

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

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

Official School Name Carl G. Renn Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address P.O. Box 66 - 183 School Lane  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Lairdsville PA 17742-0066  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. ( 570 ) 584-3070 Fax ( 570 ) 584-5393

Website/URL www.eastlycoming.net E-mail bknapsack@elsd.org

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\* Mr. Edward W. Harrington  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name East Lycoming School District Tel. ( 570 ) 584-2131

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  
President/Chairperson Mrs. Susan Bigger – Coordinator, Curriculum and Instruction  
(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.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

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

1. Number of schools in the district:       3   Elementary schools  
    Middle schools  
    Junior high schools  
    High schools  
   1   Other (Briefly explain)  
   One building serves grades 7-12, Jr/Sr High School  
   4   TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure:      \$7782   
     Average State Per Pupil Expenditure:      \$8295

**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.   6   Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.  
     \_\_\_\_\_ 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
<b>K</b>	12	8	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>			
<b>1</b>	10	8	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>			
<b>2</b>	20	20	<b>40</b>	<b>9</b>			
<b>3</b>	23	7	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>			
<b>4</b>	22	15	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>			
<b>5</b>	13	19	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>			
<b>6</b>	19	16	<b>35</b>	Other			
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →</b>							<b>212</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school: 100 % White  
 \_\_\_\_\_ % 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: 7.96 %

(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.	7
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	11
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	226
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.079646
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7.96

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 0.0 %  
0.0 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: N/A

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40.57 %

86 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: 9.9 %  
21 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>    </u> Autism	<u>    </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>    </u> Deafness	<u>    </u> Other Health Impaired
<u>    </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>  10</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>    </u> Hearing Impairment	<u>  10</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>  1</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>    </u>	<u>  1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>  12</u>	<u>    </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>  3</u>	<u>  7</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
Support staff	<u>  2</u>	<u>  3</u>
Total number	<u>  17</u>	<u>  11</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio:   18:1

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	95.73%	95.78%	95.59%	95.98%	96.09%
Daily teacher attendance	93.82%	92.67%	94.50%	94.11%	93.29%
Teacher turnover rate	11.11%	5.56%	11.76%	18.75%	12.50%
Student dropout rate	N/A				
Student drop-off rate	N/A				

## **Part III - Summary**

Carl G. Renn Elementary School is described as an extension of both home and family by children, parents, and teachers who live by the school's motto, "Where Children Come First." The mission of Renn centers on the concept that school emulates a family environment with caring teachers who are committed to supporting their students to achieve academic excellence. High student expectations are reinforced daily by all members of the school community who implement a standards-based curriculum.

Carl G. Renn Elementary is located in the East Lycoming School District in Lairdsville, Pennsylvania, a rural community. Renn is one of three elementary schools in the district, and educates pre-kindergarten and kindergarten through grade six students. The school serves 212 students and is staffed by 12 classroom teachers, 1 Title I reading specialist, 1 Special Education teacher, and 4 part-time teacher specialists in library, art, music, and physical education. Ninety-eight percent of the Renn students are bussed from the surrounding area, which is primarily a farming community. Recent demographic information indicates that 40.5% of the student population qualifies for free and/or reduced lunch, and in years prior to entering kindergarten, children have the least amount of formal pre-school development in the district. In the 2003-2004 school year, the district implemented an all-year, half-day pre-kindergarten program for entering kindergarten students. In 2001-2002, Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA) results ranked Renn as the poorest performing school in the district. However, dramatically, in the 2002-2003 school year, Renn demonstrated significant improvement at grade 5 that propelled it to the highest performing school within the district, boasting scaled scores of 1510 in Mathematics and 1500 in Reading. Both scores are a full 200 points above the PA state average reported as 1300 in Mathematics and 1300 in Reading. In Mathematics, 85.3% of students scored At or Above Proficient and 88.2% At or Above Proficient in Reading.

Renn also offers many extended-day opportunities that enhance students' academic and social well-being, such as Reading is Fundamental, Family Literacy Project, Homework Club, Intervention, Accelerated Reader, Readers' Theater, McRead Project, Battle of the Books, and Bookmobile. Extra-curricular activities available to all students include Primetime Reading, Science Fair, Pioneer Club, Spring Fling, Chorus, Band, Student-of-the-Month, Scouts, Book Bingo, Football, Wrestling, and Basketball

The families, although socio-economically disadvantaged, have a long-standing history of both support and respect for the teachers and school in their small town. Their participation in school events, parent-teacher conferences, PTO, and their overwhelming support of school initiatives demonstrates this. With no other supportive agencies, Renn truly is the town center, sponsoring many community events, thus accomplishing its mission of emulating a family environment while supporting students' academic excellence. We envision a new generation in this community, one that, inspired by its academic success will break the cycle of disadvantage.

## **Part IV – Indicators of Academic Success**

1. The state of Pennsylvania used the fifth grade school results of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) to measure student and school performance in regard to the No Child Left Behind Legislation (NCLB). As specified in Pennsylvania Chapter 4 curriculum regulations, the purposes of the PSSA include providing

- An understanding of the school's achievement of the academic standards to students, parents, educators and community citizens
- A measure of the degree to which school programs enable students to attain the academic standards
- Results to school districts for use in their strategic plans
- Information to the general public and state policymakers regarding school achievement of academic standards
- Aggregated results for all students

School and student results for the PSSA are reported using scaled scores and performance levels. Scaled scores allow for comparisons of a school's results from year to year. The statewide average allows for comparison of schools across the state. In 2002-2003, the fifth-grade students of Carl G. Renn Elementary earned an impressive scaled score of 1510 in mathematics compared to 1250 in 2001-2002. The mathematics results reflect an improvement of 260 scaled points. In 2002-2003 the school had a scaled score of 1500 in reading compared to 1200 in the 2001-2002 school year. The reading results reflect a dramatic improvement of 300 scaled points. The Pennsylvania Department of Education considers a difference of 50 scaled points to be educationally meaningful. The 2002-2003 school year marked the first year of PSSA testing in third grade. Results were only reported as scaled scores. In third grade, Renn earned an average scaled score of 1483 in mathematics compared to a state average of 1306. In reading, the scaled score was 1470 compared to a state average of 1303.

Mathematics and reading results in fifth grade are also reported in terms of four performance levels:

Advanced: The Advanced level reflects superior academic performance.

Proficient: The Proficient level reflects satisfactory academic performance.

Basic: The Basic level reflects marginal academic performance.

Below Basic: The Below Basic level reflects inadequate academic performance.

For the 2002-2003 school year, Renn had 85.3% of the students reach either proficient or advanced in mathematics on the PSSA. The NCLB benchmark for math was 35%. In reading, 88.2% of the students reached proficient or advanced on the PSSA. The NCLB benchmark was 45%. Amazingly, 64.7 % of the students achieved the performance level of advanced in math, and 58.8% achieved advanced in reading. This data is based on all fifth-grade students who were assessed with no exclusions.

The results from statewide assessments and nationally normed tests provide indicators of student strength and weakness. The grade level information is used to guide curriculum and instruction.

2. Renn teachers use assessments to shape their teaching practices and model self-evaluation skills to students. Teachers believe in and practice data-driven decision making on a daily basis. Formal and informal student assessment data is collected and reviewed at the building and classroom levels in order to determine school performance, student growth, student intervention services, classroom instructional strategies, curriculum decisions, and professional development needs.

At the building level, standardized achievement and state assessments are given in reading, writing, and mathematics in second through sixth grades. Building-based assessments form a school-wide picture that provide a focus on school assessment goals. Renn's strengths and weaknesses are shared and actively discussed with the faculty to determine professional development needs, curriculum and standards alignment, and progress toward performance benchmarks.

At the classroom level, teachers collect curriculum-based assessments: running records, constructed responses, open-ended math problems, Harcourt Brace holistic assessments, Everyday Math tests, and aligned test-prep materials. Annually and throughout each quarter, building and classroom-based assessments are used to determine individual student needs and classroom growth. In conjunction with the Primary Literacy Coach and building principal, classroom teachers review data to tailor classroom strategies, differentiate instruction, prescribe intervention services, after school tutoring, and summer programming.

3. Renn views communication of student performance as a vital part of insuring student success. Formative and summative assessments are communicated to students, parents, and the community through frequent and personal contact.

Teachers communicate with students daily to increase their understanding of concepts and monitor academic performance. Collaboratively, students and teachers identify standards, develop rubrics, self-evaluate against checklists, use anchor papers as guides, monitor portfolio development, and work out sample problems to create divergent, critical thinkers.

Standards based rubric report cards are shared with parents every nine weeks to show student growth and progress. Parent conferences, scheduled twice a year, have an amazing participation rate of 98%. Teachers personally contact parents unable to attend the conferences. Individualized student achievement from standardized and state assessments are promptly sent to parents. In addition, daily agenda books, weekly folders containing daily work and e-mail correspondence provide parents information to improve student performance.

The community is made aware of the school's performances by the superintendent, staff, and student presentations to the Board of Education, which receives local press. Results are updated to the district web page, which also serves as a tool for effective communication. It is this communication network that strengthens Renn's collaborative environment.

4. Renn staff members are proud of their students and the academic growth and progress they have made. As honored recipients, we would encourage and solicit educators within and outside of the district to become mentors for aspiring Blue Ribbon Schools. We would relish the opportunity to share and model our research-based best practices with other educators and schools.

Through district-wide professional development, faculty meet in grade level and cross-curricular teams to share teaching strategies aligned to the improvement of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student achievement. Our collaborative efforts must not stop at our own school doors. The district belongs to a multi-county consortium, a group of businesses and educators, that exists to improve education through the implementation of standards. As a Phase I instructional leader, staff members have presented professional development seminars at local, regional, state, and national levels. In the future, these experienced presenters will share their successful teaching strategies about school improvement. We have on-going relationships with department chairpersons at local universities, who often send visitors and student teachers. We would continue to welcome educators who would like to visit our school.

It would be hard to stop the Renn staff from sharing the successes of our students!

## **Part V – Curriculum and Instruction**

1. Every student at Carl G. Renn Elementary is instructed through a dynamic, rigorous curriculum, based on best practices and innovations in the content areas. The curriculum is designed to meet or exceed national and state standards. It is continually reviewed and adjusted to remain abreast of current research as determined by the National Reading Panel and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

A balanced literacy approach to learning is fundamental in the development of readers and in building a comprehensive language arts curriculum. The goal of this approach is to develop independent critical readers. The curriculum takes the form of a supplemented four-block literacy model: guided reading, independent reading, guided writing, and independent writing. Our integrated curriculum includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills as defined by the national and state standards for Pennsylvania, authentic literature with the Harcourt Series, and constructed responses to literature aligned to the PSSA. Our developmentally appropriate language-rich environment, beginning with four year-old students, is designed to create strategic readers. Teachers make a concentrated effort to expand knowledge of vocabulary and provide extensive language experiences, to meet our students' needs.

Our mathematics curriculum is based on a hands-on, constructivist approach to learning. Students develop a wide range of skills, including basic computation and problem-solving strategies. The research-based Everyday Math series was selected as core curriculum due to its rigorous approach to learning. Teachers use a variety of methods to engage students in learning, such as cooperative learning, projects, explorations, games, and competitions. These methods build conceptual understanding of math principles and application to real-world situations.

The science curriculum was developed using state science and technology standards. Grade level modules are hands-on, inquiry-based studies in the areas of Physical, Earth, Technological and Biological Sciences. These teacher-developed materials incorporate challenging content and essential processes: prediction, observation, collection and report of data, analysis, inference, sequence, communication of conclusion, and extensions of learning to new situations.

Our elementary social studies curriculum is integrated into the language arts program and supported by technology. Topics are presented through quality literature, both fiction and non-fiction, supported by teacher-developed thematic units. These materials have been designed using student interests, ranging in topic from local needs to global issues. The program is tailored to strengthen student reading comprehension skills through the use of student-response logs, class discussion, hands-on projects, and critical reading of the various media.

All children receive instruction weekly from certified specialists in the areas of art, vocal music, physical education, library, and for interested students, instrumental and choral music. Each child also has daily individual practice of math and reading skills through the use of a computerized integrated learning system.

2. Renn utilizes Balanced Literacy for teaching reading, writing, speaking, and listening across the curriculum to Pre-K through sixth grade students. Components of the reading curriculum are based upon the findings of the National Reading Panel and the research of Fountas and Pinnell, Harvey, Clay, Cunningham and others. The theoretical foundation, coupled with the PA curriculum standards, provides an instructional framework to insure students are meeting or exceeding grade-level benchmarks. Students are immersed in authentic literature using Harcourt Language Arts Signatures. To develop comprehension, students learn to activate prior knowledge, interact with text, and construct meaning. Guided Reading provides students individualized reading instruction while working in flexible student groups. To improve accuracy and fluency, students are engaged in phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, and repeated readings. Writing instruction occurs formally and informally throughout the day and is integrated into content areas. Students are exposed to various writing modes and learn to incorporate the domains of focus, content, style, organization, and conventions as defined by the PA standards.

Renn teachers are strongly committed to providing all students with a highly successful language arts program that promotes academic growth and success across the curriculum while developing critical independent readers who find joy in books.

3. In our effort to “develop lifelong learners and contributing citizens to the community,” Renn adopted Everyday Mathematics (EM). This research-based program focuses on the philosophy that students can, and must, learn more mathematics than had been previously expected from using the traditional program. Math is meaningful to children when it is varied, rich, and rooted in real-world problems and applications. One of EM strengths is the spiral approach to learning in the various mathematical strands: operations, patterns, functions, and sequences. Students learn a variety of algorithms to apply in the practice of various math concepts and problem solving.

Our students develop additional problem solving strategies for open-ended problems. Students practice a variety of techniques when writing in the area of mathematics, using common mathematical vocabulary instituted building wide.

All teachers, K-6, have fine-tuned their instruction to develop higher level thinking skills necessary for success in this rigorous math curriculum. In addition to several intensive math trainings, teachers have the benefit of an onsite Math Coach and several EM consultants as resources. Based on the philosophy that math is everywhere, we teach our students essential skills and strategies, preparing them for life.

4. At Renn, we know that the best curriculum in the world will not be meaningful if instructional methods are not sound. Students are placed in heterogeneous classrooms, and instructional grouping decisions are based on student strengths, needs, and learning styles. Through an inclusion model, intervention is delivered to students needing support. Instruction, performance, and content are differentiated for students needing acceleration or support. Teachers understand the social nature of learning and provide opportunities for cross-grade tutoring and cooperative learning.

Integration of reading, writing, math, technology, and content allows students to make connections and deepen their understanding. Direct, explicit instruction, hands-on activities, and embedded problem solving are core instructional methods.

Technology is a strength at Renn. A computer-based curriculum reinforcing independent level math and reading concepts is enjoyed daily by all students. Accelerated Reader motivates students to read. The intermediate grades have iBook carts; each cart is equipped with a classroom set of laptops used to enhance instruction in math, reading, writing, and research. Each sixth-grade student is assigned an iBook, which can be taken home to aid in research or assignments.

On-staff instructional coaches model content-specific instructional strategies that help teachers deliver standards-based instruction to improve student learning at Renn.

5. Renn teachers have engaged in professional development opportunities with a heavy emphasis on standards-driven instruction. Training on differentiated instruction and its relationship to standards, in addition to best practices teaching mathematics and language arts, has been delivered to teachers.

Given Renn's unique needs, site-specific professional development has focused on the National Reading Panel's findings. The goal of this professional development is to deepen our understanding about how children learn to read and to articulate how assessments drive our instruction and how to explicitly deliver reading instruction.

Teachers collaborate daily and receive on-site professional support from reading, writing, and math coaches. Every teacher has a district-provided laptop computer; the use of this technology to network with other professionals has led to learning opportunities for teachers and students. Moreover, teachers are provided with opportunities to attend conferences and return to share what they have learned with their Renn colleagues.

Graduate-level reading courses are offered periodically in our district and enable staff to develop common teaching practices that improve student achievement. With the support of our district administration, our faculty pursues professional education; 50% of Renn's classroom teachers have Master's degrees. This highly qualified staff has a positive impact on improving student achievement.



## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

### PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT FIFTH GRADE READING

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Testing month	April	April	April
<b>CARL G. RENN SCHOOL SCORES</b>	1500	1200	1310
% At or Above Basic	91.1%	63.3%	75%
% At or Above Proficient	88.2%	33.3%	58.3%
% At Advanced	58.8%	3.3%	13.9%
Number of students tested	37	30	36
Percent of total students tested	100%	96.8%	100%
Number of students excluded	0	1	0
Percent of students excluded	0%	3.2%	0%
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
1. Economically Disadvantaged			
% At or Above Basic	85.8%	58.3%	68.7%
% At or Above Proficient	85.8%	16.7%	56.3%
% At Advanced	42.9%	0%	18.8%
Number of students tested	14	12	16
<b>STATE SCALED SCORES</b>	1300	1320	1310
% At or Above Basic			
State Mean Score	78.4%	79.7%	76%
% At or Above Proficient			
State Mean Score	58%	57%	55.1%
% At Advanced			
State Mean Score	27.1%	18.2%	19.8%

## **STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS**

### **PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT FIFTH GRADE MATH**

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Testing month	April	April	April
<b>CARL G. RENN SCHOOL SCORES</b>	1510	1250	1360
% At or Above Basic	100%	73.3%	89%
% At or Above Proficient	85.3%	30%	64%
% At Advanced	64.7%	6.7%	27.8%
Number of students tested	37	30	36
Percent of total students tested	100%	96.8%	100%
Number of students excluded	0	1	0
Percent of students excluded	0%	3.2%	0%
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
1. Economically Disadvantaged			
% At or Above Basic	100%	66.7%	81.3%
% At or Above Proficient	78.6%	33.3%	56.3%
% At Advanced	42.9%	8.3%	31.3%
Number of students tested	14	12	16
<b>STATE SCALED SCORES</b>	1300	1320	1310
% At or Above Basic			
State Mean Score	77.6%	74.8%	74.6%
% At or Above Proficient			
State Mean Score	56.3%	53.1%	53%
% At Advanced			
State Mean Score	27.7%	25.8%	22.5%