

**2003-2004 No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program
Cover Sheet**

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

Official School Name New Berlin Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 300 E. Ellis St.
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

New Berlin Illinois 62670-0230
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. (217) 488-6011 x 229 Fax (217) 488-3107

Website/URL CUSD16.K12.il.us E-mail rsczurko@yahoo.com

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 _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. J. Gregory Reynolds
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Community Unit School District #16 Tel (217) 488-6011

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 _____

Name of School Board Mr. Rich Behl
President/Chairperson _____
(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 _____

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

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

[Include this page in the school's application as page 2.]

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 of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2003-2004 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1998.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The 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 the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. 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.
8. 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.

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school: 97.6% White
 2.4% Black or African American
 _____% Hispanic or Latino
 _____% Asian/Pacific Islander
 _____% American Indian/Alaskan Native
100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 5.6%

(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.	6
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	5
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	195
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.0056
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5.6

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

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 26.6%
 _____ Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method does not produce 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: 28%
 _____ Total Number of Students Served

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| ___ Autism | ___ Orthopedic Impairment |
| ___ Deafness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| ___ Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| ___ Hearing Impairment | <u>39</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Mental Retardation | ___ Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities | ___ 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>1</u>	_____
Classroom teachers	<u>10</u>	_____
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>4</u>	_____
Support staff	<u>2</u>	_____
Total number	<u>18</u>	<u>1</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 19.5

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. 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 rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Daily student attendance	<u>94.8</u>	<u>94.7</u>	<u>96.1</u>	<u>95.9</u>	<u>95.4</u>
Daily teacher attendance	<u>96.9</u>	<u>94.6</u>	<u>96.0</u>	<u>96.0</u>	<u>95.4</u>
Teacher turnover rate	<u>15%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>
Student dropout rate					
Student drop-off rate					

NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

300 East Ellis

New Berlin, Illinois 62670-0230

As principal of New Berlin Elementary School, it is my sincere pleasure to describe a place where children flourish under the guidance and support of a dedicated professional staff and in a community that values educational excellence. We understand the importance of our mission statement with respect to developing young people to their maximum potential in the areas of social responsibility, employability, and life long learning, and we structure our learning environment to accomplish our shared mission.

New Berlin Elementary School is a Pre-K through 3rd Grade attendance center with an enrollment of approximately 220 students. Our school is a part of Community Unit School District #16 that also includes Loami Elementary School (a 4th, 5th, and 6th grade center), New Berlin Junior High School (7th and 8th), and New Berlin High School (9th-12th). CUSD #16 has a total enrollment of 612.

The towns of Loami and New Berlin are located in the central portion of Illinois, immediately west of Springfield. CUSD #16 is a district that is experiencing significant economic growth due to increased industrial development, and it is on the verge of increased student enrollment with the expansion of residential development. The financial status of the district is solid, and the foreseeable economic future is very positive.

New Berlin Elementary School students benefit from a variety of programs, facilities, and equipment that are utilized to accommodate the individual learning styles of all children. Such varied approaches as our Talented and Gifted Program, Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math, Special Education Instruction emphasizing inclusion, computer instruction at all grade levels, ample field trips and educational experiences outside of the classroom all reinforce learning skills that enable our students to meet and exceed state standards.

In terms of performance, our children have demonstrated the educational benefits gained from a school that combines the positive attributes of a rural atmosphere with sound financial management. The most recent standardized assessment of our student performance using the ISAT (Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test) indicated that 92.7% of our students tested met or exceeded expectations in reading and mathematics. In addition, student performance was above state average achievement in all areas tested.

I believe that it is evident that I am a firm advocate for our school. We work very hard each day to strive for excellence in education because at New Berlin Elementary School it is more than a slogan... **it is our expectation.**

THE MEANING OF NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' **ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

The State of Illinois uses the Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test (ISAT) to assess the performance of students in a variety of prescribed grades and subject areas. At New Berlin Elementary School, the third grade students are tested in reading, mathematics, and writing on an annual basis. This occurs during the first week in April with the results released in late spring or summer.

The ISAT is designed to assess student performance in a variety of State Standards. In reading, the Standards apply to comprehension, application of strategies, vocabulary, word analysis, literary works, informational sources, explicit ideas, and inferences from text. In mathematics the Standards focus on estimation/number sense/computation, algebraic patterns/variables, algebraic relationships/representations, geometric concepts, geometric relationships, measurement, data organization/analysis, and probability. On both the reading and mathematics assessments, there are extended response items included that require the students to demonstrate overall skills in each area.

Individual and school performance on the ISAT is published in terms how well state standards are met. The performance levels are defined as exceeding standards, meeting standards, below standards, and academic warning. Over the past four years, we have made it a goal of our building to increase the percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards while eliminating students in the academic warning area. We have succeeded in meeting this goal as highlighted by the following statistics. Over the past four years in mathematics, we have had 77%, 86%, 91%, and 93% of our students meeting or exceeding standards while in reading 89%, 84%, 84%, and 93% of our students meeting or exceeding standards. In addition, we have not had any child in the academic warning area in either mathematics or reading.

By taking a closer look at our ISAT and CAT 5 data, combined with local assessments, we are able to identify specific areas of strengths and weaknesses and address these in our School Improvement Plan Process. For instance, this past year we recognized that math computation and spelling were areas to focus upon, and we were extremely pleased with student performance in language mechanics and expression. We also review our teaching materials such as our textbook series to determine if supplemental material is needed to successfully present the specific areas of concern, and we have also just begun looking at curriculum mapping to identify any gaps or overlaps in instruction that may be impacting learning.

The most important data we receive from the standardized tests are the individual student's performance in all the defined areas. Our faculty and myself carefully review this information and make logical and careful adjustments to the curriculum and implement varied methods of instruction so that our children can experience continued success.

HOW NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL USES ASSESSMENT DATA

The value of assessment data is in how it enables us to identify and focus on areas for school improvement. At New Berlin Elementary School, we use data from the ISAT (3rd grade), the CAT 5 (2nd grade), and various others teacher and textbook developed classroom assessments to carefully and logically adjust our curriculum to meet the needs of our children.

For example, prior to my arrival at New Berlin, test results indicated a need to improve achievement in reading with special emphasis on reducing the number of students not meeting state standards on the ISAT. We initiated several changes which included the addition of a computer based accelerated reading program that gives student instant feedback at all ability levels. Since our school board supports the research that indicates the importance of providing a solid learning foundation at the elementary level, a reading tutor teaching position was created. Therefore, we were able to utilize the classroom teachers along with the reading tutor, special education teacher, and Title I teacher to improve the student-teacher ratio providing students with more individual assistance. In addition, another data-driven decision was the creation of a scheduled block of time (75 minutes) for reading and writing where the excellent student-teacher ratio could be maintained. In mathematics, the early data indicated a need to improve students' computation skills. We again turned to computer-based software that provided immediate feedback. Also, our Title I program supported the addition of a part-time math tutor who worked with our at-risk students and a community volunteer, (the retired principal of our school) who helped with our accelerated children.

HOW NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATES **STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

One of my highest priorities when becoming principal at New Berlin Elementary School was to be proactive with respect to communication. In Illinois, we have a system requiring the communicating of ISAT results through the media, as well as to have the schools share the individual results with parents. We felt the need to build on this requirement by communicating to all parents on a daily basis. Therefore, we initiated the use of daily agendas/planners by all of our children. They are used as a tool of organization as well as a method of keeping parents informed on a daily basis, and give parents the opportunity to interact with staff as often as necessary.

Although we use the newspaper, radio, and television to share our successes, we also use our Excellence in Education Committee as a two-way method of communication. The Committee meets on a monthly basis and is made up of parents, students, community members, teachers, board members and administrators throughout our district. By implementing this personalized method of interacting, we share information about a variety of topics relevant to the children of our district, and ultimately provide recommendations to the Board of Education. An outgrowth of this Committee is our building level School Improvement Teams. Members of these teams review specific data collected by various forms of testing and provide input with respect to adjusting our School Improvement Plan to meet the needs of our children.

HOW NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHARES ITS SUCCESSSES

A major benefit of our recent recognition is that it has given us a great deal of positive local publicity that generates interest and excitement from people in our surrounding communities. Our colleagues have read, listened, and watched stories of our success, and we have been the recipients of numerous instances of expressed congratulations and best wishes. These interactions have allowed teachers, parents, community members, administrators, board members, and students express a sense of pride in their school, and to explain why they feel New Berlin Elementary School is worthy of recognition.

In addition to the routine interactions between people, the administration and faculty have been able to share their success when participating in professional workshops and seminars. As principal, I have networked with colleagues at our local monthly and quarterly professional meetings. We also have published our success on our website, and we have hosted teachers from other communities who expressed interest in observing our teachers and programs.

Currently, we are in the final stages of developing both a brochure and a video about our school and District #16 that will be available to potential new families in our district and to local realtors. Also, as principal of New Berlin Elementary School, I publish a monthly letter to the parents of our district focusing on our successes and recognizing the important role that they play in the educational process.

THE CURRICULUM OF NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As mentioned in our mission statement, our school strives to develop children to their fullest potential. This is an extremely challenging goal, but it is one that we hold dear. At the elementary level we focus on providing students with the foundation that is essential to future learning, and we attempt to expose them to a world of limitless academic and vocational possibilities.

Our total curriculum includes the following subject areas: Reading, Language Arts (spelling, grammar, and phonics), Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Health, Physical Education, Music, and Art. Classroom teachers teach most of our subject areas, with specialists in Physical education and Music. In addition to the daily teaching of core subjects, our faculty schedules rotating lessons in art, current events, library utilization, health, safety, handwriting, educational videos/DVD's, and computer software. We are fortunate to be located immediately west of Springfield, Illinois as the capital city provides numerous educational opportunities for children in history, government, and the fine arts. Field trips are used to access these local resources and faculty members skillfully integrate these resources to help meet our curricular goals and the State Standards.

Although we do not currently have an art specialist, we participate in an Art Outreach Program, sponsored by the Springfield Arts Council, which is presented by volunteer parents and community members. The program is designed to introduce the fundamentals of art and present students with an appreciation and understanding of various artists and develop the skills necessary to recognize their work.

Since reading and mathematics will be covered later in our application, I will briefly present some areas of focus in other subject areas. In language arts we incorporate grammar and sentence structure with weekly spelling mastery. Our social studies curriculum includes government, geography, and social issues with a special emphasis on career exploration. In science, we try to incorporate hands-on experiences in the various areas of life science, with a concentration on environmental science. The health curriculum targets appropriate choice making, positive self-concept development and the importance of a healthy life style. In writing, we stress the improvement of student writing in the expository mode, and we have used practical opportunities across the curriculum with the inclusion of computer software such as Perfect Copy. We have initiated a volunteer writing program entitled, Young Authors, where our students gain recognition at school and also by having their works published in the local media. Our music specialist not only prepares students for several public performances, but our students also strive to satisfy State Standards in theory, history, and appreciation. Last, but certainly not least, our physical education program is designed to meet the developmental needs of young children by incorporating movement exploration, fundamental skill development, and participation in lead-up games.

THE READING CURRICULUM AT NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student performance in reading has been simply outstanding at New Berlin Elementary School. The most recent ISAT scores demonstrate that 93% of our students meet or exceed State Standards in reading, and this success has been fairly consistent over the past four years. Our approach to reading instruction supports the current research indicating that success follows a balanced literacy approach. Our students participate in activities such as guided, independent, and partner reading along with a strong phonemic awareness component. Our teachers use a Standards-based basal reader series, and they also integrate high interest books that reinforce and motivate. We have responded to the research providing students with exceptional teacher/pupil ratios that average approximately 9 to 1, and we have student groupings that are both flexible and homogenous enabling children to progress successfully at their own rate.

We schedule a 75-minute block of uninterrupted time each day for reading and writing so that we can maintain these excellent ratios. Students have also become avid independent readers through the use of technology. The Accelerated Reader Program gives our students opportunities to read books at their ability level, and assess their retention of the material with immediate feedback. Students are rewarded for their efforts at an annual recognition ceremony. In addition, our students participate in periodic motivational activities such as Read Across America, Family Reading Night, and Dr. Seuss' Birthday Celebration. To accommodate students who love to read and can't find the time during the day to get all of it in, our district librarian developed a reading club that meets before school on a weekly basis entitled W.O.R.M.S. (We're Outstanding Readers at My School), and the percentage of children participating is exceptional.

THE MATHEMATICS CURRICULUM AT **NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Perhaps the most stunning performance by students at New Berlin Elementary School is the strong and steady progress that has been achieved in the area of mathematics. Over the past four years the percentage of students meeting or exceeding State Standards has steadily risen. (77%-86%-91%-93%) We are very proud of these statistics, and there are several factors that may have made the difference.

Our District's mission statement includes a goal of developing children to their fullest potential including employability. One of the foundation blocks that lead to success is the ability to be competent in mathematics. Therefore, we have focused our resources and attention in this subject area. Specifically, we have used a portion of our Title I funding to hire a half-time teacher to work with our at-risk math students, and we have been fortunate to have a volunteer (the retired former principal of New Berlin Elementary School) work with our top students. Once again, we also turned to technology to utilize several software programs to supplement our curriculum. Our third grade students enjoy working with the Accelerated Math program that provides immediate feedback and identifies individual strengths and areas in need of improvement. Our K-3 teachers have also embraced both the use of manipulatives and centers-based instruction. By focusing on improving math skills, and focusing on career education, we strive to accomplish our District's mission on a daily basis.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS USED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AT NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

One of the basic tenets at New Berlin Elementary School is that children have varied learning styles and, as educators, we must make every effort to adjust our teaching methods to meet each style. Educational research supports this and we believe it. Therefore, while walking through our school, visitors will see a variety of presentations including student use of educational software, centers-based instruction, cooperative learning, the use of supplemental videos with each classroom, (we have video/DVD players and large screen televisions in each classroom courtesy of a REAP Grant), tactile learning opportunities such as the use of manipulatives, audio tapes, guest speakers, and traditional lecture/guided discussion/demonstration.

Not only do we adjust our presentations based on learning styles, and since we understand that all children do not learn at the same rate, we adjust the learning content and rate to meet individual needs. For instance, our teachers oftentimes modify assignments so that students may achieve success without sacrificing the attainment of State Standards. We also adjust methods to meet the needs of various groups such as special education, Title I, and gifted.

Finally, all of our classrooms are equipped with speakers and microphones for our teachers because of the research gained through the MAARS Project (Mainstream Amplification Resource Room System). This research concluded that students experience academic gains if they are exposed to amplified communication in the classroom.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AT NEW BERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In spite of having to be very frugal with our economic assets, CUSD #16 is committed to supporting the professional development of its faculty. Not only does the budget allow for each teacher to use a prescribed amount of money for participation in conferences and workshops, but also the salary schedule rewards teachers for successfully completing graduate hours in education. Add to this the State of Illinois initiative to increase recertification requirements, and we have an atmosphere that is very conducive to enhancing professional development.

Our teachers are consistently interested in improving their skills. They take advantage of both local and regional workshops. Topics such as improving classroom management skills, incorporating technology into the classroom, teaching autistic children, special education inclusion, brain research as related to learning styles, looping, and curriculum enhancement in such areas as reading, mathematics, writing, and science are all very well attended by our staff.

At the district level, we schedule professional workshop/ school improvement days throughout the school year. Although State funding has been eliminated for this purpose, we have been resourceful in terms of securing presenters who are inexpensive or we use volunteers. Another strategy to strengthen professional development is that we schedule a district workshop where teachers who have attended outstanding workshops outside of our district come back and share the information with their local colleagues. This practice, for instance, has stimulated positive changes such as the addition of looping at the first and second grade level.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS, Continued

Sample Data Display Table for Reading (language arts or English) and Mathematics

New Berlin Elementary School Mathematics

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Testing month April					
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	
% At or Above Proficient	92.3	91	86	77	
% At Advanced	34.6	32	32	8	
Number of students tested	52	44	50	39	
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	
Percent of students excluded	0%	0%	0%	0%	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. _____ (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Basic					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. _____ (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Basic					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At Advanced					
Number of students tested					
STATE SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	93.2	93	92	90	
State Mean Score					
% At or Above Proficient	75.7	74	74	69	
State Mean Score					
% At Advanced	31.1	30	28	23	
State Mean Score					

Use the same basic format for subgroup results. Complete a separate form for each test and each grade level. Present *at least* three years of data to show decreasing disparity among subgroups. Some subgroup examples are:

- (a) Socioeconomic Status (e.g., eligible for free and reduced meals, not eligible for free and reduced meals)
- (b) Ethnicity (e.g., White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native)

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS, Continued

Sample Data Display Table for Reading (language arts or English) and Mathematics

New Berlin Elementary School Reading

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Testing month April					
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	
% At or Above Proficient	92.5	84	84	84	
% At Advanced	38.5	23	18	15	
Number of students tested	52	44	50	39	
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	
Percent of students excluded	0%	0%	0%	0%	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. _____ (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Basic					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. _____ (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Basic					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At Advanced					
Number of students tested					
STATE SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	91.8	93	93	94	
State Mean Score					
% At or Above Proficient	62.0	63	62	62	
State Mean Score					
% At Advanced	21.9	19	19	21	
State Mean Score					

Use the same basic format for subgroup results. Complete a separate form for each test and each grade level. Present *at least* three years of data to show decreasing disparity among subgroups. Some subgroup examples are:

- (b) Socioeconomic Status (e.g., eligible for free and reduced meals, not eligible for free and reduced meals)
- (b) Ethnicity (e.g., White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native)

