



# PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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12PA16

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

12PA16

All data are the most recent year available.

## DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
 (per district designation): 1 Middle/Junior high schools  
1 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
6 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 12793

## SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Rural
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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	27	35	62		<b>7</b>	0	0	0
1	35	30	65		<b>8</b>	0	0	0
2	39	45	84		<b>9</b>	0	0	0
3	40	42	82		<b>10</b>	0	0	0
4	35	36	71		<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: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
0 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
3 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
92 % 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: 10%

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.	17
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	36
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	353
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.10
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	10

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 46%

Total number of students who qualify: 169

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: 39

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>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</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>16</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>
Total number	<u>39</u>	<u>13</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: 23:1

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	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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?

## PART III - SUMMARY

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The mission of the Spring Grove Area School District, in partnership with families, businesses and community organizations, is to provide a safe and active learning environment, that will challenge and motivate all students to attain their full potential and reach proficiency on state assessments, while preparing them for the future. The Paradise Elementary staff takes pride in the district's mission statement as every teacher works hard to make sure that each student succeeds. The staff at Paradise Elementary School is dedicated to providing the students with a high quality education while also addressing the various academic, emotional, social, and physical needs of each student.

Paradise is an elementary school that provides an educational journey for students in kindergarten through fourth grade. In addition to the core curriculum, Paradise Elementary offers gifted and learning support classes, Title I reading support, speech and language support, guidance, intervention support, occupational therapy, and hearing itinerant services. The Paradise students benefit from forty minutes of instruction in a specialty area (library, technology, wellness, physical education, art, and music) each day during the six-day cycle. In addition, the students have opportunities to participate in fourth grade intramurals, Spanish club, and Envirothon activities. Instrumental lessons are available to students in fourth grade, while students in third and fourth grade have the opportunity to play a string instrument. Paradise Elementary students are provided with before-school or after-school programs during which students in need are supplied with extra support in math and reading. The staff at Paradise also offers an enrichment program before or after school to some third and fourth grade students.

The scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) reflect Paradise Elementary's desire to be a high performing school. The Paradise teachers have aligned the curriculum with the Pennsylvania State Standards to ensure that the students meet the state's required expectations. Teachers thoroughly analyze the resources used to facilitate that learning to make sure that each standard is being addressed with rigor in a timely fashion. Paradise Elementary has achieved AYP status every year and is currently proud to be ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the state of Pennsylvania for its math scores on the PSSA in the area of achievement for third and fourth grade. Paradise has been recognized as a Title I Distinguished School in both reading (2009-2010) and math (2010-2011).

These accomplishments reflect the hard work of the Paradise Elementary teachers. Data is analyzed monthly at grade level team meetings. Individual students are discussed at Child Study meetings during which benchmark data and progress monitoring data are analyzed by a team consisting of the classroom teacher, school counselor, reading specialists, learning support teachers, school psychologist, and elementary principal. Interventions are discussed and goals are made to help the students achieve success. Also, incoming kindergarten students are assessed and, if needed, are offered the opportunity to attend a summer pre-kindergarten program to better prepare them for kindergarten.

Paradise Elementary School has an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Meetings are held monthly and are attended by the principal, teacher representatives, and parents. The PTO sponsors two educational assemblies for the student body each year, as well as grade level field trips. In addition, the PTO holds various activities such as Spring Spree, Santa's Secret Shop, Family Bingo Night, Movie Night, and Book Fair. The PTO has also worked with the reading specialists to sponsor a literacy night where parents and students experienced an entire evening devoted to the importance of reading.

The school also recognizes that providing for the Paradise Elementary families and community contributes to the success of the school. Paradise has organized canned food drives and hat, mitten, scarf, and glove drives that directly benefit the needy families in the surrounding community. This past year the school partnered with a church that meets in the building to provide canned foods, turkeys, and Christmas gifts for seventeen families with children whom attend Paradise Elementary. The school has provided

resources to families and helped families tap into local agencies to get assistance with gas/heating bills, clothing, and/or food.

Traditionally, at Paradise, there have been many parent volunteers. It is not uncommon to walk through the halls and see dedicated parents volunteering their time to assist the students with various academic tasks. Retired teachers continuously come back to volunteer in classrooms and work with students.

Building relationships is very important in this community. Many college supervisors, student teachers, and various other visitors comment that there is something special about Paradise. The answer is simple. Paradise Elementary is a family and everyone cares about each other. That means helping each other through the difficult times and celebrating successes. Paradise Elementary is a family and the staff is excited about this Blue Ribbon nomination!

## 1. Assessment Results:

A. Spring Grove Area School District, including Paradise Elementary School, adopted a standards-aligned reporting system for grades. This reporting system is used with district and state assessments, as well as students' report cards at the elementary level. When scores are reported, the key used includes: Advanced, consistently demonstrates a high standard of work; Proficient, adequately demonstrates satisfactory work; Basic, occasionally demonstrates adequate work, but relies on guidance; Below Basic, even with guidance does not demonstrate satisfactory work. Paradise Elementary, just like the Pennsylvania Department of Education, considers the scores of Advanced and Proficient to be acceptable and the scores of Basic and Below Basic to be below the standard. By utilizing a standards-based reporting system in every area, students, teachers, and parents experience a common and consistent language.

Currently, Paradise Elementary School administers *4-Sight* assessments in third and fourth grade three times per year. Answers are entered into a data system, Performance Tracker, which transfers the answers into the four levels of Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic. Due to the fact that the *4-Sight* assessments correlate to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), teachers use this data to guide instruction. Also, when results for PSSA scores are sent to parents, they are familiar and comfortable with these performance levels.

B. Paradise Elementary School has made gains overall in the past five years. For third grade students in the area of reading, the scores have increased by seven percentage points between the 2006-2007 assessment and the 2010-2011 assessment. For fourth grade students in the area of reading, the scores have increased by thirteen percentage points between the 2006-2007 assessment and the 2010-2011 assessment.

The math PSSA scores in third grade have increased by more than eight percentage points between the 2006-2007 school year and the 2010-2011 school year. The students in third grade during the 2010-2011 school year reached 99% proficiency. The students in fourth grade increased their math PSSA scores from 2006-2007 to 2010-2011 by thirteen percentage points. The students in fourth grade during the 2010-2011 school year reached 99% proficiency.

These gains are reflective of the changes that have taken place at Paradise in regards to using data to drive instruction. Teachers do not solely rely on curriculum based measures to determine success. Teachers analyze benchmark data such as *4-Sight* and previous PSSA scores to determine what instructional changes need to occur to meet school and state benchmark scores. These significant gains are a result of carefully looking at the eligible content provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Teachers are able to guide their instruction and ensure that all students have been taught the critical information. When all teachers in a grade level have a common focus, identified through the eligible content, the students benefit.

Another reason for the increased scores is due to reading specialists and instructional support teachers gathering resources for regular education teachers to use during their daily instruction to address eligible content and state standards. Not only do the support staff provide resources to regular education teachers, they also work with students to meet their independent needs. Students are placed in intervention groups that target student-specific areas of need. Throughout the day, students who require interventions receive research-based instruction by highly qualified teachers. All students at Paradise Elementary are placed into intervention groups based upon their specific needs identified through benchmark data.

Although Paradise Elementary School has met Adequately Yearly Progress in the past five years, a gap existed on the most recent PSSA reading assessment in third and fourth grade between all students and various subgroups including students who receive free and reduced lunches, students with an

Individualized Education Plan, and students receiving Title I services. To close that gap, all teachers at Paradise Elementary School go above and beyond to work with students' regular education teachers and parents. One way in which Paradise Elementary aims to close the gap is through a program titled Extended Learning. For approximately three months, students who have lower scores on *4-Sight* assessments (or other assessments at the lower grades) are invited to stay for an additional hour of instruction in reading and/or math. This program is staffed by teachers at Paradise and is of no cost to parents. This program works with students on eligible content through teacher directed activities and computer programs.

Reading specialists aim to close the gap by hosting many events that invite parents and families to come to school. These events are used as parent education to explain what is happening in regards to reading instruction in school. This allows parents to continue working at home with their children in providing a comprehensive, collaborative education. Regular education teachers also host events that aim to educate parents about the curriculum their child is learning in school including curriculum night and math night. Parents attending these events leave with materials and resources that can be used at home to practice essential skills. By including parents in these sessions, all students have a better opportunity to receive consistent information between school and home.

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

With the development of the Response to Intervention and Instruction process in education, schools have started to take a different look at how students are educated. Paradise Elementary has adopted the philosophy of data-driven instruction to ensure that all students receive the education they need to be proficient on state assessments. Paradise Elementary uses a variety of assessments to gain student data. Assessments include, but are not limited to, Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA 2), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS Next), Monitoring Basic Skills Progress (MBSP), 4-Sight, PSSA, writing assessments, and curriculum based assessments. The assessments used as school-wide screening tools are administered three times per year. This benchmark data plays an integral role in determining student interventions and instruction. Paradise Elementary employs a part-time data secretary to enter benchmark data, progress monitoring data, and run data reports.

Paradise Elementary currently has a forty minute time period every day in which first through fourth grade instructional staff provides instruction or interventions to all students in those grades based upon student data. Students in those intervention groups are monitored on a consistent basis to ensure that they are responding appropriately to the interventions. When more benchmark data becomes available, teachers also use this data to determine the correct placement of students and the appropriateness of interventions. Those students who do not require intensive intervention are placed in groups that receive reading instruction and enrichment opportunities through various programs and strategies.

Students who meet certain criteria receive supplementary supports at Paradise Elementary School to ensure academic success in addition to the common intervention time. Currently, Paradise Elementary has two reading specialists who use criteria to identify and work with students who have reading difficulties. Along with pulling students in small groups for support, the reading specialists also go into kindergarten extended day classrooms and teach a research-based reading intervention program. Students who need further interventions can meet with the Intervention Support Teacher, who delivers small group, research-based interventions. Some students benefit from instruction in a reverse inclusion setting with a learning support teacher.

Teachers in third and fourth grade use data from the *4-Sight* to constantly monitor student progress in regards to the PSSA. With the use of Performance Tracker, reports are run breaking down student scores into the Pennsylvania State Standards. With this data, teachers are able to see the specific questions and standards that require more instruction. The teachers often share the results with the students so they are aware of areas of need. The fourth grade teachers have another avenue of data—the PSSA from third grade. With this data, fourth grade teachers are able to focus reading and math instruction to strengthen

students' skills in those areas. Along with data collected from Performance Tracker, fourth grade teachers also use Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) and E-Metric data to look at students' projected progress.

Communication plays an integral role in ensuring student success on state assessments. Teachers meet collaboratively once per cycle to analyze and discuss particular students, data, and any changes that might need to take place to students or interventions. Not only are there collaboration days once per six-day cycle, but Paradise Elementary also has monthly grade level meetings in which student progress, pacing of content, and assessment data are discussed. Within the school calendar, there are three in-service half days that are devoted to analyzing data. Although teachers are the ultimate expert on their students, Paradise Elementary provides opportunities to discuss academic concerns of students with all stakeholders. Paradise Elementary participates in Child Study Team meetings five times per year. At these scheduled meetings, students' regular education teacher, reading specialist teacher, special education teacher (if applicable), school principal, school counselor, intervention support teacher, and school psychologist come together to analyze students' progress monitoring data, benchmark data, and share concerns over academic progress. These meetings are data driven and can result in students being tested for a specific learning disability, change in interventions or supports, or bringing parents in to school to discuss concerns.

As an elementary school, the roles parents play in students' education are crucial. Therefore, parents and teachers are in constant communication during conferences and other times a teacher or parent feels it is necessary. Not only are parent teacher conferences in the fall an opportunity to discuss strengths and areas of concern, teachers and parents also work together to develop a plan of action. During conferences in early March, parents and teachers are able to check on the status of the plan and determine any further actions that might need to take place. Along with parents, the community receives updates regarding assessment achievement through newsletters.

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

Sharing successful strategies from Paradise Elementary begins at the top with the principal setting the example and expectation of "paying it forward." As a former PA State Teacher of the Year nominee, Paradise Elementary's principal has presented and shared various instructional strategies and best practices at the Pennsylvania State Teacher of the Year conference.

As part of a Title I Academic Achievement Award in 2009-2010, Paradise Elementary reading specialists traveled to Pittsburgh, PA to share and present a workshop entitled "The Power of Poetry" at the Pennsylvania Title I Improving School Performance Conference. Many districts and teachers across the state gathered to learn how the use of poetry can enhance daily curriculum while increasing fluency in school and at home with readers needing extra practice and support.

Reaching out to other districts and families closer to home, the Paradise Elementary reading specialists presented research-based games and activities for comprehension at the Lincoln Intermediate Unit in New Oxford, PA for the Title I Parent Gathering. For the past three years, these workshops have helped both parents and teachers motivate students to practice comprehension skills in a meaningful and engaging manner. Teachers, administrators, and parents from York County are represented at this gathering.

Paradise Elementary has a dedicated team of teachers who not only seek to improve their own instructional "tool kits," but willingly share successful lessons and strategies with other schools and teachers in the Spring Grove Area School District. One opportunity for such sharing is at the district in-services. Paradise Elementary teachers and principal have volunteered to present numerous workshops to other teachers within the district. The gifted support teacher presented Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), which is a research-based program that uses peer tutoring to improve students' reading and/or math skills. Reading specialists provided training for teachers on the power of read alouds in helping students make connections to text and improve comprehension. Some fourth grade teachers at Paradise Elementary presented ideas and techniques from Spencer Kagan which help kids retain

information better by using movement as a way to activate learning. The principal presented on John Medina's Brain Rules and how those are applicable to the instruction and learning in the classroom.

The teaching staff at Paradise Elementary has committed themselves to not only learning and implementing new instructional methods and best practices, but sharing what has been authentically executed in their own classrooms.

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

Paradise Elementary successfully engages families and community members as partners in student success. The school offers many opportunities for involvement and actively encourages participation in programs and events that supplement and reinforce student learning. All of the strategies for involving parents and the community share the fundamental trait of being student-focused.

Paradise Elementary reading specialists offer a “Books & Breakfast” morning for each grade level, which provides breakfast to Title I students and their parents who attend these before-school events where parents are taught reading strategies to use with their children and get an opportunity to read with them at school.

Programs that directly support the curriculum often include an element of coaching parents to engage them as active partners in increasing student success. In addition to a school-wide Open House (Back To School Night) and school-wide Curriculum Fairs, Paradise Elementary holds grade-level Curriculum Nights in Math and Communication Arts, where parents get to see student work displayed and learn strategies for working at home with their student to increase success in these subjects. Additionally, students often perform their musical talents at these events.

By offering many opportunities covering a wide range of subjects and activities, the staff maximizes the probability that a parent will get involved at school. Examples of such opportunities offered at Paradise include PTO fundraisers, holiday food drives, a very active parent volunteer program in the classrooms, student performances, literacy festivals, PTO-sponsored school-based and off-site activities, Jump Rope for Heart, Laps for Learning, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Cooperative Games Day, and many others. The key to parent involvement is offering a wide variety of ways and times (before, during, and after school) to get parents involved.

Frequent and meaningful communications from school to home, in a variety of formats and media, are successfully employed at Paradise. Building-wide outreach includes the principal’s monthly newsletter and activity calendar, the school counselor’s newsletter, a school website, a recorded Storyline, and minutes from monthly PTO meetings. Individual teachers also send home newsletters; maintain websites; contact parents by email, telephone, and in writing; and send home daily behavior calendars or charts to keep parents informed and involved. Newsletters at Paradise showcase student achievements and include photographs of students engaged in learning to make them meaningful and relevant to parents.

Paradise Elementary has formed partnerships with community members to help build student success. A local community church offers a homework club one day a week at Paradise Elementary School. The school partners with local fire companies to provide safety education during fire prevention week. A School Resource Officer visits the school and teaches lessons on bus safety, bullying, and various other topics. Students at Paradise Elementary learn about being valuable members of their community through Junior Achievement programs. In addition, students participate in art contests and essay contests through the Women's Club. The Rotary Club has also provided some of the students with their own personal dictionaries.

The support and involvement of parents and the community are essential for increasing student achievement. By offering a wide variety of student-centered opportunities for involvement, Paradise Elementary actively engages families and community members in the success of all students.

## 1. Curriculum:

Paradise Elementary is committed to the school district's mission to create and maintain a safe and active learning environment that challenges and motivates all students to attain their full potential and prepares them for the future. The school strives to bring students to the maximum of their abilities while protecting their unique personalities and characteristics. The core curriculum is closely aligned to the Pennsylvania State Standards. Curriculum committees review curriculum and new materials on a cyclical basis to maintain high standards and remain current. These committees also create pacing guides to ensure consistency throughout the curriculum. Teachers utilize research-based materials and inquiry based programs to convey the curriculum. Specialists teach to the standards of their respective curriculum, as well. Student achievement is fostered by differentiated instruction, intervention, and extended day programs. A summer pre-kindergarten program and an extended day kindergarten program have been implemented.

The Reading/Language Arts curriculum is designed to create a balanced literacy approach that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension strategies, and vocabulary development. The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Reading program is utilized in kindergarten through fourth grade to support our curriculum. My Sidewalks is used as a support program for some of our students in kindergarten. Writing instruction is included within the Reading/Language Arts block. Writing instruction begins in kindergarten with Kid Writing and continues across all grade levels to include narrative, informational and persuasive pieces of writing.

In math, teachers used the PA State Standards to develop a rigorous curriculum. A pacing guide was created to ensure that all of the standards are covered. Houghton Mifflin Math is the main resource used to convey the core math curriculum in kindergarten through fourth grade. The key concepts taught are number and operations, problem solving, data analysis and probability, geometry, measurement, algebraic concepts, reasoning and proof, and communicating and representation. All units begin with open ended investigations allowing informal observations of students' prior knowledge. Daily lessons include brief reviews of prior targeted skills followed by an engagement activity designed to introduce the new information, whole group instruction, guided practice, independent practice, and assessment and closure. Students are afforded access to a wide variety of math materials and are encouraged to explore and develop problem solving skills to promote higher level thinking.

The Science curriculum utilizes an inquiry based science model. Students are actively involved in engaging science experiments that allow them to investigate earth, life and physical science concepts. Students make discoveries through these investigations that allow them to develop a deeper understanding of science concepts and they develop and use process skills such as observing, questioning, predicting and interpreting results.

The Social Studies curriculum includes the study of history, geography and government. The history of Pennsylvania and the United States is a focus in third and fourth grades. Good citizenship and following rules and laws are ongoing foci at all grade levels. Paradise Elementary implements this with a school wide program (School Wide Effective Behavior Support) designed to promote good citizenship and behavior in the school.

Technology instruction is provided as a formal class in grades first through fourth once a six day cycle. Kindergarten students are introduced to computer skills through programs such as iStation. Students are taught keyboarding skills, word processing, navigation of the web and research. Students are able to utilize technology skills across the curriculum through multimedia resources such as computer labs, netbooks, iPods, document cameras, interactive white boards, and digital cameras.

The library at Paradise Elementary houses many resources for staff and students. Each class in the school visits the library for formal instruction once a six day cycle beginning in kindergarten and continuing through fourth grade. The students study authors and learn characteristics of many different styles of writing. This integrates with many lessons in Reading/Language Arts. Parts of the library curriculum are also integrated with technology in the form of research projects. Students are able to research information, develop note taking skills and cite sources.

Music education occurs in grades first through fourth once a six day cycle. Students are exposed to many musical genres and a variety of instruments. Students experience elements of rhythm, melody, harmony and musical expression. Older students are eligible to participate in instrumental lessons to further develop musical talent and techniques. Their talents are showcased throughout the year with vocal and instrumental concerts with very large audiences.

Art instruction occurs once during a six day cycle. The curriculum focuses on the elements of art, the principles of art, and the historical and cultural influences on art. A variety of media is used so students can experience both two and three dimensional art. Students learn the art vocabulary necessary to be able to discuss their own art and the works of professional artists. While learning to express themselves creatively through experimentation, the students learn valuable problem solving skills while also making cross-curricular connections. Each student maintains a portfolio and selects artwork from it for displays at the school's Curriculum Fair and Art Show. In addition parents and community volunteers are trained to present the "Art Goes to School" program, which includes a portfolio of well-known art prints and learning activities, to individual classrooms.

Physical Education/Wellness Education occurs twice in a six day cycle for students in first through fourth grades. The Physical Education program focuses on motor skills, physical fitness and endurance, and provides the students opportunities to be active and learn the importance maintaining healthy active lifestyles. Students receive formal swimming instruction through a district-wide aquatics program in kindergarten through fourth grade. Students also participate in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart and Laps for Learning. Wellness Education focuses on five basic components: communication, self-esteem, decision making, goal setting and stress management. The curriculum is designed to help students develop skills to make positive decisions to enhance their diet, exercise, safety and overall well-being.

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

At Paradise Elementary, a standards-aligned reading curriculum and instruction are critical aspects of success. The communication arts curriculum is written by a team of grade level teachers, many of whom have master's degrees in curriculum and instruction. Each aspect of eligible content is reviewed and aligned to the standards. Curriculum maps are established and utilized across the district to ensure every student is receiving adequate and appropriate instruction. In order to support the goals for student achievement, teachers across kindergarten through sixth grade levels, along with reading specialists and learning support teachers have selected Houghton Mifflin Journeys as the main resource. This main curricular resource was chosen as the first tier of instruction due to its strong fundamentals and the range of genres it offers for all levels of guided reading within a classroom.

Curriculum and instruction are monitored and adjusted through district reading assessments. Assessments are given three times a year using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next), Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA 2) and 4-Sight. For students who are not meeting grade level benchmarks for reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension, Title I services are provided by reading specialists. In this second tier of instruction, programs such as Leveled Literacy Intervention, Soar to Success, Read Naturally, and My Sidewalks are used based on student need.

Paradise students acquire foundational reading skills and comprehension during whole and small group instruction within their classroom setting. Students receive uninterrupted communication arts instruction, including spelling, grammar, writing, core reading comprehension instruction and guided

reading. Paradise teachers have had training from Debbie Diller using her model of guided reading. Many of the teachers have had the opportunity to observe Mrs. Diller teach their own small group of students.

In addition to the main reading instruction time, Paradise has a common intervention time where students are grouped homogeneously and specific needs are addressed. During this time, students may attend a research-based enrichment program such as PALS or literature circles. Other students are provided with core support in writing workshop or thematic units. Those in need of more intense reading interventions are instructed with other research-based programs like Project Read, Wilson Reading and Phonics for Reading with the Instructional Support Teacher or Special Education teacher.

With common intervention time, teachers have a planned collaboration once each six day cycle. Intervention groups, programs, and progress monitoring are discussed and reviewed. For additional reinforcement and enrichment opportunities beyond the school day, Paradise offers an extended day program. Students in need of enrichment and extra intervention are invited to attend and are instructed by Paradise staff beyond the school day. It is evident that reading instruction continues to be a major focus for Paradise Elementary.

### **3. Mathematics:**

Paradise Elementary implements a standards-based mathematics program. The program is designed to build on the content from kindergarten through fourth grade and focuses around number and operations, measurement, geometry, algebraic concepts, data analysis and probability, reasoning and proof, and communication and representation. Lessons also look to incorporate cross-curricular areas such as writing open-ended responses, drawing graphic models of information gathered, and life-application such as using measurement tools in science. Each grade level has developed and implements a pacing guide which fosters continuity and accountability among classrooms.

To support instructional practices, all classrooms are equipped with technology that enables teachers to instruct with interactive lessons. Examples include use of the interactive whiteboards, hand-held pads, iPod touches, and document cameras. All classrooms are furnished with age-appropriate manipulatives that encourage students to be actively engaged in the process of learning mathematics. In previous years, third grade students participated in a county-wide “Math-Madness” tournament that motivated students to apply the skills and strategies taught. Students work together as a team to solve open-ended word problems. These questions are structured and scored using the PSSA format.

Data drives many of the decisions used to guide instruction. Teachers will regularly monitor the progress of each student through various means. This includes fluency as related to math facts, *4-Sight*, teacher-developed and common grade-level assessments. To meet the needs of students of varying ability, flexible grouping is implemented. This allows students who benefit from small group or more enriching environments to receive the instruction that fits their individualized needs. Some students are identified and invited to attend a pre-kindergarten program that focuses on skills not fully developed for entrance into the program. Students who are not meeting academic performance standards are also encouraged to participate in before or after school math extended learning programs at each grade level.

The teachers at Paradise Elementary are driven to develop and mold the mathematics curriculum to best fit the needs of their students. Teachers meet regularly to collaborate in curriculum committees and in monthly grade-level teams to discuss possible changes and improvements to the program.

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

Paradise Elementary adopted the FOSS (Full Option Science System) science program in 2007 as the primary resource for the science curriculum. FOSS is a research-based science program dedicated to improving the learning and teaching of science. The objectives and materials included in this program provide meaningful science education in order to prepare students for life in the 21st century.

The Pennsylvania System of State Assessment tests all fourth graders in science. Many of the essential skills measured on this test are components of the science curriculum. Some of the anchors for fourth grade include application of scientific knowledge to solve problems; changes in natural or human made systems, and the effects of those changes; conducting experiments by generating questions, designing investigations, and drawing conclusions; identifying tools for scientific tasks; recognizing adaptations, inherited traits, and interactions in living things; uses of Earth's resources, including sources of water and how it changes form; and forms and sources of energy.

The FOSS program provides modules, which beginning in kindergarten, cover many of these topics. The modules provide experiences for students in earth, life, and physical science. Kindergarten explores trees; first grade studies plants and balance/motion; second grade investigates solids and liquids and air and weather; third grade delves into measurement, water, and physics of sound; and fourth grade looks at structures of life, magnetism/electricity, and earth materials. These modules provide a developmental sequence specifically related to the cognitive stages of children's development. In each module, the learning moves from experience to abstraction, and all modules incorporate hands-on investigations. Students experience fewer topics which are covered in depth, as opposed to many topics that are briefly visited.

Paradise Elementary has achieved the following proficiency levels on the science PSSA test for fourth grade: 2008– 80%, 2009– 89%, 2010– 93%, and 2011– 95%.

The school also gives students the opportunity for additional science experiences throughout the grades. Some of these include the York County Envirothon for third and fourth grade students, first and second graders planting and mulching in the school's courtyard, third grade unit on Embryology provided by the York County 4H Club, and the school's wellness curriculum has lessons linked to science.

The science program at Paradise Elementary encourages lifelong learning. These lessons will go beyond the classroom by building students' curiosity and will stimulate them to develop questions and find answers to many challenges they may have in the future.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

Due to the diverse learning needs that exist at Paradise Elementary, a focus has been to provide as much differentiation as possible. Student needs, interests, behaviors, and modes of learning are all ways that teachers may group students based on the activity and the objective of the lesson. Guided reading is an example of how students are grouped within a classroom setting based on individual reading needs. Many guided reading lessons focus on the core communication arts skills, but revisit those skills using pieces of literature that are on the student's reading level. Other guided reading groups follow the Debbie Diller approach where students' needs are analyzed and then literature is chosen that lends itself well to helping students master those skills.

Paradise Elementary provides instruction to its students in specialized classrooms as well. There are learning support, Title I reading, gifted, and intervention support classrooms that all focus on meeting individual student needs in small group settings. Although those are small group settings, differentiation still occurs. For example, a third grade learning support classroom currently has students ranging from those still developing basic reading skills to those who are fluent readers and have reading comprehension as an educational goal. To address these diverse needs, the learning support teacher has her room set up in learning stations so that she can provide meaningful instruction in that classroom setting while still addressing individual learning goals and meeting grade level expectations.

In addition to differentiating instruction by grouping students, teachers also meet the diverse needs of their students by providing various instructional methods in their daily lessons. Direct instruction and inquiry based instruction are two types of educational styles used. LLI, Wilson, Project Read, and SRA Math are just a few examples of programs where students receive remediation through the use of teacher directed instruction. Inquiry based instruction occurs frequently in science and math as

students are not always given the steps, but are left to discover how to arrive at an answer through asking questions and experimentation. Reciprocal teaching is also another avenue used to facilitate learning, which is exemplified through the PALS program.

Tapping into student interests is especially important when looking at education in the 21st century. With living in a digital age, teachers have found ways to incorporate technology into their daily lessons to assist with engaging students. Teachers at Paradise Elementary utilize Netbooks, iTouches, iPad, interactive white boards, and various other digital tools to engage students and support instruction.

Challenging and motivating all of the students is part of the mission statement and that is why the teachers at Paradise Elementary are constantly evaluating their instructional methods to provide their students with the best education possible!

## **6. Professional Development:**

Spring Grove Area School District's professional development program focuses on student academic achievement by providing teachers with research-based strategies to deliver informative and engaging lessons. The professional development program at Spring Grove Area School District requires all professional employees to complete an Individual Action Plan prior to the start of every school year. The Individual Action Plan is comprised of the teacher's professional goals for the upcoming academic year, a plan to accomplish those goals, and the impact it will have on student achievement. The district then provides an academic school year filled with in-service and training opportunities for teachers so they are able to achieve their goals. These in-service days lead to informed, well-trained, and motivated staff utilizing research based practices to provide better instruction and a better academic experience for our students.

Over the past two years the Spring Grove Area School District has taken on the initiative to have every teacher, administrator, and support staff member trained in Best Practices. The Best Practices training provides teachers with strategies to maximize student engagement and foster a community of learners. In addition to the initial four-day training, teachers are also provided with refresher courses, instruction and support from administration during monthly faculty meetings, and observations by outside consultants. Best Practices is a commitment by the district on all levels and is a team effort to provide all students the best possible instruction and educational experience.

Many other professionals have joined the in-service days providing resources and strategies for the teachers. Spring Grove has been fortunate to have an outside consultant on multiple occasions to model, instruct, train, and collaborate with the elementary teachers to better the guided reading program and literacy stations. The district has also partnered with the local Intermediate Unit and often utilizes their consultative and program training services. For example, a consultant with the Lincoln Intermediate Unit has trained reading specialists and learning support teachers on effective progress monitoring and intervention programs, such as Wilson Reading.

At district curriculum committee meetings, specialists from the Intermediate Unit have presented on various strategies that teachers could utilize to assist students in need of support. This time also allows teachers to share ideas, align curriculum with standards, and develop effective pacing guides. Whether an in-service day is used to train, review data and plan instruction, or implement many of the wonderful strategies provided by the district and its partners, each in-service is followed by a survey which is reviewed by administration. These surveys allow for teachers to openly share their needs and suggestions to meet the academic needs of their students.

The district has also taken a differentiated approach to its in-service. For some of the in-service dates, teachers are provided with a menu of options. Teachers are able to choose sessions that they feel would best benefit their needs to help them to continue to grow professionally. At Paradise, the information gathered at these in-services is often shared among grade level teams so that all grade level members benefit.

Whether it is professional development provided by the district staff, a partner, or outside experts, the staff at Paradise Elementary is committed to continually growing professionally so that student achievement can directly be impacted.

## **7. School Leadership:**

A clear goal of the Paradise Elementary principal is to know each student by name. She greets students by name as they enter the building each morning, and wishes them well each afternoon as they are dismissed from school. Offering praise and positive reinforcement is also something this principal works hard to do through verbal praise and individual and class notes. She meets with students experiencing behavior needs, emotional needs, or to provide encouragement. She stresses that her office is not just a place to come when you are in trouble, but a place to come when a student has good news to share.

Working collaboratively with her staff is a goal of the principal. She meets monthly with a staff advisory committee to address concerns that exist within the building. She conducts monthly faculty meetings, formally observes teachers, makes frequent informal classroom visitations, and participates in classroom activities that she is invited to attend. She has been a guest reader in classrooms, as well as occasionally taught lessons in classrooms.

Building relationships with parents is especially important to the principal. A monthly newsletter is sent home to the parents with a message from the principal. She stresses the importance of open communication and will meet with parents without previous notice to help address any concerns those parents may have. She has provided transportation to families so that parents could attend a conference at school. Home visits have become part of her routine so that parents do not miss out on important meetings that directly involve their children.

She participates in the NISL (National Institute for School Leadership) program, has guest taught at Shippensburg University, has served as a guest interviewer at York College of Pennsylvania for students about to enter the teaching field, and continues to attend Pennsylvania State Teacher of the Year forums. She attends and shares information at Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. Her attendance at her students' performances and at after school events is something that she holds of importance, even if it means including her own children and family in the event.

In addition to administrative leadership, there is other leadership within the school that helps to make Paradise Elementary a high performing school. Teachers within the building serve as co-chairs for the district math curriculum and the district communication arts curriculum. The Paradise intervention specialist is constantly reviewing and analyzing data, meeting with teachers, and researching instructional strategies and resources to offer to teachers. Teachers meet as grade levels each month to discuss academic issues for their classes and determine appropriate pacing and sequencing of the curriculum. A lead teacher assists with the daily routines and procedures associated with maintaining a safe environment for our staff and students.

Also, at Paradise Elementary, it is not uncommon to see the superintendent and assistant superintendent in the hallways and classrooms. Both administrative leaders value the importance of establishing relationships with teachers and visiting classrooms to see firsthand what teachers are doing with the students.

Learning, succeeding, and achieving are truly team efforts at Paradise Elementary School!

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2011 Publisher: PDE

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	99	96	89	93	90
Advanced	73	69	60	78	49
Number of students tested	73	67	84	72	67
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	100	94	85	89	78
Advanced	68	66	46	71	22
Number of students tested	28	32	39	35	27
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	1		1		
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	2	3	2	1
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced		82	53	80	75
Advanced		45	27	47	13
Number of students tested	8	11	15	15	16
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12PA16

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2011 Publisher: PDE

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	92	88	90	93	85
Advanced	45	52	36	32	27
Number of students tested	73	67	84	72	67
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	82	84	84	89	74
Advanced	39	47	18	29	11
Number of students tested	28	32	39	35	27
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	1		1		
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	2	3	2	1
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced		73	60	73	63
Advanced		36	13	13	6
Number of students tested	8	11	15	15	16
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced				0	
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2011 Publisher: PDE

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	99	92	86	81	86
Advanced	78	58	63	58	55
Number of students tested	72	86	79	64	80
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	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>					
Proficient plus Advanced	100	88	79	56	79
Advanced	70	46	52	28	44
Number of students tested	37	41	42	25	43
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested		1	1		
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	3	3	1	1
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	100	73	55	43	78
Advanced	45	40	35	14	61
Number of students tested	11	15	20	14	18
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2011 Publisher: PDE

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	89	80	85	73	76
Advanced	40	38	43	31	24
Number of students tested	72	86	79	64	80
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	92	78	79	44	63
Advanced	38	27	36	4	16
Number of students tested	37	41	42	25	43
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested		1	1		
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	3	3	1	1
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	55	47	55	36	67
Advanced	18	20	15	14	11
Number of students tested	11	15	20	14	18
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	99	93	87	87	87
Advanced	75	62	61	68	52
Number of students tested	145	153	163	136	147
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	100	90	81	75	78
Advanced	69	54	49	53	35
Number of students tested	65	73	81	60	70
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1	2	0	0
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	4	5	6	3	2
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	100	76	54	62	76
Advanced	42	42	31	31	38
Number of students tested	19	26	35	29	34
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>NOTES:</b>					

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading      Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	90	83	87	83	80
Advanced	42	44	39	31	25
Number of students tested	145	153	163	136	147
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	87	80	81	70	67
Advanced	38	35	27	18	14
Number of students tested	65	73	81	60	70
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1	2	0	0
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	4	5	6	3	2
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	52	58	57	55	65
Advanced	15	26	14	13	8
Number of students tested	19	26	35	29	34
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12PA16