2004-2005 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet

Type of School: __ Elementary **X** Middle __ High __ K-12

Name of Principal: Mr. Carmen Macchia

Official School Name: Port Chester Middle School

School Mailing Address: 113 Bowman Avenue

Port Chester New York 10573 – 2808
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County: Westchester School Code Number*: 66-19-04-03-0010

Telephone (914) 934-7931 Fax (914) 934-7886

Website/URL: www.ms.portchesterschools.org E-mail: cmacchia@portchesterschools.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.

_____ Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Charles D. Coletti

District Name: Port Chester-Rye U.F.S.D. Tel.: (914) 934-7901

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.

_____ Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Larry Lupo

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.

_____ Date_____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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 2004-2005 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 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award.*

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:

1. Number of schools in the district:
   4 Elementary schools
   1 Middle school
   0 Junior high school
   1 High School
   0 Other
   6 TOTAL

2. District per Pupil Expenditure: $13,098
   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: $13,505

SCHOOL:

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [X] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [ ] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

4. 12 Number of years the principal has been in his position at this school.

   N/A If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK				7	133	114	247
K				8	138	103	241
1				9			
2				10			
3				11			
4				12			
5	2		2	Other	3	4	7
6	144	118	262				
2004-2005 SY TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							**759**

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
   23 % White
   11 % Black or African American
   64 % Hispanic or Latino
   2 % Asian/Pacific Islander
   0 % American Indian/Alaskan Native
   100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 4 %
(This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (7) is the mobility rate.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	17
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	15
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2003	745
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	0.042
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4 %

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 13 %
99 Total Number Limited English Proficient
Number of languages represented: 3
Specify languages: Spanish, Portuguese, and Creole

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 64%
Total number students who qualify: 482

10. Students receiving special education services: 14%
103 Total Number of Students Served

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

1 Autism	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	7 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	55 Specific Learning Disability
0 Hearing Impairment	26 Speech or Language Impairment
2 Mental Retardation	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
7 Multiple Disabilities	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
	5 Emotional Disturbance

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

	Full-time	**Part-Time**
Administrators	3	
Classroom teachers	39	
Special resource teachers/specialists	27	
Paraprofessionals	13	
Support staff	5	
Total number	**87**	

12. Average school student-"classroom teacher" ratio: 19:1
13. Attendance patterns of teachers and students:

	2003-2004	**2002-2003**	**2001-2002**	**2000-2001**	**1999-2000**
Daily student attendance	94%	94%	93%	95%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	8%	12%	8%	16%	7%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

PART III – SUMMARY

In affluent Westchester County, 15% of children attending school are classified "poverty eligible." In comparison, almost 64% of Port Chester Middle School (PCMS) students are "poverty eligible." This high concentration of poverty, together with ethnic and language changes continue to impact middle school operations. In 1993, when the Principal began his tenure at PCMS, 37% of students were Hispanic surnamed. In 2003-04, 64% of students are Hispanic surnamed, a 90% increase. Many of our students come to us with significant gaps in their previous education. We are a diverse school committed to success for every student; 11% of students are African American, 2% are Asian, and 23% Caucasian. We embrace all students and their families in our school culture. This is the essence of the PCMS **Mission Statement**[1]: **Our *Strength is Our Diversity!***

Our Mission Statement embodies our core values: to promote academic achievement together with personal and social development; to acknowledge responsibility for students as they journey from childhood through adolescence; to support the transition from the elementary school and extending into the high school.

PCMS provides a **safe and orderly learning environment** as part of a nurturing school community. In the initial stage of our reform effort (1999-2000), we conducted a school wide needs assessment, researched best middle school practices, implemented comprehensive staff development and increased accountability for all staff. As a result of these systemic reforms and improvements in school culture, we were one of only two schools nationwide to receive the **National School Safety Award** in **1999.** We combine **high academic expectations**, **character education and leadership** as part of one unified curriculum. We endorse the principle that "**character education teaches habits of thought and deed that help people live and work together in families, as friends, neighbors, communities and nations**"[2]. At PCMS we integrate character education into classroom instruction consistent with academic content standards and in conjunction with our commitment to excellence.

Through our **interdisciplinary, differentiated curriculum** students are **heterogeneously** grouped, taught the core curriculum and cared for in small learning communities we call **teams**. In each team, four to six teachers meet daily to develop customized action plans to ensure *no child is left behind* and *literacy is connected to all content area instruction.* Each team has a team leader who meets with administrators bimonthly**.** This group, together with guidance counselors, serves as the **School Leadership Committee.** In addition to interdisciplinary team subjects: Math, English Language Arts (ELA), Science and Social Studies, students attend **foreign language** classes, **art,** music, technology, and athletics[3]. It should be noted, Special Education students are mainstreamed into collaborative/inclusion classes. We offer Honors Math and English Seminar programs to challenge 'advanced proficiency' students.

Academic Teams and "**looping"**[4] for 7th and 8th graders are unique aspects of the PCMS experience providing students opportunities to develop academically, creatively, and to blossom under the caring, watchful, professional eyes of our teachers. Our team approach stresses organization and time management while nurturing creativity in our commitment to flexible, multi-faceted, quality standards-aligned programs to provide a rich environment for quality learning.

Each faculty member views him/herself as an ELA teacher who embeds ELA skills into

[1] PCMS Mission Statement: "PCMS is committed to the individual needs of its diverse population. Our aim is to ensure that all students will achieve academically, develop socially and discover their unique gifts and talents."
[2] *Our Shared Responsibilities*. Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. USDOE. January 2005.
[3] 7th & 8th grade male & female students participate in supplementary after school NYS Athletic Association Athletic program & weekly swimming lessons in collaboration with local YMCA.
[4] Looping requires that students and staff remain together for a two year period.

lessons. ELA is a priority: students understand that literacy across the curricula is integral to being a successful learner. Students experience success because of the faculty's dedication to ensuring that curriculum and students' work meet NYS Standards. Teachers devote themselves to identifying and delineating skills students need to become excellent readers and writers.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Description of English Language Arts and Mathematics Assessment Results[5]

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) identified four performance levels for New York State criterion-reference tests. In **ELA**, student performance at Levels 1 and 2 is described as having **"**minimal" or "partial" understanding of intermediate level written and oral text. At Levels 3 and 4, performance is described as showing general and thorough understanding of intermediate level written and oral text. Students at Level 4 exceed the standard.

In **math**, the State standard describes Level 1 students as having serious performance deficiencies: "They may understand and use simple operations." Level 2 students "for the most part use only basic understanding" of varied mathematical concepts. Level 3 students meet state standards as they demonstrate "consistent" knowledge of a wide range of mathematical concepts. Level 4 performance exceeds the standard. Students at this level provide evidence of superior knowledge of key mathematical ideas. Students who do not meet the standards (Level 1 and & 2) are provided Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in math and ELA.

Assessment results, Tables 1 and 2 displayed on the last two pages, show **dramatic improvement** in **both ELA and math** over the past five years exhibiting significant gains. This steady rise in *Levels 3 and 4 and decline in Levels 1 and 2 provides a preponderance of evidence that strategies to close the achievement gap are working.* In ELA for the year 2003-2004, 22 students who scored at Level 2 missed the Level 3 score by only one cutpoint. Based on the 2002-2003 scoring grid, those students would have reached the State standard but NYSED recalibrated the 2003-2004 cutpoint for Level 3. Overall it is clearly indicated that our Level 1 scores declined and our Level 4 scores increased steadily, providing proof of significant positive change over time and demonstrating our ability to **sustain these gains in school improvement**.

Both ELA and math Tables display performance of four subgroups**:** Economically Disadvantaged, African American, Caucasian and Hispanic, where improvement patterns, over time, are exhibited. *We are committed to continue such progress and increase the number of students meeting and exceeding the standard, while rapidly decreasing the number of students in Levels 1 and 2.* Please note: subgroup scores for African American students for the 1999-2000, 2001-2002 and 2003-2004 school years (SY), may not be statistically significant since the number of students was fewer than 30.

PCMS mathematics results are exciting: it is clear from performance data that our school is achieving dynamic growth. From 2002 to 2003, we were cited by the NYSED for having one of the largest single year increases in the number of students meeting and exceeding math standards. School-wide math totals, at or above Level 3, increased from 66% to 90%, a 24 point gain! As indicated by 2004 scores, this jump is not an aberration; it demonstrates change has been institutionalized. Math Table 2 indicates constant **Level 4 advanced proficiency performance increases** and a **significant decline in the number of students not meeting the state standards.**

All subgroups of students in Tables 1 and 2 display this **same pattern of improvement.** When NYS and PCMS tables are compared, improved performance consistencies become

[5] Information on the NYS Assessment System can be accessed via http://emsc32.nysed.gov/osa/. Port Chester assessment information can be accessed via: http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/repcrdfall2003/links/d_661904.html. Additional ELA & Math grade 8 test information is cited on the last two pages of this document.

clear. PCMS scores were higher than statewide results.

Our overall philosophy and our daily goal remain the same, “Success for Every Student.” As stated in our District Plan, w*e expect to continue this positive pattern of* growth on our locally developed monthly assessments, the district annually administered Test of New York State Standards (TONYSS) and the NYS grade 8 ELA and math standardized assessments.

2. Use of Assessment Data to Understand and Improve Student and School Performance:

"***Good Assessment Drives Good Instruction***" is emblazoned in our minds as we go through a cycle of data collection, analysis, synthesis, reflection and renewal. To improve teaching and learning, local and standardized assessment data are compiled as students move through each grade, providing a network of usable data to modify instruction. Staff analyzes standardized and monthly pre/post assessment data to increase instructional efficacy and to focus instruction.

ELA staff receives sustained, on-going specific training with Ellin Rossberg, author and reading consultant, with regard to Score Reports, Item Analysis and Gap Analysis to assess student strengths and weaknesses and design targeted curricular and pedagogical improvements. Reading strategies and skills, determined essential for reading comprehension, writing, and critical thinking, are assessed monthly to measure student proficiency. Class group results are charted monthly and posted for visual analysis outside of each classroom for parents, school visitors, Board Members, and the Superintendent.

Additionally, the TONYSS is administered every spring to 6th and 7th graders and the NYS 8th Grade ELA exam every January and math every May. Through BOCES "Data Warehouse," staff analyze student achievement data by group, by student, by skill and longitudinally. Data are used for reteaching strategies, and skill specific supplementary units. A student (general education, ELL or special education) who scores below standard receives AIS, a specific skills reinforcement class. Mainstream support (MSS) provides an additional academic class to reinforce concepts taught in inclusion classes. In ELA, advanced students receive enrichment experiences via our Seminar program which incorporates 'Junior Great Books'. In addition, we developed many school programs to support all students by establishing skill-targeted extended day, AIS and MSS classes. Teachers use assessment data to refine teaching methodologies, drive instructional decisions and implement differentiated materials for student success.

3. Communication of Performance and Assessment Data to All

Our "reporting and accountability" system, in effect for three years, is as follows: **School:** teacher-made monthly class group assessment results and specific ELA skills are posted outside every ELA classroom so anyone may see how well each group scores on monthly assessments presented on a bar-graph displaying trends. **Staff** discusses student performance based on standardized and locally developed monthly assessments during common planning time, grade, team and faculty meetings and during professional development days.

Student performance and achievement is communicated to and discussed with **parents** via report cards, the school's Website, PTA and parent/teacher conferences and special meetings called by the Principal. Months before administration of the NYSED exams, parent meetings are held to describe exam content and strategies parents can use to support their child's academic achievement. After test results have been determined, parents are informed of their child's performance and, if necessary, informed about AIS and summer school support. **Community:** student performance data is publicly reported at Board meetings broadcast on Channel 74. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent report and display scores and offer data indicating steady progress. Board meetings are rebroadcast daily for two weeks. This year, two NYSED television productions (featuring PCMS assessment progress): **"Middle Schools in Transition"** and **"Port Chester, Leading the Way**" were aired on Channel 74 and PBS.

Parents and the community-at-large may access PCMS student reading and math achievement performance via local newspapers, the District and PCMS websites: www.portchesterschools.org, www.ms.portchesterschools.org and the NYSED School Report **card:** *www.emsc.nysed.gov/repcrdfall2003/links/d_661904.html*.

4. Successes are, and Will Continue to be, Shared with Other Schools:

In March 2004, NYSED Deputy Commissioner James Kadamus visited PCMS to celebrate our achievement gains. Deputy Kadamus was so impressed with his fact-finding that he returned in May with a NYSED film crew to produce a television program showcasing our school's achievements: **"Against the Odds**", an apt metaphor for our student academic achievement. It was aired on the PBS network throughout New York State on June 2, 2004. The program received such acclaim that Commissioner of Education, Richard Mills, invited Superintendent Coletti, Principal Macchia, and teacher leader, Laurie Morra, to Albany to "have a conversation" with him about our significant gains. Two hundred fifty thousand viewers watched the taped "conversation" aired on **PBS** throughout New York on November 23, 2004. We are honored NYSED recognized and publicized our students' dramatic five-year ELA and mathematics progress. As a result of this publicity, Ossining, Mt. Vernon, Tuckahoe, and Middletown School Districts visited us with groups of teachers and administrators. After visitors observed ELA and math classes, we shared best practices in roundtable discussions. Additionally, the Southern Westchester BOCES Superintendent visited; and this year, the Amsterdam School District will visit. We gladly share practices, strategies and organizational structures that have accelerated student achievement.

Additionally, Principal Macchia, past president of the Westchester/Putnam Middle School Principals' Association, regularly attends all Association meetings where he makes many valuable contributions. He attended this year's **National Middle School Association Convention in Minnesota** and he and PCMS staff attend county and state meetings in all disciplines. At each venue, PCMS leadership shares programs and practices that contribute to our school's progress. ELA Coordinator Michael DeVito was interviewed on WGCH **Radio** Station on June 26, 2004. This interview explored strategies and best practices that spur our students to achieve. We will continue to share our successes with other schools by **hosting more site visits**, disseminating program information through printed materials, the **school's Website**, and 2005 **local and National Middle School Principals' Conferences.** One **workshop,** already in the planning stages, concerning our ongoing academic progress, will be submitted for presentation for the October 2005 NYS Middle School Association's convention.

PART V – 1. CORE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Our NYS Standards Aligned Curriculum (Grades 6-8): PCMS is committed to meeting individual needs of its diverse population. We expect students to meet or exceed performance standards in content, critical thinking, communication and creative expression using **differentiated** strategies tailored to student interests, aspirations and unique talents. Below, we briefly illustrate our **interdisciplinary** literacy and technology integrated curricula:

English Language Arts is our curriculum **keystone!** We have identified and mapped 24 essential skills webbed to all core subjects. These skills, aligned to the NYS 8th Grade ELA Assessment, NYS Performance Standards and the National Reading Panel's (NRP) recommendations (2000), are "bundled" into a scope and sequence within each ELA class. Skills and reading strategies determined essential for reading comprehension, writing, and critical thinking, are embedded in all grade 6-8 lessons in a curriculum that is spiraled, accelerated, enriched with and authentic literature. Instruction is data-driven guided by ongoing assessment and differentiated instruction. (Please see Part IV, 1-3 and V, 2b).

Social Studies, aligned with NYS Standards, is adapted from the Monroe - Orleans BOCES Curriculum (2003). The 6th grade program focuses on cultural, social, geographic-historical, and political factors and transitions into 7th and 8th grade American history, geography, economics, government, and contemporary issues. Students are **actively involved** in eight **cooperative** and **independent, research-based** projects. Students learn skills necessary for written and oral presentations: gathering, processing, and communicating multiple sources of information (print and digital), thinking, decision-making and problem-solving.

Foreign Language offers **French, Italian and Spanish** for **7th - 8th** graders. **Interactive activities** enable students to understand and appreciate **diverse cultures and traditions** via synergistic discussion of history and current events. ELA skills are embedded and spiraled between students' native language and the target language. Students excel on Foreign Language Proficiency exams: more than 95% pass each year.

Arts Instruction is **interdisciplinary** and aligned with ELA, social studies, mathematics, and science curricula. Here, we teach students to make **connections throughout the curricula**—to understand how personal and cultural forces shape artistic communication; and how art, in turn, shapes past and present diverse cultures, e.g. students follow the social studies curriculum through art and learn how the history of humanity is deeply understood through artistic expression. This interdisciplinary approach teaches students to understand how basic problem-solving evolved into art as a form of **self-expression** and **creativity,** using not only elements and principles of art, but also **laws of mathematics and science**. Students are taught relationships and common themes connecting all curricula, encouraging them to become **creative problem solvers.** Additionally, our music program interweaves interdisciplinary content area skills and knowledge: two grade level concert bands and choruses, two Jazz Bands, a Select Concert Band, a Show Choir, Vocal Ensembles, Brass and Saxophone Ensembles and a Marching Band augmented by two Color Guards. These varied arts programs include exciting and inspirational opportunities for student performances that directly involve parents and the community at large[6].

Mathematics grounds students in a scope and sequence of analytical strategies, reasoning, problem-solving, **higher-order thinking and predicting skills.** Each student is challenged to master abstract math concepts necessary for success in our contemporary world. ELA skills are incorporated, as appropriate, to improve **comprehension** of **word problems** and

[6] Such as: District-wide winter & spring, Vocal & Instrumental Concerts, local holiday parades and traditional "Band Night Marching Show." Students give Community Service through performances at local nursing homes, hotels, civic clubs, nursery schools, etc.

vocabulary. Teachers diagnose and provide on-going student assessment. Multi-pronged **differentiated** approaches, including student-centered, technology integrated projects are planned in collaboration with bilingual and special education teachers.

Hands-on, Inquiry-Based Science is aligned with NYS Science and ELA Standards. Based on higher levels of **Bloom's Taxonomy**, students learn ***Scientific Method*** and basic research processes, science principles and current scientific events that span earth, life, and physical science courses. Real-life applications of new theories and startling discoveries come alive in the school-based **planetarium**, the center of monthly PCMS *Evening Sky Shows*.

2b. Improving Reading Skills of Below Grade Level Students through our ELA Curriculum.

Our ELA Curriculum progressively extends and accelerates reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. ELA focuses on, integrates, and "bundles" assessment skills embedded into daily lessons through research skills, technology literacy, and authentic literature. As the *keystone* curriculum, ELA encodes other subjects with essential skills. Teachers present reading skills through an **accelerated literacy** program that catapults students from grade-level to above-grade-level authentic literature. ELA teachers created NYS aligned curricular documents which allow teacher flexibility but achieve consistency *within* and *from* grade to grade. Materials are chosen from **various content areas and classics—**fiction and nonfiction (short stories, novels, poetry, expository text**)**. Rigorous age-appropriate literature demands high level **critical-thinking skills**—comparison, analysis and synthesis. Authentic literature is used to create reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. Student work includes four-paragraph compositions, daily reading homework, oral presentations, individual and group book talks, group literary analysis, weekly writing assignments, high-level vocabulary, website research, creative writing, and required independent reading. Acknowledging diverse student **learning styles and skill levels** by **differentiating instruction,** performance is assessed, lessons are retaught, spiraled, and reassessed.

Each grade has an inclusion program supporting mainstream special education students. The ESL/Bilingual program augments ELA strategies by using visual aids, active class discussions and the **English and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol**[7] (**SIOP**) model to facilitate high-quality instruction for ELLs in content area teaching. ELA and ESL curricula are tailored to students' abilities. ELA teachers have created a **book-rich, multi-genre curriculum** and **developmental writing program** that identifies **essential skills by grade. Interdisciplinary teacher teams extend** and **embed** these **skills** into lessons across **all disciplines** including **technology integration** and assessments. Flexible uniformity earmarks ELA and ESL classrooms through teacher-written curriculum customized to students' strengths.

Instructional strategies and skills[8] developed to promote acceleration of below grade level students are based on **scientific based research** (SBR) of J. David Cooper, et al. and the NRP's recommended skills determined essential for reading comprehension, writing, and critical thinking. Supplemental remedial services are offered to **below grade-level students** via **AIS, MSS, resource room,** and our federally funded *21st Century Community Learning Center Program* **extended school day** (3:00PM-6:00PM) classes all help our students meet and exceed local and state academic standards.

3. *The ARTS*: Essential Skills, Knowledge Base and Relationship to School's Mission

[7] SIOP Model, Vogt & Short, 2004, Goldenberg, 2004.

[8] SBR skills: Phonics (beginning readers), vocabulary development, fluency, comprehension. Strategies: graphic organizers, reciprocal teaching, summarizing, scaffolding, daily fast-paced structured lessons, modeling good work habits

The arts are integral to our academic achievement. Research[9] supports our view that the arts are valuable and critical to a complete education. Studies[10] reveal a powerful, positive relationship between study in the arts and other academic subjects, influencing attitudes and behaviors that promote learning for students in various ways. Our **award winning** interdisciplinary standards-aligned **Multiple Arts** programs are linked to and **completely aligned** with ELA, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Mathematics and Science. We develop and enhance student learning through **team work, students' self-discipline, motivation, enjoyment, expression, growth** and **self-esteem, development of personal standards of excellence,** stimulating **community service, parent and community support and involvement.** Arts are integral to our school's mission: Students will "…**discover their unique skills and talents**."

The essential mission and focus of arts instruction, which includes fine arts, vocal and instrumental music, and theatre arts, are to teach students to make connections —so they learn how personal and cultural forces shape artistic communication; and how the arts, in turn, shape diverse cultures of past and present societies. For example, as students follow the Social Studies curriculum through their studies of the arts, (from cave art and primitive musical rhythms to modern art, classical music and jazz), they learn how the history of humanity can be traced and understood through the arts. **Interdisciplinary, multisensory** and **multicultural** approaches guide students to understand how basic problem-solving evolves into various Arts as forms of self-expression. Visual arts become more than a demonstration of knowledge of elements of art, but also the laws of mathematics and science (architecture, civil engineering, monument design, computer and graphic arts). Performing arts teaches story telling through understanding of opera, self expression through vocal music and theatre, mathematics through understanding of meter and rhythm. Students learn relationships and common themes that connect curricula and apply these themes to become creative problem solvers.

4. Different Instructional Methods to Improve Student Learning.

Teachers have worked collaboratively identifying, mapping, and connecting core concepts and skills aligned to NYS Standards, determining what students need to know and be able to do from grade to grade. Method and structure go hand-in-hand and the structure of the curriculum is married to the instructional strategy. **Differentiation** and adjustment of instruction for **various learning styles** and **rates** make it possible to provide targeted instruction for those who need extra support or use different learning routes. Methods include: modifying the scope, pace, and depth of the curriculum to meet individual student needs and scaffolding lessons for varying levels of learning abilities.

Varied instructional strategies are employed to address the needs of our diverse population; teachers use visual, kinesthetic, and auditory modalities to keep students focused and engaged with lessons and methods that lead students to practice effective content area reading strategies. Methods include previewing text, noticing paragraph headings and perusing end of chapter questions before reading a selection and creating graphic organizers.

We use **interdisciplinary**, **multi-sensory** and **technology infused approaches;** individual, small group and **cooperative learning groups** enhance the learning process. They are effective strategies to ensure every student; those with special learning needs to the most gifted child, is **engaged in learning**, and exercises creativity.

Our instructional strategies for improvement in student learning begin with ongoing assessment and diagnosis to improve the learning and teaching environment. We diagnose and

[9] Schools, Communities, and the Arts: A Research Compendium. National Endowment for the Arts. Wash., DC. 1995.

[10] Highlights from Key National Research on Arts Education, retrieved Jan. 17, 2005 from http://www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/pac_article.asp?id=613

monitor student progress and adjust instruction based on current data. As a result, instruction has evolved to reflect multiple intelligences research which we have used to customize our classrooms to exhibit higher-order thinking.

For students who have advanced in their literacy skills, we created an enriched ELA curriculum, the **English Seminar Program[11].** The ESP, an authentic **literature-based** curriculum provides more challenging activities: **textual reading** of **rich selections** and **text-based discussions.** *Shared Inquiry* drives the **Socratic Seminar** approach to richer analysis. Each grade studies more than **12 novels** in addition to **Junior Great Books** selections. Authentic literature, choice for students, reading complete original books, nonfiction and expository materials, emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, cooperative collaborative oral presentation activities, while honoring and modeling democratic principles—are ESP earmarks!

5. Professional Development and Impact on Improving Student Achievement.

Ongoing professional development (PD) for teachers and administrators includes instructional content, best practices, interdisciplinary and multi-sensory teaching, technology integration, student support, numeracy and literacy. A unique feature of PCMS PD is our active engagement as we **develop customized curricula.**

PCMS PD **accelerates student achievement**. A turning point began five years ago when Ellin Rossberg, author and reading consultant, began working with our ELA department to **identify skills** necessary for mastery of the NYSED Standards, **align ELA skills** with the **Standards** and **develop high-end literature reading activities** and **reading strategies** for identified skills**.** The SBR reading strategies **permeate every discipline on every grade level[12].** PD includes modeling and observing lessons, and, **ultimately, developing the ELA curriculum: authentic literature aligned to standards, by skill and grade.** Sustained, ongoing specific training includes understanding and using **Score Reports, Item Analysis** and **Gap Analysis** to assess student strengths and weaknesses and design targeted curricular improvements. During team meetings, ELA staff turnkey train other content area staff since literacy skills are critical for all content areas. Similarly, mathematics teachers receive extensive PD from a math professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz, to identify skills aligned with mastery of math standards

Driving district and school PD, all teaching staff views themselves as **teachers of literacy:** reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Embedded in lesson plans are ELA skills and strategies taught with subject content. Comprehension, oral and listening skills not only improve students' ELA scores but have changed the culture of our school: students see the transference, make the connections, use reading strategies for all subjects and have become better readers and writers. Students know their school work is relevant and important to their success.

Our district is committed to providing expert in-house and **BOCES professional developers in content and support areas**. Time is provided to pursue appropriate systemic changes that improve curriculum and teaching. Faculty is encouraged to pursue **graduate level courses** especially at our local colleges with whom we are developing Professional Development Services (PDS): Manhattanville College and Pace University. Faculty attends BOCES off-site workshops to enhance teaching and student performance. Assistant Superintendent Kohlhagen prepares the **District PD and Technology Plans** which undergird the PCMS PD plans. They include **training in differentiating instruction; co-teaching strategies, the inclusion model** and **technology** integration in all content areas.

This year's staff is being further trained in the use of our Internet portal, and **technology**

[11] ESP Program is based on The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

[12] As examples of ELA standards and strategies integrated into another content area, see Social Studies, math, science and Foreign Language Curricula descriptions, Part V-1 above.

as an instructional tool. Classrooms have at least one computer; several classrooms have multiple computers. PCMS has a state-of-the-art planetarium and three technology labs. One is used 100% by English language learners; the other labs are staffed by computer specialists and are available to all teachers and their classes. Technology PD ranges from **basic skills** to facility with various **software** to ultimate **technology integration** including research in all content areas.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS: please see attached tables.

Table 1. Subject: **English Language Arts:** Grade: **8**
Test: NYS Testing Program English Language Arts, Grade 8
Edition/Publication Year: 2004[13] Publisher: CTB/McGraw Hill, LLC

New York State Tests	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
	Jan.	Jan	March	May	May
New York State Scores[14]		*	**	**	**
%At or Above Basic Proficient (Level 2)	98%	91%	93%	86%	50%
%At or Above Proficient (Level 3)	60%	45%	44%	45%	45%
%At Advanced Proficiency (Level 4)	13%	8%	10%	11%	10%
PCMS SCORES	***	****	****	****	****
% At or Above Basic Proficiency Level 2)	98%	96%	99%	94%	87%
%At or Above Proficient (Level 3)	60%	67%	56%	42%	33%
%At Advanced Proficiency (Level 4)	13%	11%	7%	11%	4%
Number of students tested	208	199	219	189	195
Percent of total students tested	98%	98%	100%	99%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	4	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2%	2%	0%	1%	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged	*****	****	******	****	*****
%At or Above Basic Proficiency	96%	92%	97%	91%	80%
%At or Above Proficient	47%	52%	50%	24%	20%
%At Advanced Proficiency	4%	6%	0%	1%	0%
Number of Students Tested	109	85	76	80	30
2. African American [15]	*****	****	*****	*****	*****
%At or Above Basic Proficiency	100%	97%	93%	82%	81%
%At or Above Proficient	54%	60%	52%	18%	19%
%At Advanced Proficiency	4%	7%	3%	0%	0%
Number of Students Tested	26	30	29	22	26
3. White	*****	****	****	****	*****
%At or Above Basic Proficiency	100%	100%	100%	95%	99%
%At or Above Proficient	85%	83%	75%	61%	59%
%At Advanced Proficiency	27%	22%	16%	26%	8%
Number of Students Tested	55	54	64	61	74
4. Hispanic	*****	****	****	****	*****
%At or Above Basic Proficient	97%	94%	99%	93%	81%
%At or Above Proficient	50%	59%	47%	35%	18%
%At Advanced Proficiency	8%	6%	3%	4%	1%
Number of Students Tested	125	109	124	108	95

Source: *NYS Overview of District Performance in ELA: NYS Results. Jan. 2005, pp8, 18
**NYS July 2003 Report to the Governor & the Legislature on the Status of the State's Schools p.5.
***NYSED Form C, Summary of Component Test Performance ELA, Sept. 2004 p.2.
**NYS Overview of School Performance in ELA, Apr. 2003 pp. 5, 9, Mar. 2004 pp8, 18.
*****NYS BOCES LHRIC DataWareHouse: Cognos PowerPlay Web Explorer, Jan. 2005
*****Local data and New York Statewide Testing Program School Summary Report for 2001-02 SY.

[13] CTB publishes a new edition every year since the first edition in 1999.
[14] NYS will report 2003-2004 ELA scores in mid-February 2005.
[15] Please note: subgroup scores for African American students, for the 1999-2000, 2001-2002 and 2003-2004 school years, may not be statistically significant since the total number students tested was less than 30.

Table 2. Subject: MATHEMATICS Grade **8**
Test: NYS Testing Program: Mathematics Grade 8
Edition/Publication Year: 2004[16] Publisher: CTB/McGraw Hill, LLC

New York State Tests	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
	May.	May	May	May	May
New York State Scores[17]		*	**	**	**
%At or Above Basic Proficient (Level 2)		83%	80%	73%	76%
%At or Above Proficient (Level 3)		51%	48%	39%	41%
%At Advanced Proficiency (Level 4)		9%	11%	8%	7%
PCMS SCORES	***	****	****	****	****
% At or Above Basic Proficiency Level 2)	97%	98%	92%	85%	80%
%At or Above Proficient (Level 3)	86%	90%	66%	48%	38%
%At Advanced Proficiency (Level 4)	36%	30%	14%	8%	3%
Number of students tested	226	228	250	202	225
Percent of total students tested	98%	98%	100%	99%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	4	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2%	2%	0%	1%	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Economically Disadvantaged	******	*****	*******	*****	******
%At or Above Basic Proficiency	95%	97%	82%	81%	76%
%At or Above Proficient	78%	85%	57%	35%	31%
%At Advanced Proficiency	28%	32%	0%	2%	0%
Number of Students Tested	125	92	102	88	30
2. African American [18]	******	*****	******	******	******
%At or Above Basic Proficiency	92%	100%	82%	67%	65%
%At or Above Proficient	75%	90%	57%	27%	27%
%At Advanced Proficiency	17%	17%	4%	0%	0%
Number of Students Tested	24	30	27	15	26
3. White	******	*****	*****	*****	******
%At or Above Basic Proficiency	98%	100%	97%	90%	92%
%At or Above Proficient	94%	98%	79%	65%	57%
%At Advanced Proficiency	56%	39%	32%	16%	8%
Number of Students Tested	54	56	66	63	75
4. Hispanic	******	*****	*****	*****	******
%At or Above Basic Proficient	97%	96%	92%	85%	74%
%At or Above Proficient	84%	86%	61%	42%	28%
%At Advanced Proficiency	32%	29%	8%	4%	0%
Number of Students Tested	148	136	155	122	123

Source: *NYS Overview of District Performance in Math: NYS Results. Jan. 2005, pp9, 19
**NYS July 2003 Report to the Governor & the Legislature on the Status of the State's Schools p.5.
***NYSED Form C, Summary of Component Test Performance Math, Sept. 2004 p.2.
****NYS Overview of School Performance in Math, Apr. 2003 pp. 6, 10, Mar. 2004 pp. 10, 19.
*****NYS BOCES LHRIC DataWareHouse: Cognos PowerPlay Web Explorer, Jan. 2005
******Local data and New York Statewide Testing Program School Summary Report for 2001-02 SY.

[16] CTB publishes a new edition every year since the first edition in 1999.
[17] NYS will report 2003-2004 Math scores in mid-February 2005.
[18] Please note: subgroup scores for African American students, for the 1999-2000, 2001-2002 and 2003-2004 school years, may not be statistically significant since the total number students tested was less that 30.