

2002-2003 No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program Cover Sheet

Name of Principal Mr. Robert Pedersen (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Plentywood Public Schools 7-8 (As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 100 East Laurel Avenue (If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Plentywood Montana 59254-1697 City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. (406) 765-1803 Fax (406) 765-1195

Website/URL Plentywood.k12.mt.us Email 2wildcat@nemontel.net

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

(Principal's Signature) Date 3-21-03

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

Name of Superintendent Mr. Joseph Bennett (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Plentywood School District #20 Tel. (406) 765-1803

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date 3-21-03

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Rick Darvis (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date 3-21-03

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: _____ Elementary schools
 _____ Middle schools
 1 Junior high schools
 _____ High schools

 _____ 1 TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: _____ \$7,200
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: _____ \$7,148

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

- Urban or large central city
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural area
 Rural

4. 1 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 1 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
 5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
K				7	17	15	32
1				8	17	12	29
2				9			
3				10			
4				11			
5				12			
6				Other			
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							61

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 97 | % White |
| | % Black or African American |
| 3 | % Hispanic or Latino |
| | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |

100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 4.9%

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	1
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	2
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	3
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	61
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.049
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4.9

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 0%
0 Total Number Limited English Proficient
 Number of languages represented: 1
 Specify languages: English

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 33%
20 Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method is not a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 15%
9 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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

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>2</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>3</u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total number	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>

12. Student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 18:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout and drop-off rates.

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	98%	99%	99%	99%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student drop-off rate	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%

PART III - SUMMARY

Provide a brief, coherent narrative snapshot of the school in one page (approximately 475 words). Include at least a summary of the school's mission or vision in the statement and begin the first sentence with the school's name, city, and state.

Plentywood School 7-8, Plentywood, Montana is a center for educational excellence and integrity. Located in the northeast corner of the Big Sky State, Plentywood is a small rural community with a population of approximately 2,000. The area is in the Great Plains region of North America with rolling plains and hills. The climate normally features extreme summers and winters, with mild springs and falls. The nearest city with a population of more than 100,000 is Regina, Saskatchewan approximately 120 miles to the north. The community was founded in 1912 near the Big Muddy River.

The Plentywood school system is well known in the area for the high standards that are set for the students and staff in academic proficiency. The students tend to test high on standardized assessments, which is a true reflection of the dedication of the seasoned faculty. The students participate readily in academic competitions throughout the year and compete strongly against the largest schools in Montana. Numerous co-curricular activities are also available to aid the school in providing well-rounded individuals for the real world. Plentywood's graduation rate ranks among the highest in the state and professional institutions speak highly of the graduates after they employ them.

Plentywood's middle school faculty is extremely strong in pedagogical experience. A true team concept exists between the staff. Collegiality is an evident characteristic in every sense of the word. Sharing is a daily occurrence among these professionals, and they are very caring about the success of each student they have the pleasure to grace their classrooms. They truly encompass our school's mission statement, which is: Plentywood Schools in partnership with the community will nurture, support, and welcome the needs of all students. Teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members will share in the responsibility for providing a supportive, safe environment where respect for self and others is paramount.

The school and community recognize the diversity of our students and their uniquely individual intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs. All students will be engaged in the educational process, and participate in real life learning experiences to gain knowledge, wisdom, confidence, and an appreciation and ability for lifelong learning, as they strive to maximize their individual potential.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is utilized by Plentywood School and is used statewide in Montana to determine levels of proficiency in reading and math for students in grades 4, 8, and 11.

The results are meaningful for two reasons. First of all, it allows the school to be compared to schools across the country in reading and math achievement. Plentywood School is consistently above the national average in the two subject areas of math and reading. The core area normal curve equivalent in each of the three years indicates that Plentywood students have achieved above average (with 50 being average) scores.

The next indicator is that Plentywood School 7-8 students have above average standard scores that place them in the sixth and seventh stanines of the National Stanine scale. This indicates that students have abilities that exceed averages for students around the country.

While test scores aren't the complete measure of school success, it is the belief that Plentywood students are learning at a level that will allow them to succeed into the future.

1. Show in one-half page (approximately 200 words) how the school uses assessment data to understand and improve student and school performance.

Plentywood School 7-8 pays a lot of attention to assessment data in terms of understanding and looking for ways to improve student and school performance. It is the school's feeling that most of their decisions in regard to school improvement are data driven. The assessment data has been very high, which is a true reflection that Plentywood's seasoned staff is doing a job well done. However, the school is also in a never-ending search to keep the improvement process in perpetual motion so that stagnancy does not rear its ugly head.

When some of the students' reading scores dropped somewhat, Plentywood School looked to invest more in an accelerated reader program through their library. All of the students now have strict guidelines for reading various books and taking tests that show their educators their reading level, improvements, and comprehension levels.

Assessment data has also been utilized in terms of Plentywood's curriculum development and revision. They are constantly looking for voids and redundancies in the curriculum that sometimes is magnified by assessment data. Supplements to the curriculum mainly are given to them because of notification in a lower data score from their students on a given year.

2. Describe in one-half page how the school communicates student performance, including assessment data, to parents, students, and the community.

Communication is key to student success, it is felt at Plentywood School 7-8. They provide their parents and students especially with a lot of information and feedback on their academic, behavioral, and social progress at the school. They do this through phone conversations, individual student meetings, parent-teacher conferences, mid-term progress reports, and quarterly report cards. Assessment data is also mailed home to each parent to look at and the teachers make it a point to explain the data at the parent-teacher conferences that are held in the fall each year. Plentywood feels that it is not only important to communicate areas of concern with said parents and students, but they also think it is vitally necessary to share success with them.

Plentywood has a local newspaper and radio station that is utilized to broadcast positive student performances in various curricular and co-curricular areas. Of course, they only do this after individual students and their guardians sign a permission slip in regards to individual privacy laws. The state and local media also broadcast their assessment data to show how it compares to other schools.

3. Describe in one-half page how the school will share its successes with other schools.

While Plentywood School is by no means a large school in terms of enrollment, they are actually

much bigger in terms of the area. They are the largest school in the county and rank as one of the largest schools in the two counties that border theirs. Because of this, Plentywood Schools are looked upon as an educational leader in their part of the state. Plentywood School also has an enviable reputation for having high standards for their students and teachers.

Therefore, Plentywood often hosts county or even tri-county wide in-services for area teachers that are led by outside professionals or even their own qualified staff. They feel that professional development is of the utmost importance to school improvement. Plentywood also believes that there is no reason for not sharing this process with other schools to make education better in the whole area of the state.

Plentywood's school burned down approximately 12 years ago. When their new facility was put in place, it easily became one of the nicest school buildings in the area. Hence, the facility is extremely adequate for hosting many schools for these types of activities.

If their school is fortunate enough to be chosen as a Blue Ribbon School, they will most likely be looked upon to provide more opportunities to provide sharing occasions with other schools.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Describe in one page the school’s curriculum, including foreign languages (foreign language instruction is an eligibility requirement for middle, junior high, and high schools), and show how all students are engaged with significant content, based on high standards.

Even though Plentywood’s enrollment is in a decreasing process, they have fought to keep their curriculum rich and full of a variety of opportunities for the students. They believe that a well-rounded curriculum will provide their school with well-rounded graduates able to compete well in the world with others. They sometimes ask a lot from their staff and utilize all of their talents in doing so.

In regards to specific curricular areas, a good place to start would be mathematics. Plentywood provides a progressive Saxon mathematics program to their 7th and 8th graders. Pre-Algebra is also covered in the 8th grade curriculum to best prepare them for high school as Algebra is required to graduate from high school. They have a very experienced mathematics instructor who is sharp and has high expectations of her students.

In the area of language arts, Plentywood School is also very fortunate to have a “master teacher” at the helm. She is extremely insightful in her curricular area and is very caring of her students and their success. They utilize a Saxon phonics program in their formative years that has an emphasis on word construction. This program is very progressive as they begin the process in kindergarten and continue it through their second grade year. Our intermediate staff continues to build on the sentence and paragraph structure. This has provided their students coming into junior high with a solid grammar base to expand upon. Plentywood’s reading program is quite strong as the students are expected to read a heavy number of books during their 7th and 8th grade years. This is not only in their language arts classes, but also in the aforementioned accelerated reader program.

Plentywood’s social studies instructor is also what would be considered to be a “master teacher.” She hasn’t been a full-time teacher as long as her peers, but she is filled with motivational activities and high-level learning strategies that set her apart from many social studies instructors. Students love to learn from her, simply put. The 7th grade social studies curriculum involves world geography and Montana History on a semester basis. While a textbook is followed in both classes, Plentywood’s students are involved in numerous activities and projects that enhance multi-sensory applications. The 8th grade social studies curriculum involves U.S. History from the Ice Age to the Civil War era. This instruction provides the basis for their junior year when the rest of the timeline of American history is covered.

Plentywood’s science curriculum features an intermediate biology emphasis in the 7th grade year. Animals and humans are both covered. Labs are utilized as well as supplementary activities to enhance the textbook instruction. Earth science is the focus of 8th grade in a progressive means to lead into their freshmen level classes.

Besides the four core classes, Plentywood provide a diverse liberal arts curriculum that encompasses a variety of areas. Literature/Reading, Band, Chorus, Physical Education, Health Enhancement, Art, Keyboarding, Spanish, French, Home Economics, Shop, Guidance, Newspaper, and Special Education classes are offered. The foreign language classes are similar enough to the Spanish I and French I high school class that they are in the process of checking with the Office of Public Instruction on how they can provide a high school credit for students taking them.

2. Describe in one-half page the school’s English language curriculum, including efforts the school makes to improve the reading skills of students who read below grade level.

Developing life-long readers is Plentywood School’s foremost reading goal. Reading skills are integral to all curriculum areas, as well as in life. Plentywood strives to meet this goal in a variety of ways.

Plentywood School’s reading program is literature-based. They use a Saxon phonics program in grades K-2 to teach word construction. Grades 3 & 4 use the Scott-Foresman reading program to emphasize comprehension. Individual novels are supplemented to each reading program after 3rd grade.

Most of the novels utilized are Newberry Medal winners, chosen because of their adaptability to each grade level and genre variation. Grades 5-12 use the Prentice-Hall literature program. An additional literature class is included in the grades 6-8 curriculum to incorporate the reading workshop approach to literature, with emphasis on enjoyment and respect for each literary piece. Plentywood teachers feel that an individualized reading program provides continuity and skill advancement as students proceed through the Plentywood School system. Hopefully, with the reading curriculum, Plentywoods' students will develop the skills to become life-long readers.

3. Describe in one -half page one other curriculum area of the school's choice and show how it relates to essential skills and knowledge based on the school's mission.

Plentywood School has a unique area of the curriculum that sets them apart from many schools that are similar in size to them. This curriculum area is service learning. Their teachers have been doing this type of learning for many years, but they have been funded through a middle school learn and serve grant for the past three years by the Northwest Rural Project (ESD 112). There are a variety of projects that are conducted in this area of curriculum. Some examples are as follows:

Founder's Day: Students researched their community history and in doing so, discovered there were no signs identifying the two most significant waterways in the area. They involved the county road department, the State Department of Transportation, and local businesses in getting this problem rectified. This involved social studies in terms of learning how landmarks are established and how state funding occurs. English was also involved as the students had to write letters of correspondence to these agencies.

Victory Planters: Students worked with the Garden Club and County Fair Board to create "victory gardens" at the fairgrounds similar to what was constructed in the 1940's. This involved learning in the area of social studies as they revisited the need for these gardens during World War II and also in the area of science as they learned about plant structure and the planting process.

Bird Feeder Project: Students interacted with their school community, providing cross-age mentoring to the younger age groups and discussed healthy snacks both for birds and people with the elementary students they were paired with. Then they constructed bird feeders for the community together. This involved math and science, as they had to figure how much birdseed would feed a specific species of bird. It also involved reading and computer technology as they had to research about local bird species.

4. Describe in one-half page the different instructional methods the school uses to improve student learning.

At Plentywood School 7-8, they allow individual teachers with the freedom to choose their own pedagogical methods themselves. Some follow strict Bloom's Taxonomy methodology, some go the way of Madeline Hunter's methodology, and some are more kinesthetic-based, etc. As educational leaders, the administrative team will often provide ideas or instruction if a teacher is interested in learning alternative methods in their instruction. They also provide mentoring to younger teachers from their more experienced staff when needed. Plentywood believes that they have a strong networking that exists in their junior high areas. Collegiality is important to them and they often share any teaching techniques with each other when an interest is shown.

Cooperative learning is a staple among the teachers as well. They provide the means to have students teach each other on occasion. It has been observed that there are "Jigsaw" approaches on various occasions. The teachers do a good job of setting the basis for cooperative learning by discussing guidelines and rules before this type of learning can be followed.

Plentywood's teachers try to provide learning that touches upon the various ways students learn differently. Instruction in a given week features teaching that reaches both auditory and visual learners. Kinesthetic learning is given whenever possible. It is not unusual to see artwork being done in a social studies or math class, reading being done in a shop class, math problems being figured out in an art class, etc. Cross-curricular learning is very evident at Plentywood School.

5. Describe in one-half page the school's professional development program and its impact on improving student achievement.

Professional development is extremely vital it is felt in the success of Plentywood School 7-8. As part of their evaluation of staff, it is required of their teachers to construct a portfolio of professional development. They provide them with seventeen items of proven professional development strategies and can help teachers improve student learning. Plentywood requires that teachers select a minimum of eight strategies from the list each year and attach evidence to their portfolio to demonstrate their involvement in that particular professional growth opportunity. It is recommended that they complete at least some strategies that are different from the ones that they completed the year before. Some take the option of approaching the same strategy with a different perspective based on their increasing knowledge.

The administrative team is in constant observation of their staff. They conduct two formal evaluations of their non-tenured staff and one formal evaluation of their tenured staff each year. Plentywood's evaluation process is goal-oriented in terms of providing positive feedback and constructive alternatives for the staff to improve their instructional techniques.

Plentywood provides their staff with professional instruction via guest speakers, video purchases, and literary purchases for them to peruse and ponder. They also provide financial support throughout the year for teachers to attend workshops on professional development that is pertinent to their content area.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR DISPLAYING ASSESSMENTS
REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Provide the following information for all tests in reading (language arts or English) and mathematics. Show at least three years of data. Complete a separate form for each test and grade level.

Grade 8 Test Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)

Edition/publication year 2001 Publisher Riverside Publishing

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed? None excluded

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs Scaled scores Percentiles

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Testing month	March	March	March		
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score (READING)	62	59	68		
Number of students tested	32	44	37		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students excluded	0	0	0		
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. _____ (specify subgroup)					
2. _____ (specify subgroup)					
3. _____ (specify subgroup)					
4. _____ (specify subgroup)					
5. _____ (specify subgroup)					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national score (mean score) and standard deviation for the total test and each subtest.

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
NATIONAL SCORES					
Total Score					
STANDARD DEVIATIONS					
Total Standard Deviation					

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR DISPLAYING ASSESSMENTS
REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Provide the following information for all tests in reading (language arts or English) and mathematics. Show at least three years of data. Complete a separate form for each test and grade level.

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What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed? None excluded

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs Scaled scores Percentiles

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Testing month	March	March	March		
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score (MATH)	70	63	68		
Number of students tested	32	44	37		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students excluded	0	0	0		
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. _____ (specify subgroup)					
2. _____ (specify subgroup)					
3. _____ (specify subgroup)					
4. _____ (specify subgroup)					
5. _____ (specify subgroup)					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national score (mean score) and standard deviation for the total test and each subtest.

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
NATIONAL SCORES					
Total Score					
STANDARD DEVIATIONS					
Total Standard Deviation					