



## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

12PA1

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 2011-2012 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 foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
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

12PA1

All data are the most recent year available.

## DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
 (per district designation): 1 Middle/Junior high schools  
1 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
7 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 12322

## 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: 1
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 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		<b>6</b>	0	0	0
K	42	50	92		<b>7</b>	0	0	0
1	46	48	94		<b>8</b>	0	0	0
2	51	33	84		<b>9</b>	0	0	0
3	49	45	94		<b>10</b>	0	0	0
4	0	0	0		<b>11</b>	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		<b>12</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>								<b>364</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
8 % Asian  
6 % Black or African American  
2 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
81 % White  
3 % 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 2010-2011 school year: 6%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	19
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	4
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	23
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	361
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.06
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	6

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 4%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 15

Number of non-English languages represented: 6

Specify non-English languages:

Hindi, Portuguese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13%

Total number of students who qualify: 48

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: 18%

Total number of students served: 64

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>21</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>28</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>22</u>	<u>1</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>
Total number	<u>42</u>	<u>18</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:

17:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

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	_____ %
<b>Total</b>	<b>_____ 0%</b>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

Ridge Park Elementary School serves a diverse population of students in kindergarten through third grade. Committed to academic excellence for all students, Ridge Park staff focuses on developing students who are well prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. For over fifty years, our school has been closely tied to the community, creating a special place that celebrates differences and honors traditions. Our strong traditions coupled with a distinct educational mission unequivocally qualify Ridge Park for Blue Ribbon status.

Ridge Park Elementary is a unique, one-story school located in the suburban Philadelphia area. It is a microcosm of the Colonial School District which serves over 4,700 students. The school provides a full-day kindergarten program, hosts the district's elementary autistic support program, and boasts a highly involved, engaged parent-teacher organization.

The National Blue Ribbon Award gives recognition to schools that are producing outstanding and consistent results for all students regardless of race or socioeconomic status. Ridge Park consistently yields superior results across all subgroups. Over the years, Ridge Park students have demonstrated sustained excellence in the areas of Reading and Mathematics on the Pennsylvania System of Schools Assessment (PSSA). This past school year, all third grade students scored in the proficient or advanced range on the Reading and Mathematics PSSA.

Ridge Park teachers implement a multitude of best practices in the classroom to meet the instructional needs of all students, including students with IEPs, English Language Learners, and students that are economically disadvantaged. The school provides all students with an appropriate and rigorous instructional program. Strategic interventions are designed to provide at-risk students with supports needed to be academically successful. A comprehensive Student Support Team identifies students who are at-risk and designs a personalized plan for the student. Mathematics and reading coaches work with staff to analyze assessment data and to provide remediation and enrichment. Ridge Park also implements a before-school program called "Rise and Shine" to provide further support to students in the areas of mathematics and reading.

The mission of the Colonial School District stresses that it will provide learning experiences which instill common societal values, develop critical thinking skills, value human diversity, and prepare a generation of lifelong learners to inherit and lead our complex society. This mission is ubiquitously cultivated each day at Ridge Park. Ridge Park focuses on educating the whole child. There is an assortment of programs within the school to spark the various interests of the students. All students attend a daily specialist class in the areas of physical education, music, art, health, library, technology, and guidance. A dynamic music program exists in which each grade-level performs a concert for the students and parents. Each year, the third grade choir performs in the community and also sings the national anthem at a Philadelphia Phillies game. Other programs include a "Walk Run" before-school program to keep students active, a student-run post office, curriculum-focused field trips for students to learn outside of the school setting, art shows to display student work, and a field day for students to compete in a variety of athletic events. Ridge Park boasts many traditions. Students annually participate in the Thanksgiving play, plant trees to observe Earth Day, and celebrate the Chinese New Year with a special party. Staff and students also join the high school's band and color guard each fall for the community parade.

Ridge Park's influence in the community is profound. During the month of December, the school works with the Colonial Neighborhood Council during its annual "Families in Need" project to donate holiday gifts to needy families. In February, the school partners with Whole Foods to hold its annual "Food Drive" where students bring in more than 1,500 items and Whole Foods donates over 400 more. The

school's artwork is displayed at BJ's as the company has adopted Ridge Park for its "Adopt a School" program. Throughout the school year, the Ridge Park PTO partners with a variety of local businesses in the community to help with its fundraising efforts.

Ridge Park achieves this unparalleled level of success because of its hard-working teachers, dedicated support staff, engaged students, and involved parents. This partnership between school and community creates a sense of pride that is collaboratively shared by all stakeholders. It is a place where personal interactions, networked communications, and assembled cooperation are pervasive and critical to the effectiveness of the school's success. Ridge Park's tradition of excellence is due to the organic, personalized, and self-motivating culture that has been created and sustained over time.

## 1. Assessment Results:

A. Ridge Park uses the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) to determine student performance levels on grade-level standards in Reading and Mathematics. The Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) by Fountas and Pinnell is used to establish student developmental reading levels. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is an assessment used to regularly monitor students' development of pre-reading and early reading skills such as a phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and fluency. To provide diagnostic information on PA standards and sub-skills, guide classroom instruction, and estimate student attainment of the Reading and Mathematics standards, the 4-Sight assessment is used. Comparative data is also used to evaluate progress toward grade-level targets or goals and evaluate our relative level of student performance across the district, county and state.

The level of overall student performance is measured over a span of years to determine achievement trends and ensure continuous improvement. A baseline of individual student performance levels is established at the start of the school year with reference to state expectations and developmental norms. Teachers use this information to structure and implement instructional and student support processes. They measure success in terms of student growth, individually and in aggregate, against the same group and across different cohorts. Levels of performance are considered to be acceptable when there is an overall positive trend over time. At a minimum, students are expected to demonstrate a year's growth in performance on all standardized and common grade-level assessments. More generally, all students are considered proficient when they demonstrate an understanding of grade-level standards-based curriculum learning targets and are able to apply what they learned across different contexts.

B. The five year trend reveals continuous, high levels of improvement in the percentage of Ridge Park students scoring at or above the proficient level on the grade 3 PSSA Reading and Mathematics assessments. In 2007, 82% students scored at/above proficient in Reading and 89% in Mathematics. All students scored at/above proficient level in Reading and Mathematics in 2011. Most notable is the significant improvement in the percentage of grade 3 students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) scoring at/above proficient level in Mathematics, from 76% in 2007 to 100% in 2011. Also noteworthy is the increase in the percentage of students with IEPs scoring at/above proficient level in Reading, up from 72% in 2007 to 100% in 2011.

There has also been a substantial increase in the percentage of students scoring at the advanced level in Reading and Mathematics. In 2011, 61% of students scored at the advanced level in Reading, a 27% increase since 2007. In 2011, 97% of Ridge Park students scored at the advanced level in Mathematics, a 41% increase since 2007. Students with IEPs scoring at the advanced level in Reading also increased substantially. In Reading, students with IEPs scoring at the advanced level increased from 21% in 2007 to 58% in 2011. In Mathematics, students with IEPs scoring at the advanced level increased from 45% in 2007 to 96% in 2011.

Factors contributing to significant gains in student learning can be linked to administrative and teaching staff systematically collecting and rigorously analyzing quantifiable and observable evidence of individual learning and growth from multiple valid and reliable data sources. A web-based application for tracking student performance and meeting No Child Left Behind requirements is used to differentiate instructional programs and determine supports for struggling students. This application is used for progress monitoring of students with IEP's, student achievement, discipline referrals, and academic and behavioral interventions.

Families are viewed as an important source of information and insight about students. Members of the staff work collaboratively with colleagues and families to review data about student progress and to develop appropriate strategies for continued progress. Communication with families regarding students' progress in learning and performance is regular, productive, and meaningful.

For students who are not demonstrating growth, extended learning opportunities are offered. Academic supports are offered by teachers before, during and after the school day. Coverage schedules, common planning and team time, as well as professional learning communities (PLC) provide time for teachers to work collaboratively, using data to make informed instructional decisions within the school day. An additional planning period is built into the teachers' weekly schedule. This additional time is dedicated to collaborative analysis of student data and instructional planning.

Another factor contributing to high performance levels is the curriculum. The curriculum reflects state standards and a map encompassing a clear vision of student learning expectations at each grade level. The map forms a bridge between established standards and classroom practice by providing guidance for the organization of specific knowledge, skills, and student instruction.

Significant gains in student achievement over the past five years occurred largely due to daily and consistent assessment of student learning and implementation of a rigorous, viable curriculum. Performance expectations are aligned with curriculum and instruction in a coherent system consistent with the school's philosophy/mission. Ridge Park maintains a high-quality data system that enables all decision makers to access data in a timely fashion. Strategic use of data, focus on research-based curricular and instructional practices, differentiated professional development, and effective teacher and leadership practices have resulted in continued student improvement across all disaggregate groups.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

Ridge Park uses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to determine and monitor individual student knowledge and skills across all core content areas. Although our school has never been required to develop or submit School Improvement Plans to the state, Ridge Park staff sets annual achievement goals and develops an implementation plan for meeting those goals. The goals are established following extensive data review of student performance measures that include PSSA and district-wide common benchmark assessments. The building principal and the School Improvement Team, composed of strategically selected faculty members, set student achievement goals for PSSA. The School Improvement Plan is very similar to the PA Getting Results model and is established primarily to identify and remediate students at risk of not attaining proficiency based on state standards and curricular expectations.

For students not showing appropriate growth or not achieving proficiency, teachers plan and provide expanded and differentiated learning opportunities.

Interventions include:

1. Math and Literacy Remediation Programs (before and after school). Students eligible to receive additional instructional support by teachers attend either a before or after school remedial program. An assessment is administered to each student prior to the start of the program to determine special area(s) of need (e.g. computation skills, inference, etc.). A post-test is given at the end of the program to determine student progress. Students who do not show adequate growth receive additional support such as before and after school tutoring, flexible grouping, and differentiated instructional materials and resources.

2. Math and Reading Tutorial, Mentoring and Co-Teaching Support (during school). Students demonstrating difficulty meeting the benchmark standards receive additional support through co-teaching, tutoring and mentoring from their peers, middle and high school students, parents and grandparent volunteers, etc.

3. Summer Literacy Program. Research consistently shows struggling students may regress over the summer months and that such losses are cumulative, widening the gap each year between more proficient and less proficient students. Well-designed interventions such as a systematic, strategic summer program taught by highly trained staff, provide an opportunity to overcome the deleterious effects of summer learning loss. Our district provides targeted assistance in the summer to preclude summer reading loss. In addition to a school-based program, there is a K-2 community program offered to all students that reside in the Colonial School District attendance area, including those attending non-public schools. The goal of our summer literacy programs is to help students maintain or improve reading and writing skills using a balanced literacy approach. Students receive differentiated instruction and participate in shared and guided reading, literature circles, independent reading, teacher-student conferences, word study, and writing instruction using the writer's workshop model. The elementary summer literacy programs serve students currently enrolled in Kindergarten through grade five and is offered to students who are not reading at appropriate grade level. Three half-day programs operate on Monday through Friday during the months of June and July.

Our systematic, research-based summer school curriculum provides the impetus for optimal use of time during class and transitions. Strategically designed components include a balance of reading and writing using fiction and nonfiction texts. Instruction is designed to engage students with emphasis on differentiated instruction, purposeful centers, student collaboration, and integration of technology as warranted. Maximum class size is ten students. Frequent student monitoring using formative and summative data determines progress of reading behaviors, fluency, and writing. Teachers prepare clear parent reports as students exit the program.

Colonial School District's assessment results are clearly and effectively communicated to all district stakeholders. Such communication ensures understanding of the various components of the assessment results by all constituent audiences, as well as offering opportunities in which they can partner with the District in its effort to help all children become successful learners. This has also been accomplished through a variety of ways including surveys, forums, and discussions.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Through a differentiated, district-wide staff development program, the teachers at Ridge Park Elementary have had many opportunities to learn and share with their colleagues in other buildings. Specially designed sessions on topics such as formative and summative assessment, differentiated classroom instruction, and 21st century teaching and learning have allowed for cross-building articulation and an alignment of best practices across the district. Ridge Park teachers have often served as facilitators for these sessions, mentors to new teachers, and leaders in the New Teacher Induction Program. Elementary professionals from across the district have benefited from training by Ridge Park teachers in the areas of lesson planning and preparation, classroom environment and effective instruction.

Every two years, the district holds a Best Practices Fair in which many Ridge Park teachers design and facilitate staff development sessions on strategies that have proven to be successful with diverse populations of students. Teachers from across the district attend these sessions to deepen their understanding, and expand their use of research-based instructional approaches. Specific areas of knowledge and skill that have been shared by Ridge Park teachers include cooperative learning, discourse and questioning, and co-teaching strategies. Through their grade-level Professional Learning Communities and building-based focus groups, Ridge Park teachers have cultivated a team of teachers willing and able to share their expertise with colleagues in other buildings.

In 2011, Colonial School District was awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Staff Development Council (PSDC) for an innovative professional development opportunity that was based on exemplary student achievement. Ridge Park teachers participated in this program of study to expand their classroom differentiation of Math problem solving. Teachers learned new approaches to problem solving that foster student exploration and creativity, along with ways to scaffold complex problems for varied depths of

understanding, complexity and engagement. These teachers were instrumental in sharing this learning with their colleagues within and outside of their building.

#### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

Ridge Park Elementary School is committed to sustained partnerships with school families and community members in order to ensure student success. The overarching goals are to nurture balanced, healthy, and productive relationships with parents, to promote understanding of different cultures, and to build upon positive relationships by developing tools for ongoing communication between home and school. As part of the Colonial School District, Ridge Park adheres to the district parent involvement policy that delineates ongoing communication with parents and consistent, meaningful interactions involving student academic learning and other school-related activities that are linked to student achievement.

Strategies developed to nurture productive, instructionally focused relationships with parents include the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Parent Council, Colonial Instructional Television (CITV), Teachable Moments on CITV, ongoing communication from Food Services, Barnes and Noble Family Nights, the elementary literacy summer programs, summer reading lists, summer math packets, language arts and math nights highlighting curricular initiatives, Art Goes to School, K-3 digital library home access (MyON), and Read Across America guest readers from the community.

Strategies designed to promote understanding of different cultures include the annual kindergarten outreach, community pre-school outreach, Pupil Services opportunities such as parent trainings and family services, and translation services.

Strategies intended to build upon positive relationships by developing tools for ongoing communication between home and school include open house, report card conferences, the parent calendar, parent informational brochures, the CSD website, school newsletters, online school supply lists, Friday folders, and regular public relations outreach, e.g., grandparents, Reading Adventure on CITV, and newspaper articles. The PTO sponsors annual events such as the spaghetti dinner, ice cream social, Book Fair nights, and the end-of-year carnival. Multiple opportunities also exist for parents to volunteer their time and talents at Ridge Park.

Ridge Park staff is sensitive to parent and community input and seeks to actively listen to questions, concerns, and suggestions for continuous improvement. Forums such as surveys and checklists are used to gather data and determine action plans. Staff is committed to actualize the Colonial School District goals to enhance and expand communication with parents and community members.

## 1. Curriculum:

The curriculum in the Colonial School District (CSD) is aligned with state and national standards and developed using the Understanding by Design (UBD) framework. This curricular design focuses on developing and deepening students' understanding, recognizing that knowledge is always fluid, transferable to new contexts and transformable into new learning.

The elementary Language Arts curriculum includes three overlapping media of communication: oral, written and multi-media (visual representations of digital and electronic media) and is designed to help children learn to deal critically with a range of texts. Children are exposed to and involved in a numerous range of spoken, written and electronic texts on a daily basis. The curriculum is based on research and theory-based frameworks for literacy development and reflects recent advances in our understanding of teaching and literacy learning as well as the impact of new technologies on literacy. It is also reflective of the guidelines set forth by the National Reading Panel. The curriculum is specifically designed using the principles of a comprehensive, balanced approach to literacy that include modeled, shared, interactive, guided and independent approaches to reading and writing. It provides opportunities for teachers to guide, encourage and challenge students as they progress towards becoming successful, self-regulated learners.

The elementary mathematics curriculum is designed to ensure students learn mathematics with understanding, actively building new knowledge from experience and prior knowledge. Mathematical ideas are introduced in such a way that they build on one another, helping students to recognize the relationships among key mathematical ideas. Inquiry-based instructional materials support the mathematics curriculum, incorporating problem solving in a variety of contexts, while reflecting the importance of mathematical literacy in an increasingly technological society. Developing computational fluency with whole numbers is a primary goal of the elementary curriculum including understanding the base ten number system and its place value notation, the meaning of the operations and their relationships, basic addition and multiplication number combinations (the "facts") and their counterparts for subtraction and division, estimating reasonable results, interpreting problems embedded in contexts, and practicing, and consolidating accurate and efficient strategies for computing. It also includes developing curiosity about the characteristics of numbers and operations and learning to articulate, represent, and justify generalizations.

The elementary Social Studies curriculum is designed to provide the opportunity for every student to develop as knowledgeable and responsible citizens. Our students need the ability to apply 21st Century skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, contextual learning, communication, information and media literacy, creativity and innovation, and collaboration skills to carefully analyze and objectively evaluate historical and social issues. This approach begins with the study of family and local community in early elementary grades. The social studies program addresses content standards in the areas of civics and government, economics, geography, and history.

The elementary Science curriculum offers hands-on personal experiences with objects, materials and organisms in order to understand the natural world. Real-world applications provide the foundation for concept development and complex thinking. The inquiry-based approach helps students construct an understanding of science concepts through their own investigations and analyses, using laboratory equipment, student readings and interactive technology. The curriculum also helps students develop basic skills within the context of learning science through student readings, science journals, student projects, and the use of mathematics to quantify and communicate results of investigations and experiments.

All elementary students receive instruction in the specialist areas of art, music, physical education, library science (including instruction on the research process), and guidance by a certified specialist teacher on a weekly basis. Students also have technology as part of their specialist rotation. Their learning experiences with technology and digital resources meet the National Educational Technology Standards for students.

## **2. Reading/English:**

The reading curriculum, instruction, and instructional methods at Ridge Park reflect a comprehensive approach to literacy using a balanced literacy framework that incorporates reading and writing approaches of modeled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent experiences using a variety of print and electronic text. Colonial School District implements the research-based, balanced model to encourage collaboration among children, self-direction, and critical thinking, ensuring students are prepared to meet the literacy challenges of the 21st century. It provides opportunities for teachers to guide, encourage, and challenge students as they progress towards becoming successful, self-regulated learners.

Balanced literacy is a flexible organizational tool that facilitates strategic discourse so interactions between children and teachers provide opportunities for formative assessment and differentiated learning. In each component, teachers observe children's responses carefully and draw their attention to powerful examples that illustrate critical processes. The flexible elements in the balanced literacy framework are meant to provide opportunities to learn and teach. Emphasis is on a gradual release of responsibility model to ensure students take increased responsibility for their learning and have opportunities for varied demonstration of knowledge. Most important is the quality and effectiveness of interactions between children and teachers and between children and other children. It is not the components themselves but the teaching decisions within them that lead to new understandings.

The curriculum reflects a coherent instructional plan that is articulated across grades and aligned with assessment and resources for optimal implementation. The resources and scope and sequence of the K-3 language arts curriculum and assessment methods are carefully monitored and revised as needed to ensure students receive foundational reading skills in word recognition, comprehension instruction, and opportunities to acquire important communication skills in writing and discourse.

Ridge Park is committed to meeting the diverse academic needs of all students by strategically differentiating instruction to increase student mastery of essential content and skills. Teachers use formative and summative data, including local and standardized assessments to respond to their students' learning needs. Data is used to target students below level and strategize interventions, including small group and in-class interventions by reading specialists as well as before and after school help. Dedicated time is allotted weekly for professional learning time that allows grade-group teachers to continuously analyze data and make collaborative instructional decisions. Similarly, high achieving students are afforded opportunities to challenge them, including literature circles, discourse structures, and extensive print and digital resources.

## **3. Mathematics:**

The standards-based Mathematics curriculum reflects the importance of mathematical literacy in an increasingly technological society. Toward this end, students are provided multiple opportunities to apply Mathematics in meaningful ways as part of the learning process. The curriculum is designed to promote a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts through exploration, investigation, critical thinking and problem solving. Through classroom experiences that draw from both the real-world and mathematical contexts, students develop reasoning, judgment and decision making skills by using a variety of strategies.

Students are encouraged to solve problems that require them to work cooperatively and to use technology to explore and address relevant and interesting mathematical ideas. Ridge Park teachers consistently

employ cooperative learning strategies and structures to ensure common goals, individual accountability, shared responsibility, and equal engagement. Multiple opportunities are provided for students to communicate mathematically - "talk mathematics" and write about mathematics using rich math vocabulary to explain and clarify their own thinking. Through effective questioning techniques, Ridge Park teachers promote rich discourse within their teaching and among their students as they learn mathematics.

Formative assessment and differentiation are at the heart of mathematics instruction at Ridge Park. Teachers consistently use data to address the unique mathematical needs of their students through appropriate differentiated support, while providing a common foundation of challenging mathematics. Additional resources and supports such as increased learning time, flexible/small group instruction, peer mentoring and extension or enrichment tasks are made available to students in order to maximize the growth and potential for all.

Ridge Park teachers work together to not only ensure that students are taught the curriculum, but more importantly, that they are learning. Student learning is measured using data that includes benchmark assessments, unit assessments, quick checks, projects, student work, progress monitoring, teacher observation, anecdotal records, and exit slips. Grade level teams meet regularly to analyze this data and collaboratively plan for remediation, enrichment, and interventions. These teams continuously seek authentic ways to improve student success and evaluate their own effectiveness as part of the teaching and learning process.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

The Social Studies curriculum supports students in acquiring essential skills and knowledge based on the school's mission. The Social Studies curriculum engages students' intellects and imaginations, helping them to understand and appreciate the concepts of time and generations in relation to their family, local communities, school, the state and nation, and the cultures of other countries. The curriculum builds on historical and theoretical developments in what it means to be an educated citizen in a democracy. Critical thinking, focused on social and civic education, is fostered by using an integrated approach in which the social sciences are brought together to create one area of study. In this design, students' experiences are connected to the curriculum and they are encouraged to question "taken-for-granted views," and engage in dialogue and debate. This approach begins with the study of family and local community in early elementary and grows outward to the study of state, country, and the world as students progress through the higher grades. Biographies are used to teach history at the elementary level, helping students gain a greater understanding that history is a collection of narratives from different perspectives.

In today's ever changing society, learning to collaborate with others within a group is essential. Throughout the curriculum, students participate in activities, specifically in cooperative learning groups, to support development of social skills needed to deal with increasing social interdependence. By exploring the importance and necessity of rules and laws, students will be able to effectively use the skills learned to solve conflicts within their world. They will be able to identify fair versus unfair rules and laws. Students will be able to use what they learned to help them become productive citizens in the 21st century. It is our goal to help students understand what it means to become a responsible citizen, and to provide them with the qualities of effective leadership in their community.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

Ridge Park teachers implement research-based best practices in the classroom to improve student achievement. Teachers use assessment techniques to drive their instruction and use this data to differentiate lessons to best meet the needs of their students. The staff consistently incorporates technology to engage students in 21st century learning. All teachers have weekly professional learning time to meet with their grade-level partners to engage in meaningful conversations about student work, curriculum, and instruction. Teachers regularly participate in professional development and are experts in

authentically incorporating cooperative learning, effective questioning, and student discourse into their classrooms. This high-quality instruction fueled by professional learning is the cornerstone of Ridge Park's success.

In order to differentiate effectively, teachers are highly skilled at analyzing both formative and summative assessments to determine students' specific areas of academic need. Teachers create and regularly employ formative assessment techniques to gauge their students' level of understanding during lessons. Teachers are trained to utilize this data to plan future instruction with appropriate differentiation for specific students. Equally important, benchmark assessments are administered throughout the school year to provide teachers with current and meaningful data to plan for future differentiation.

Teachers differentiate their daily lessons to meet the academic needs of their students. They are trained to differentiate the curriculum by adapting what students learn, how students learn, and how students demonstrate their mastery of the knowledge or skills. In the classroom, students are constantly placed in purposeful, flexible groups according to their performance level. These flexible groups are utilized to both remediate and enrich students. Furthermore, during lessons students utilize various materials and resources based on their readiness, including games, manipulatives, visual aids, and graphic organizers. Teachers modify homework for particular students and consistently employ the use of a "menu" for students to self-select homework assignments.

All Ridge Park classrooms are equipped with the latest technology, including interactive white boards, digital document cameras, and desktop computers. Additionally, the school has wireless capabilities and there are over 50 laptops distributed in the various grade levels for student use. Teachers consistently utilize the technology in their classrooms to supplement their instruction and engage their students. Teachers collaboratively plan with both the librarian and technology teacher to authentically integrate technology into their instructional program through the use of meaningful projects and activities. Students create multi-media slideshows, participate in discussion boards, and research topics using online databases.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Teacher professional development is valued at both the district- and building-level in Colonial School District. The organization's student achievement goals are grounded in research-based instructional practices that include: formative assessment and the differentiation of instruction, cooperative learning, questioning and discourse and the integration of 21st century skills.

Ridge Park teachers have facilitated and participated in district-wide professional development that is designed to increase student attainment of the academic standards. Examples of this include sessions related to effective balanced literacy instruction and the administration of quality, leveled reading assessments. In Math, teachers learn about and share differentiated Math practices. They have deepened their understanding of the academic standards and how that aligns to local and state assessments. New strategies for enhancing student's oral and written communication and collaboration skills are continuously explored. Additionally, teachers are trained to use technology and digital resources that support the curriculum and enhance instruction. This professional learning is then sustained through the implementation of professional learning communities.

Ridge Park's Professional Learning Time (PLT) is a 45-minute block of time provided by the district that allows teams of teachers to meet and collaborate on ways to effectively carry out focused plans for improving student success. Each professional learning team creates a unique plan to maximize this time that includes identifying learning needs, developing an action plan, collecting evidence of student achievement and analyzing data. Strategic next steps are then planned and followed-up on in future sessions.

An additional and unique way in which Ridge Park ensures collective commitment to school-wide initiatives is through our monthly “Chat N’ Chew.” This is a time set aside for the staff to come together, reflect on their practice, and collaboratively identify ways to improve their instructional program. Sessions might include formal presentations on topics, reading and discussing journal articles or books, and informal dialogue around the implementation of programs and methodologies. This year’s topics at Ridge Park have focused on climate and culture, checking for understanding, and teacher sharing of best practices.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The leadership style at Ridge Park Elementary is one that is shared, collaborative, and distributive. Shared leadership was critical in the change of leadership over the summer. The previous principal has remained with Colonial School District as a principal at the secondary level; therefore communication was ongoing between the current and former principals. Both principals regularly met over the summer to discuss students, staff, and programming and this communication is ongoing, continuing the tradition of excellence at Ridge Park.

Collaborative leadership is essential to success at Ridge Park. This leadership approach begins with our School Improvement Team (SIT) led by the principal and a team of approximately ten teachers. This team, whose motto is Together Educating Always Motivating, develops a school-wide plan that targets improvement of student achievement. Once developed by the SIT team, the plan is shared with the remainder of the staff. All staff is encouraged to contribute to the plan to ensure collective ownership by the entire staff. The SIT team meets continuously throughout the school year to review and monitor implementation of the plan in order to revise appropriately. The School Improvement Team is the foundation of ongoing and sustained improvement at Ridge Park Elementary.

Teacher leadership is critical at Ridge Park. Teachers lead professional development sessions, content-specific committees, develop curriculum, and facilitate their own professional learning time (PLT). Additionally, Ridge Park conducts monthly professional development for the purpose of discussing best practices and sharing effective classroom strategies. Teacher-led committee meetings focused on reading and math curriculum and instructional strategies are held every other month.

At Ridge Park, the principal serves as the instructional leader whose vision guides the School Improvement Team and all members of the school community. The principal oversees the professional learning community, ensuring that the overarching focus is continuous student achievement. Overall, the principal’s mission aligns with Colonial School District’s goal of “promoting a culture of collaboration, innovation, and inspiration.”

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: Current Year Publisher: Pennsylvania Department of Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Mar	Apr	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% At/Above Proficient	100	99	97	93	89
Advanced	97	88	89	74	56
Number of students tested	90	83	88	82	79
Percent of total students tested	97	97	97	97	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient			83	60	
Advanced			75	30	
Number of students tested	8	6	12	10	9
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	3	3	4	8	1
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient	100	100		67	
Advanced	100	100		67	
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient	100	97	89	80	76
Advanced	96	92	75	60	45
Number of students tested	24	36	28	25	29
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested			1	1	
<b>6.</b>					
% At/Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12PA1

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: Current Year Publisher: Pennsylvania Department of Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Mar	Apr	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% At/Above Proficient	100	99	94	93	82
Advanced	61	66	67	40	34
Number of students tested	90	83	88	82	79
Percent of total students tested	97	97	97	97	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient			83	70	
Advanced			58	20	
Number of students tested	8	6	12	10	9
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	3	3	4	8	1
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1		3	
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient	100	97	82	76	72
Advanced	58	53	46	16	21
Number of students tested	24	36	28	25	29
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% At/Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested		1	1		
<b>6.</b>					
% At/Above Proficient					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12PA1