcrest Elementary School in Nederland, Texas has an extended history of excellence which makes the school worthy of Blue Ribbon status. The mission statement crafted by the Hillcrest Campus Performance Committee is carried out daily in all classrooms of this modest campus. The impressive banners, plaques, and awards are not the first major impression that a guest might notice. What stands out first when approaching the front of the building are the colorful handprints of Hillcrest children placed on the white columns as they pledged to be drug free. The faculty and staff at Hillcrest strive to create a safe and supportive school environment and take great pride in making the campus attractive and inviting.

A major focus of Hillcrest Elementary is to provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum developing the potential of all students while keeping in mind individual learning styles. The tools used for instruction are a blend of multiple resources including state adopted textbooks, ancillary materials, and research based supplemental materials targeting the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Teachers provide a variety of instructional opportunities for students to develop skills for successful learning. Routinely, students are engaged with interactive whiteboards, individual handheld answer devices, and web based instructional programs.

The faculty and staff are committed to provide all students a quality education to build the foundation necessary to achieve their potential as lifelong learners. This basic foundation prepares students to participate in civic, economic, and cultural activities of our society. Through the use of the Character Counts curriculum, Right Choice, and Ron Clark's 55 Essential Skills for Discovering the Successful Student in Every Child teachers equip the students with universal core values such as respect, responsibility, and honesty. The faculty and staff model social skills and reward students who make right choices and display appropriate social interaction.

The diverse student body of Hillcrest Elementary is composed of approximately 45% White, 19% Hispanic, 15% African American, and 11% Asian students. Over 60% of the student population is economically disadvantaged. English Language Learners comprise 20% of the student body with a representation of eight different languages. The Hillcrest faculty recognizes that society is constantly changing and a wide variety of needs have to be taken into account when planning an effective educational program. Teachers consistently strive to effectively teach basic skills as well as higher level thinking to all students. Inclusion is a key factor in the success of students with special needs. Instruction is differentiated to maximize student learning by meeting individual needs, presenting a variety of approaches to learning, and building on individual student strengths.

Through team collaboration, Hillcrest staff creatively orchestrates a climate that enables students, parents, faculty and the community to interact together towards common goals. Active volunteer programs are supported by parents and members of the community, reinforcing the belief that educating children requires a working relationship between parents, teachers, and business partners. Coming together for cultural fairs, field days, assemblies, and field trips are some of the many events that unite the community. Each year since 9-11, on Veterans Day, the Hillcrest student body has created a human flag ceremony to honor veterans and first responders. The annual aerial photograph may be viewed on the school's website. Another Hillcrest tradition is the Folk Life Festival presented by the fourth grade students highlighting the diverse cultures that settled in Texas and are currently impacting the local population. Bringing together the importance of literacy, the librarian sponsors an Accelerated Reading (AR) program. Every six weeks students who reach their individualized reading goals are acknowledged with a themed walking parade through the school hallways. In addition, a huge visual recognition bulletin board can be viewed by all. To honor their years at Hillcrest the fourth grade students are recognized at an annual award's ceremony for their academic and extra curricular activities. The atmosphere at Hillcrest

electrifies the entire learning community to continue to support the student population with a variety of positive experiences.

Hillcrest is a campus of facilitators that has a clear and mapped vision for learning. This is documented by a continuum of fifteen consecutive years as an Exemplary campus, thirteen consecutive years as a Title I Distinguished campus, and nine years as a Texas Business Education Coalition Honor Roll School. Hillcrest was also recognized as a National Title I campus in 2005. The greatest contributing factor in the success of the students is the passion for learning that each staff member at Hillcrest possesses. Each member is aware that they must continue to learn as they teach, value the individuality of each student, and provide a safe learning environment.

The faculty and staff at Hillcrest strive to stay on the cutting edge in instructional research. They continuously go the extra mile knowing their reward will be watching their students develop self-confidence as they reach their potential. Their reward is in knowing they have truly left no child behind.

1. Assessment Results:

The performance level that demonstrates “meeting the standard” in Texas is based on a student’s mastery of the state-mandated curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Performance standards relate test performance directly to the state curriculum in terms of what students are expected to learn by the completion of each grade level. We embrace having standards that are designed to ensure all students receive the same knowledge and skills from class to class and year to year. We are committed to assuring all groups of students exceed those standards. The data tables for Hillcrest reflect the commitment to excellence of the faculty and staff. There is no achievement gap in meeting standards between all students and the subgroups due to the high expectations and the belief that all children can learn. The difference in the percent of students commended, those who have performed at a level that is considerably above the state passing standard, is addressed through differentiated instruction, special services support, and small group instruction.

During the fifteen years Hillcrest has achieved the highest ranking from the state accountability system, the demographics have changed dramatically. In 1994 the district rezoned, and the number of economically disadvantaged and English Language Learner students greatly increased at Hillcrest. The faculty and staff realized it was necessary to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the students. Always willing to learn new ways of teaching, the faculty and staff studied the research and attended training to learn new ways of instruction for our changing population. In spite of the financial challenge in recent years that has resulted in lack of raises and less funding for support staff, the faculty and staff have not lowered their dedication to the success of all students.

The increase in the percentage in the number of commended students reflects the high expectations of the faculty and staff for all students to not only meet but exceed the State’s expectations. Realizing the rapidly changing world our students will face, our commitment is to prepare them to be lifelong learners and problem solvers. We are committed to an environment that will allow each student to reach his/her social, emotional, physical, and intellectual potential and to become a productive member of the changing cultural and technological society of the twenty-first century.

Since 2002 The Texas Accountability System has awarded Gold Performance Acknowledgement based on the percentage of commended students. Hillcrest has received Gold Performance Acknowledgement each year in reading, math, and writing. It received Comparable Improvement in math in 2009 and 2010. Comparable Improvement (CI) is a measure that shows how student performance on the TAKS reading/ELA and mathematics tests at a given school has changed (or grown) from one year to the next, and then compares that change to that of the 40 schools that are demographically most similar to the given school. In 2009 and 2010 Hillcrest was recognized by the National Center for Educational Achievement (NCEA) for growth in reading, writing, and math and for college and Career Readiness in writing. For nine consecutive years Hillcrest has also received the Texas Business Education Coalition Honor Roll School award which recognizes schools for academic performance. To earn this prestigious award schools are evaluated based on commended performance over time.

In 2005 as we were enrolling evacuees from Hurricane Katrina, we had to evacuate for Hurricane Rita. With students trickling back in after a three week evacuation and students as well as faculty and staff suffering stress from lost homes and being misplaced for weeks, we began again in a damaged building. We slowly returned to an emphasis on academics as everyone tried to achieve some normalcy in their lives. It is amazing to look at the success of the economically disadvantaged students when their apartments in our zone were closed for repairs, and the students were uprooted and living where ever they could find shelter.

In 2008 we started school three times. Shortly after starting school in August we evacuated for Hurricane Gustav. In September we evacuated for Ike. After another lengthy mandatory evacuation and more damaged homes, our faculty, staff, and students rebounded with hard work and determination. Looking at the consistency in our achievement and thinking back to the trauma everyone was experiencing reinforces our belief that children are resilient and can be successful in spite of any obstacles they must overcome.

The lack of housing in the surrounding areas after two major hurricanes caused another dramatic increase in our number of students with special needs. Many of the subsidized apartments in a neighboring city were damaged, and the families were relocated to our zone. As construction workers moved in to rebuild, our mobility rate rapidly increased. Rebuilding and expansion by the surrounding petrochemical plants has brought students from all over the country. Throughout these challenges our students continue to excel.

The Website URL where information on Texas state assessment results can be found is http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3272&menu_id=793.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Hillcrest Elementary not only uses mandated state assessment data to analyze and improve student and school performance, but uses periodic benchmark tests. Teachers make ongoing adjustments to the reading and math curriculum and grouping of students to accommodate those in need of clarification on targeted skills. Benchmark tests for third and fourth grade students are often released state tests. The results are used to gauge skill acquisition and make arrangements for small group administration. These mock tests help ease the tension when the actual state tests occur in the spring of each year.

An example of how assessment data is used systematically in the decision-making process is when teachers document the questions missed by students and then schedule small group instruction to carefully review strategies and analyze answer choices. Not only is the classroom teacher involved in the tutorial process, but the Content Mastery teacher, Special Education teacher, and the English as a Second Language teacher serve alongside the classroom teachers to enhance targeted instruction. In a group of three to five students with a teacher as the facilitator, students are actively engaged in sharing their summaries, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving strategies. Although the review process may take three sessions to finalize, it is crucial to the students' ownership of their own learning. Often peers are able to explain and share how they resolved a question in vernacular that is more comprehensible. The teacher serves to gauge the discussions and steer the conversations in a balanced participatory exchange of knowledge. This process is repeated for math, reading, and writing benchmark tests throughout the year leading up to the spring state assessments.

By regular short exchanges of information on at-risk students, teachers are able to collaborate and make accurate decisions for each struggling student. As the test dates approach, teachers meet with the counselor and principal to finalize assessment decisions in reference to the accommodation qualifications and to document specifics about individual testing environments and administrators. Parents are kept informed at all levels, and students who need additional tutoring are scheduled to arrive early or stay after school for tutoring in the classroom or computer lab. A student is well prepared on the days of state mandated tests, which ensures the pattern of success for all Hillcrest Elementary students.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Our site based team which is made up of parents, teachers, and business and community representatives meets each month to review student performance. Reports on state assessments from TEA including the Academic Indicator System (AEIS) report and the Campus Report Card are discussed at open meetings of the committee. The Student Report Card is sent home each year along with a glossary of terms used. All parents are invited to discuss their students' results with the teachers.

Assessment results are reviewed at all Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, all Students with Disability (504) meetings, all Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) meetings, and conferences to review modifications to ensure a student's success. Each student has a Parent Teacher Communication Folder that allows for information to be exchanged between the school and home each day. Fourth grade students also have an agenda book that goes home daily. Report cards are sent home every six weeks, and progress reports are sent home at three week intervals. Parent meetings at the beginning of the year are held to explain the use of these communication devices.

Students anxiously await the results of the State Assessment each year. Because we have so few students not meet standards, and so many receive commended performance, we celebrate the success of the school as a whole and review scores with individual students and parents confidentially. All students receive certificates for their achievement at a special award ceremony. Commended performance is stated on their certificate but not announced. All family members and community members are invited to the award ceremony. The achievement of the students is recognized as a united effort of the students, the parents, and the community members. Results and recognition by the media is posted on a special bulletin board in our entry hall. In 2006 when Hillcrest was chosen to represent Texas as a National Title I School, all faculty, staff, students, and parents attended a celebration that included Texas Education Agency (TEA), School Board, and community members.

The success of thousands of past and present Hillcrest students is celebrated by the National Title I and Exemplary flags that fly in front of our school each day and nine Texas Business Education Honor Roll School banners hanging on the outside wall. Inside are fifteen Exemplary award plaques hanging in our front hall for each of the years we have been rated Exemplary by the Texas Education Agency, thirteen certificates for each of the years we have been recognized as a National Title I Distinguished School, a plaque for the year we were chosen as a National Title I School, and nine certificates for recognition as an Honor Roll School by the Texas Business and Education Coalition.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Hillcrest Elementary faculty and staff are eager to share the "secrets" of their success. As the principal networks with other districts in the state at various conferences and events, they receive invitations to share their teamwork strategies. Often teachers accompany her to surrounding districts for in-services, or delegations of principals and teachers visit our campus to witness instruction firsthand. The Hillcrest faculty and staff have shared successful strategies at the School Improvement Conference (SIC) December 2007; at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development(ASCD) October 2006; with Santa Fe ISD, Santa Fe, Texas, June 2006; at the Spring Conference of the Association for Compensatory Educators of Texas (ACET) April 2006; at the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) Midwinter conference January 2006; at the National Association of Title I School Directors (NASTID) Conference January 2006; at the Association for Compensatory Educators of Texas (ACET) February 2005; at the TEPSA Assistant Principals Conference December 2001; at the TEPSA Summer Conference June 2002; and at the Texas Commissioner's Conference February 1994. Districts see how beneficial small group sheltered instruction enhances students' confidence and competence. This model is repeated daily in classes at Hillcrest.

During Nederland ISD in-service days, teachers often facilitate across district planning in grade-levels to synchronize curriculum instruction and share best practice models. These in-service days serve to consolidate objectives and become more unified as a district. At Hillcrest the faculty and staff are always searching for ways to enhance our methodology. Successful teaching practices are research based, student oriented, loaded with active participation and processing time, and often follow a captivating thematic approach. Sharing successes is always a joy. Guests are surprised when teachers are eager to showcase their classrooms and students actively participating in the learning process.

Teachers who are members of professional educator organizations like Delta Kappa Gamma or Alpha Delta Kappa share anecdotes of Hillcrest successes. Not only academic successes but community service like donating funds to organizations such as the American Red Cross for the relief effort to Haitians and

participating in Relay For Life to raise funds for cancer research are shared. Stories of student compassion and teamwork to raise significant funds are shared at assemblies and through the local media. Hillcrest Elementary School takes great pride in academic and community involvement successes. Our front doors are always open to those who wish to visit our campus and see the crown jewel of our success: our diverse, exemplary student body.

1. Curriculum:

Hillcrest Elementary School uses the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills as the curriculum with a scope and sequence based on the Margaret Kilgo model. The staff at Hillcrest works tirelessly and cooperatively to ensure that every objective is thoroughly taught and mastered by its diverse population. All students receive a consistent education that builds on previous learning. Consistency from year to year and repetition of core concepts allows students to build a schema on which to attach new ideas and skills.

Spiraled programs, as well as skills based programs, are presented simultaneously in reading, math, and writing. Saxon Phonics is emphasized in the early grades to develop efficient word attack skills. Reading programs which teach objectives in isolation include Critical Reading, Keep on Reading, Keep on Reading Science, and Motivation Reading. Students in all grades read trade books or novels to practice these skills and take Accelerated Reader tests on the computer. Science and social studies text books give many opportunities to read technical writing. High interest materials, such as Time for Kids, motivate students to read and gain knowledge of the world in which they live. TAKS question stems are used to generate questions for novels, textbooks, and reading passages.

All third and fourth grade teachers have been trained to use Randi Whitney's Writing Academy to teach both narrative and expository writing. The key to success at Hillcrest is regular and consistent small group instruction. A mini lesson is presented in a whole group setting where excellent writing is modeled by authors, teachers, and peers. Students then break up into small groups of three to five to practice the skill with a teacher. Students write, revise, and edit their compositions with a teacher close by. This eliminates wasted time because a student does not have to sit long before the teacher is available to help them with a problem.

Math is presented in many ways throughout the day. Knowing that children are most successful if a skill is repeated often, both spiraled and skills based programs, and manipulatives are used. Motivation Math by Mentoring Minds presents one skill which is modeled, practiced and tested each week. Spiraled programs that allow students to regularly practice all skills include Target Math by Lone Star Learning, America Math, and Countdown to Math TAKS. Daily Operation Practice provides practice of math facts in an algebraic form and in random order. Since math has a language all its own, students in all grade levels recite math vocabulary using chants and hand motions. Each student practices math and language arts skills for thirty minutes daily in the computer lab. This provides a great opportunity for teachers to work with individual students on targeted skills. Programs utilized in the lab are My Skills Tutor, Frontier, Education City, and Orchard Math. Some of these programs are game based and highly motivating.

Science and social studies give students an opportunity to read, take notes, and gain information from a textbook. Science Starters, a web based program, is used to teach vocabulary and to introduce basic science concepts. Several science presentations by local industries are made throughout the year. Third and fourth grade students take part in a special science day to learn the scientific method. Students travel to each of the ten classrooms to participate in fun and exciting science experiments.

Because of our diverse population, social studies is an integral part of our curriculum. The textbook is used to practice reading skills and to obtain information. Fourth grade students keep a Texas scrapbook where they take notes, draw maps and graphic representations of information, and utilize the creative side of their brain to remember facts. Fourth graders participate in a cultural fair in which they research a country, make costumes, food, and souvenirs, make an oral presentation, and invite other grade levels to partake of the food and souvenirs. This broadens the horizons of students and helps them to appreciate the

differences in their classmates. Finally, students take field trips to places of historic importance, such as Gladys City in Beaumont, and the San Jacinto Monument where their Texas history book comes to life.

Fine arts and physical education offer a balance to the stringent academic day of our students. Teachers with an art background often incorporate artist studies into language arts and math. After studying an artist through reading and writing, students are given a chance to create a masterpiece of their own in the same style as the artist. All students are invited to participate in the annual Parent Teacher Association Reflections fine arts contest. Each grade level performs in a musical production and attends a Christmas program presented by local dance companies annually. The physical education program does many things to promote healthy habits. The Milers' Club before school and intramural sports after school allow students to participate in fun activities that interest them. The health curriculum which includes the Coordinated Approach To Children's Health (CATCH) program encourages physical activity and wise food choice.

The key to the long success of Hillcrest is the model that allows for students to be in a small group one or two times a day with a teacher in each group. Students are not left alone for long periods of time waiting for a teacher's attention. Students with special needs remain in the classroom for instruction and then work in a small group with the Resource, Content Mastery, or ESL teacher to make modifications and help with practice. Students stay engaged because of high interest material and easy access to a teacher when assistance is needed. All students are held to the same high standard of performance, and they know that teachers are there to help them succeed. The standard is set and no one rests until all students reach the goal.

2. Reading/English:

Reading is the cornerstone from which all instruction begins at Hillcrest Elementary. All other subject areas are approached from this perspective. We believe that reading is the foundation that helps students achieve success in all subject areas. Whether it is a math word problem or a science experiment, we approach the subject matter by teaching students how to understand what they are reading.

In the lower grades, learning to read begins with phonics instruction. Students develop strong phonemic awareness and the ability to decode words. Sight words are taught through the use of flashcards, word walls, and personal student dictionaries. Comprehension and fluency are taught across subject areas through whole group and small group instruction.

In the upper grades, reading is also taught across the curriculum. Science and social studies topics are read in textbooks, magazines, and various other media and dissected to find reading comprehension tools such as context clues, main idea, and cause and effect. The same skills taught in a novel are taught in these other reading materials. The "main idea" of a math problem is also identified to determine the strategy needed to solve the problem. During writing instruction students are referred to reading tools for prompting on what to write next. A teacher might recommend that a student add three events in order, cause and effect, or a problem/solution to their composition. This emphasizes to students the importance of reading like writers and writing like authors.

In addition to whole class reading instruction, students are taught in small groups at least twice a day. This provides the opportunity for students to receive focused attention in areas of comprehension, fluency, and finding text evidence. Students are not just taught how to read, but to think like authors. They learn to prove their answers and show the thought process used to get the correct answers. It is not only important to get the correct answer, but to be able to support the answer with text evidence.

Benchmark tests and/or state assessments are given at least twice a year to determine the progress of students. This, along with teacher recommendation, decides which students need accelerated instruction. Students who are not showing the progress projected are provided tutoring before, during, and/or after school. This may be a one on one instructional setting or a small group setting. The goal is to

target their areas of weakness and boost confidence. We continually tell our students they are “The Smartest Kids in Texas,” and they always live up to that mantra.

3. Mathematics:

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) is the blueprint for the mathematics curriculum at Hillcrest. The faculty members learn the best ways to teach mathematical operations. All grade level instructors meet to share strategies and materials.

The belief that all students can learn if given the time and opportunity drives math instruction. Teachers teach, and then reteach using a different method, until all students master a skill. Our goal is for students to have a greater understanding of math concepts and relevance, to be confident problem solvers, and to be proficient on all math objectives.

The faculty works together to determine the order of TEKS presentation, key concepts critical to students’ progress, and best ways to teach operations. Gaps in learning are determined by analyzing ITBS and TAKS data and teacher assessments. Progress is monitored through frequent use of benchmark tests and daily work. Small group instruction makes it easy to recognize a struggling student.

Teachers know required TEKS of each grade level. Frequent evaluation points out which students require tutoring. Tutoring responsibilities are shared by all teachers allowing students to benefit from the knowledge and materials of each teacher. Materials are purchased which integrate math skills into science, reading, and social studies. Hillcrest teachers use a variety of mathematics programs, strategies, presentation skills, methods, and manipulatives to ensure that all skills are taught in a variety of ways.

As the population of Hillcrest has changed, so have our programs and strategies. The faculty stays abreast of current state and national mandates and continually reevaluates methods and materials. Small group instruction is one key to Hillcrest’s long running success and is provided by our special education teacher and aide, two English as a Second Language teachers, a one-half day classroom reduction teacher, and two extra help personnel paid with Title I funds. Teachers, principal, and paraprofessionals provide individual tutoring in the computer lab daily, during the assigned lab time, before and/or after school.

Because of high standards, qualified instructors, and research based programs, the math scores of our students have been consistently high. All faculty and staff work tirelessly to ensure that the “Smartest Kids in Texas” stay on the cutting edge of math education.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Science enables us to quickly learn and understand how things around us work. The science book is used to practice reading skills, as well as build a foundation of science concepts. Knowing that science is not something that can be taught solely from a textbook and is better learned if it is experienced through hands-on activities, teachers assign various experiments for each child to perform in class. The student collects the needed materials, practices the experiment, and then presents it to the class. Each experiment follows the scientific process: problem, materials, hypothesis, prediction, and conclusion.

At Hillcrest science fairs are conducted, invention conventions are held, chicken eggs are hatched in incubators, the life cycle of butterflies is observed, and tadpoles are seen transforming into frogs. Living on the Gulf Coast, the students are educated about hurricanes and tornadoes, and taught how to plot hurricanes on a tracking chart. Hillcrest teachers write grants to help provide materials necessary for students to be actively and collaboratively involved. A grant, recently received, is being used to update the science lab to enhance the science curriculum.

People from the community come to Hillcrest to make presentations that enhance students’ interest in science. The children experienced making ice cream from liquid nitrogen when employees from Air

Products did many activities showing its amazing properties. The U.S. Coast Guard comes many times throughout the year to teach the children about ships, water, and buoyancy.

Hillcrest teachers hold a special science day in the spring. The students actively explore many science concepts through various experiments and demonstrations as students rotate through each classroom. Each class shares an experiment using the scientific process.

Through science we ensure the students are learners who have the tools to combat whatever they face. At Hillcrest we strive to help all students develop critical thinking skills, ensure they are equipped to make intelligent decisions, and value the world and its environment.

5. Instructional Methods:

Because over sixty percent of our students are on the free lunch program and over twenty percent are English Language Learners (ELLs), we use Title I, English as a Second Language (ESL), Special Education, and Student Success Initiative funds to hire extra teachers to provide small-group instruction. These teachers work in the classrooms to modify small-group instruction while targeting their respective population of students. An ESL teacher or special education teacher will supplement classroom instruction by modeling think-alouds, concept definition maps, and systematic phonics instruction.

The Hillcrest faculty and staff have found that all students need differentiated instruction but at the same time consistency. Because teachers attend the same professional growth opportunities and observe each other during instruction, there is consistency in teaching strategies and shared terminology. Teachers learn from each other in this type of setting, and students benefit from being instructed by various teachers. At times there could be five adults in the room with twenty-two students. The classroom teacher, the ESL teacher, special education teacher, a special education aide, and the Content Mastery teacher will each have a group of three to five students. Some teachers prefer to have the groups in different rooms to control the noise level, but all of the groups do the assigned target activity in a consistent manner. This methodology of differentiated instruction affords the necessary scaffolding students need to be successful.

If small-group instruction does not provide enough support for some students, they receive tutoring before, during, and/or after school. The special education teacher provides accelerated instruction for students who are two or more years behind using comprehensible input and differentiated instruction. Sometimes the students who are struggling are placed in a group of three while other groups are larger depending on the level of support needed. Teachers also share and rotate tutoring assignments. They each have varying delivery methods, but all teachers actively plan for instruction that engages prior knowledge. Providing a rich learning environment, all students are challenged in small group settings with demonstrations, hands-on experiments, and technology. This cooperation between teachers not only helps the students but equalizes the stress burden of all teachers. They plan and work together as a team to meet the diverse needs of individual students year after year.

6. Professional Development:

In order for faculty and staff to stay on the cutting edge of technology and curriculum, we frequently attend conventions, conferences, and workshops together. We attend the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA) conferences every fall and summer where we have an opportunity to hear firsthand from members of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), experts on Title I programs, experts on English as Second Language (ESL) and Bilingual Programs, experts on Special Education, teachers from other schools, and inspiring speakers like Ron Clark and Erin Gruell. On these occasions we have an opportunity to learn together and to discuss what we have learned and how we will apply what we have learned to ensure the success of every child on our campus. We not only learn new methodology but also reaffirm the methods and strategies we are using. Teachers enjoy hearing new ways of teaching and learning. We also enjoy visiting the exhibitors, asking questions about products, and choosing what we think will improve instruction. Sometimes representatives from each grade level attend conventions,

conferences and workshops to enhance vertical planning. Other times members of one grade level attend to encourage teamwork and grade level planning.

Teachers who attend training return to share the excitement of fresh insights into teaching 21st Century students. Hillcrest professionals stay abreast of state law changes and criteria for assessing, qualifying, and exiting students from special population programs. Teachers have received training in English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and have returned to share knowledge at faculty meetings in order to guarantee the social and academic success of our diverse English Language Learners.

We attend presentations on technology to keep abreast of the latest ways to prepare our students for the world in which they will learn and work. Every classroom has a mounted projector, a document camera, computers, and Smart Boards. We have two labs with broadband connection where our students learn technology skills, use technology to learn the state curriculum, and do research.

Faculty and staff enjoy continuing to grow and stay on the cutting edge of what is happening in education. Teachers have attended disaggregation workshops to learn to develop a scope and sequence based on our test data. With this knowledge and its application, student achievement has remained at an exemplary status at Hillcrest Elementary for fifteen consecutive years. Following a horizontally and vertically aligned scope and sequence not only unifies our school curriculum, but also aligns it with the district.

7. School Leadership:

The philosophy of the school leadership is to provide an opportunity for every member of the student body, faculty, and staff to achieve a level of success that they never believed they were capable of reaching. There are high expectations for teachers, and they have high expectations for their students. Support is provided to ensure teacher success, and they provide the same support for their students. Expectations are high regardless of the background of our students.

Our Campus Committee that includes parents, community members, and business representatives meets monthly to review our vision and the activities we have for achieving them. The principal chairs the committee and carefully reviews all data on student achievement. The committee discusses the best uses of the budget, the needs for staff development, and the instructional strategies needed to ensure the success of our diverse student population. Professional growth and development is continuously reviewed and provided. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff are chosen by their peers to represent them on the committee. All grade level chair people are ad hoc members of the committee and all special services are represented.

The principal actively searches for the best training for the faculty and staff. She is dedicated to recruiting, inspiring, and maintaining a highly qualified team. In order for the faculty and staff to stay on the cutting edge of technology and curriculum, the principal frequently takes teachers to conventions, conferences, and workshops. On these occasions we have an opportunity to learn together and to discuss what was learned and how we will apply the new knowledge to ensure the success of our students. We not only learn new methodology but also reaffirm the methods and strategies we are using. Teachers enjoy hearing new ways of teaching and learning first hand. They also enjoy visiting the exhibitors, asking questions about products, and choosing what they think will improve instruction. Often representatives from each grade level attend together to enhance vertical planning, and sometimes all members of one grade level attend together to encourage the teachers at a particular grade level to work and plan together. We attend presentations on technology to keep abreast of the latest ways to prepare our students for the world in which they will learn and work.

The principal is in classrooms and works with students daily. The principal often meets with parents, the counselor, the assistant principal, and teachers to ensure each student's needs are met.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2010, 2009, 2008,
2007, 2006

Publisher: Pearson Education, Inc.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	100	97	95	90	99
Commended	72	63	52	44	58
Number of students tested	90	86	99	84	85
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	1	6	4	8
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	1	6	5	9
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard	100	96	94	92	97
Commended	68	56	53	41	41
Number of students tested	50	55	40	32	37
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	100	91	92	75	90
Commended	67	30	21	30	30
Number of students tested	30	38	35	19	16
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard		100	92	88	100
Commended		71	55	31	50
Number of students tested		14	16	16	14
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	100	82	100		
Commended	33	55	44		
Number of students tested	12	11	16		
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard				93	
Commended				36	
Number of students tested				14	
6. Asian					
Met Standard	100	100	100	100	100
Commended	92	85	75	53	87
Number of students tested	12	13	12	17	15
<p>NOTES: Students who achieve Commended Performance have performed at a level that is considerably above the state passing standard and have shown a thorough understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills at the grade level tested. TAKS Modified (TAKS M) is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards & is designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements for TAKS M for whom TAKS is not suitable. TAKS M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but the assessment itself has been simplified thru modifications in format and test design. TAKS M is administered for the same grades and subjects as TAKS. Linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) is a special administration of TAKS for LEP-exempt recent immigrants. Linguistic accommodations are made to assist students in overcoming language barriers and to provide a meaningful assessment of academic knowledge and skills.</p>					

11TX20

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Mar	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	98	99	99	99	100
Commended	73	64	52	51	64
Number of students tested	91	89	105	86	88
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	1	6	4	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	1	6	5	5
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard	99	99	100	100	100
Commended	73	54			
Number of students tested	50	57	40	33	39
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	100	100	96	100	100
Commended	75	46			
Number of students tested	12	24	23	10	12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard		100	100	100	100
Commended		81			
Number of students tested		16	17	16	13
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	83	100	100		
Commended	33	36			
Number of students tested	12	11	16		
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard		100	100	100	
Commended		50			
Number of students tested		10	10	14	
6. Asian					
Met Standard	100	100	100	100	100
Commended	83	54			
Number of students tested	12	13	12	18	15
<p>NOTES: Students who achieve Commended Performance have performed at a level that is considerably above the state passing standard and have shown a thorough understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills at the grade level tested. TAKS Modified (TAKS M) is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards and is designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements for TAKS M for whom TAKS is not appropriate. TAKS M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but the assessment itself has been simplified through modifications in format (larger font, fewer items per page, etc.) and test design. TAKS M is administered for the same grades and subjects as TAKS. Spanish-version TAKS M assessments are not available. Linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) is a special administration of TAKS for LEP-exempt recent immigrants. Linguistic accommodations are made in order to assist students in overcoming language barriers and to provide a meaningful assessment of academic knowledge and skills.</p>					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010

Publisher: Pearson Education, Inc.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	100	98	95	97	100
Commended	89	70	54	61	58
Number of students tested	80	91	82	87	74
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	6	1	9	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	7	1	10	7
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard	100	96	95	95	100
Commended	88	63	43	52	51
Number of students tested	51	48	21	42	37
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	100	93	82		
Commended	67	33	36		
Number of students tested	18	15	11		
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard		100	88	95	
Commended		65	44	63	
Number of students tested		17	16	19	
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	100	82			
Commended	91	27			
Number of students tested	11	11			
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard					
Commended					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian					
Met Standard	100	100	100	100	100
Commended	100	93	79	80	75
Number of students tested	13	14	14	15	16
<p>NOTES: Students who achieve Commended Performance have performed at a level that is considerably above the state passing standard and have shown a thorough understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills at the grade level tested. TAKS Modified (TAKS M) is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards and is designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements for TAKS M for whom TAKS is not appropriate. TAKS M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but the assessment itself has been simplified through modifications in format and test design (fewer answer choices, simpler vocabulary and sentence structure, etc.). TAKS M is administered for the same grades and subjects as TAKS. Spanish-version TAKS M assessments are not available. Linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) is a special administration of TAKS for LEP-exempt recent immigrants. Linguistic accommodations are made in order to assist students in overcoming language barriers and to provide a meaningful assessment of academic knowledge and skills.</p>					

11TX20

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010

Publisher: Pearson Education, Inc.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	May	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Met Standard	100	96	96	92	96
Commended	46	40	40	46	32
Number of students tested	80	91	82	87	72
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	6	1	9	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	7	1	10	6
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard	100	94	100	90	94
Commended	38	29	24	36	23
Number of students tested	52	48	21	42	35
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	100	93	82		
Commended	11	27	27		
Number of students tested	19	15	11		
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard		94	100	89	
Commended		29	25	53	
Number of students tested		17	16	19	
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	100	91			
Commended	17	9			
Number of students tested	12	11			
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard					
Commended					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian					
Met Standard	100	100	93	100	93
Commended	46	43	50	53	40
Number of students tested	13	14	14	15	15
<p>NOTES: Students who achieve Commended Performance have performed at a level that is considerably above the state passing standard and have shown a thorough understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills at the grade level tested. TAKS Modified (TAKS M) is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards and is designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements for TAKS M for whom TAKS is not appropriate. TAKS M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but the assessment itself has been simplified through modifications in format and test design (fewer answer choices, simpler vocabulary and sentence structure, etc.). TAKS M is administered for the same grades and subjects as TAKS. Spanish-version TAKS M assessments are not available. Linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) is a special administration of TAKS for LEP-exempt recent immigrants. Linguistic accommodations are made in order to assist students in overcoming language barriers and to provide a meaningful assessment of academic knowledge and skills.</p>					

11TX20

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 Standard	100	100	96	94	99
Commended	78	65	57	55	59
Number of students tested	170	177	181	171	159
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	7	7	13	13
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	4	4	9	8
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard	100	100	94	93	99
Commended	76	59	57	49	49
Number of students tested	101	103	61	74	74
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	100	100	93	80	92
Commended	56	29	30	40	38
Number of students tested	30	38	35	19	16
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard	100	100	90	91	100
Commended	63	64	54	48	55
Number of students tested	11	31	32	35	21
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	100	100	100	91	100
Commended	86	41	78	36	33
Number of students tested	23	22	20	13	13
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard	100	100	94	93	100
Commended	88	57	50	40	60
Number of students tested	18	15	17	20	16
6. Asians					
Met Standard	100	100	100	100	100
Commended	95	87	80	77	81
Number of students tested	25	27	26	32	31
<p>NOTES: Students who achieve Commended Performance have performed at a level that is considerably above the state passing standard and have shown a thorough understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills at the grade level tested. TAKS Modified (TAKS M) is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards and is designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements for TAKS M for whom TAKS is not appropriate. TAKS M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but the assessment itself has been simplified through modifications in format (larger font, fewer items per page, etc.) and test design (fewer answer choices, simpler vocabulary and sentence structure, etc.). TAKS M is administered for the same grades and subjects as TAKS. Spanish-version TAKS M assessments are not available. Linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) is a special administration of TAKS for LEP-exempt recent immigrants. Linguistic accommodations are made in order to assist students in overcoming language barriers and to provide a meaningful assessment of academic knowledge and skills.</p>					

11TX20

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 Standard	99	97	99	96	98
Commended	59	48	47	48	49
Number of students tested	171	180	181	173	160
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	7	7	13	8
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	4	4	8	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Met Standard	99	97	100	95	97
Commended	51	41	37	38	40
Number of students tested	102	105	61	75	74
2. African American Students					
Met Standard	100	97	97	93	93
Commended	31	34	38	40	36
Number of students tested	31	39	34	19	18
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Met Standard	100	97	100	94	100
Commended	63	52	38	48	60
Number of students tested	11	33	33	35	20
4. Special Education Students					
Met Standard	91	95	100	82	
Commended	26	23	18	45	
Number of students tested	24	22	20	13	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Met Standard	100	93	100	93	93
Commended	50	27	18	27	36
Number of students tested	18	17	18	20	15
6. Asian					
Met Standard	100	100	96	100	96
Commended	64	43	54	54	54
Number of students tested	25	27	26	33	30
<p>NOTES: Students who achieve Commended Performance have performed at a level that is considerably above the state passing standard and have shown a thorough understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills at the grade level tested. TAKS Modified (TAKS M) is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards and is designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements for TAKS M for whom TAKS is not appropriate. TAKS M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but the assessment itself has been simplified through modifications in format (larger font, fewer items per page, etc.) and test design (fewer answer choices, simpler vocabulary and sentence structure, etc.). TAKS M is administered for the same grades and subjects as TAKS. Spanish-version TAKS M assessments are not available. Linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) is a special administration of TAKS for LEP-exempt recent immigrants. Linguistic accommodations are made in order to assist students in overcoming language barriers and to provide a meaningful assessment of academic knowledge and skills.</p>					