

2006-2007 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet Type of School: (Check all that apply) [] Elementary [X] Middle [] High [] K-12 [] Charter

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

Official School Name: Twin Groves Middle School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address: 2600 N. Buffalo Grove Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Buffalo Grove IL 60089-8023
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County: Lake State School Code Number* 34-049-0960-04 1002

Telephone: (847) 821-8946 Fax: (847) 821-8949

Web site/URL: www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us E-mail: mschalke@district96.k12.il.us

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. Thomas W. Many
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name: Kildeer Countryside Community Consolidated School District 96 Tel. (847) 459-4260

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 Mr. Marc Tepper
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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.

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

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

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2006-2007 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 2001 and has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
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: 4 Elementary schools
 2 Middle schools
 0 Junior high schools
 0 High schools
 1 Other

 7 TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$5,869

 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$5,366

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. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

7 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 or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK				7	88	94	182
K				8	119	106	225
1				9			
2				10			
3				11			
4				12			
5				Other			
6	103	89	192				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							599

[Throughout the document, round numbers 1 or higher to the nearest whole number. Use decimals to one place only if the number is below 1.]

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 83 % White
 - 01 % Black or African American
 - 02 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 14 % Asian/Pacific Islander
 - 00 % American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - 100% Total**

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 0.3%

[This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.]

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	2
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	0
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	599
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	.00333
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	0.33

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 2%
11 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 7

Specify languages: Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Lithuanian, and Portuguese

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1%

Total number students who qualify: 7

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the 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: $\frac{13}{77}$ Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>2</u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u>12</u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>34</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>17</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> </u> Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u> </u> Multiple Disabilities	

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

Number of Staff

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>25</u>	<u> </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>18</u>	<u>5</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u>21</u>	<u>2</u>
Total number	<u>66</u>	<u>7</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1
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. Also explain a high teacher turnover rate.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Teacher turnover rate	6%	8%	13%	11%	11%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Part III-Summary

Colorful banners hanging over the Twin Groves Middle School parking lot in suburban Buffalo Grove, Illinois, proclaim the school's values: Every child, every school, every day; Learning has no boundaries; Best practice, not first practice; Model *for* others what we expect *from* others; Celebrate success. The banners hang outside—as a declaration and a promise to the community. Inside the halls and classrooms of Twin Groves, those values influence each student's and staff member's experience every day. A rigorous curriculum administered by a caring and supportive staff assures that the school's mission—that every child will be successful—is met.

The daily program of each student includes instruction in five core areas: math, science, social studies, a reading/language arts block, and foreign language (“options” at sixth grade). In addition, daily physical education and an encore rotation (a rotation through 7-week sessions in communications, technology, family and consumer science, art, and music) provide a well-rounded program for all Twin Groves students. In light of research findings that students who are connected to their schools through activities outside the school day achieve at higher levels academically, teachers encourage all Twin Groves students to become involved in the extensive after-school program.

This innovative after-school program offers clubs, service opportunities, intramurals, band, orchestra, and chorus. For students who need additional support to be successful, tutoring, study halls, and academic intervention begin when the official school day ends. While the after-school program is voluntary for most, students who need more academic support are required to attend an intervention program when results of common, formative assessments demonstrate a need for re-teaching or additional tutoring. Bus service provided every day for students who attend accommodates families and makes it possible for more students to benefit from the after-school opportunities.

Teachers are organized into both interdisciplinary teams and subject area teams. Interdisciplinary teams meet daily to discuss their students' needs, curriculum connections, and parent contacts. Likewise, team-level collaboration helps teachers learn from each other. Twin Groves teachers believe that, with the right amount of time and support, all students can learn to high levels. This year each team developed a SMART goal in the area of writing that facilitates teachers in all subject areas supporting the school goal to improve writing. The staff selected writing as an area of emphasis based on disaggregating data through the school improvement process. To foster cross-curricular applications, language arts teachers share their teaching strategies with their colleagues.

Subject-area teacher teams develop essential outcomes, pace the curriculum, write common assessments, and analyze results so that decisions about teaching and learning are based on data—not simply on instinct. Over the last several years, teachers have recognized that keeping learning as their focus changes the dynamics of the decisions they make. For example, instead of focusing on “covering the curriculum,” they measure what students have learned, then use this information to determine what teachers can do for specific students who have not yet mastered their learning goals.

Collaboration to promote student learning extends to the parent community, as well. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) provides enrichment through Cultural Arts programs suggested by staff and linked to the curriculum. Intensive fundraising allows the PTO to support teachers' “wish lists” for activities, equipment, materials, and supplies that are beyond the school budget, but that enhance instruction. Parents demonstrate their commitment to their community school by volunteering their time to judge the science fair, planning and chaperoning parties, hosting special lunch and dessert days, and operating the school store. A semiannual book fair run by parent volunteers not only raises funds for the Library/Learning Center but also celebrates the importance of reading by making an offering of titles available for students to purchase for their personal collections. In addition, the Parent-to-Parent Network presents programs planned and organized by District parents that help parents support their children's academic and social growth as the students make their transition to middle school and begin to prepare for high school.

Part IV-INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results: Twin Groves students achieve at high levels on all standard measures of achievement. The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) is used annually to monitor overall achievement levels in reading, mathematics, and science. Prior to the 2005/06 school year, only students in grade 8 were tested in reading and math. Beginning with the 2005/06 school year, all students in grades 6 through 8 are given the reading and math tests and students in grade 7 the science test. Reports to the school provide individual scores as well as an aggregate school report. The ISAT reports achievement according to four performance levels: Exceeds State Standards, Meets State Standards, Below State Standards, and Academic Warning. To use the data in a way that best instructs their teaching, Twin Groves teachers disaggregate the reading and math scores into subgroup categories so they can identify shortcomings in the curriculum and make modifications to address the weaknesses.

Beginning in the 2001/02 school year, 87 percent of Twin Groves students met or exceeded state standards on the ISAT. The students steadily improved this high level of performance up to and including this year (2005/06), when 96 percent met or exceeded state standards. Math scores tell a more dramatic story. Beginning in the 2001/02 school year, 72 percent of Twin Groves students met or exceeded state standards on the ISAT. Working together, their teachers determined the need and developed strategies to identify the most important outcomes to be taught, to monitor progress through continuous assessment, and to provide support for students experiencing difficulty. Twin Groves teachers embrace this continuous improvement model, which has resulted in 98 percent of our students meeting or exceeding state standards in math for the current year.

An analysis of subgroup performance scores indicated a disparity between the whole group and our special education subgroup in the areas of both math and reading. Given the school's mission to assure the success of all students, Twin Groves regular and special education teachers began a focused effort to close the achievement gap by working collaboratively to align the curriculum for our special education students with our regular curriculum. The results of those teachers' efforts have exceeded our expectations: During the past five-year period, reading scores for our special education subgroup have increased from 35 percent to 79 percent meeting or exceeding state standards. Likewise, math scores for our special education subgroup have increased from 25 percent to 81 percent meeting or exceeding state standards.

As a learning community, the Twin Groves faculty determined several years ago that our existing assessment system did not provide results quickly enough to make a difference for students' learning. We replaced the Iowa Test of Basic Skills with the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test because the latter provided both growth data and a 24-hour turnaround for results teachers can use to inform their practice. Further, because MAP test results serve as a predictor of how a student will perform on the ISAT, Twin Groves teachers are able to provide interventions for any student identified as at risk of failing to meet state standards.

The Stevenson High School placement tests are also used to monitor student learning. These tests, administered in the areas of reading, math, and foreign language, determine the courses that our 8th-grade students are eligible to take as they enter high school. Our placement test results mirror those of the ISAT program, as over the past five years an increasing number of Twin Groves students place into the higher-level courses than in the preceding year. For example, from 2002 to 2006, higher-level high school placements increased by 63 percent in mathematics, 115 percent in English, and 45 percent in foreign language.

2. Using Assessment Results: A continuum of assessments ranging from "most formative" to "more formative," "more summative" to "most summative" allows Twin Groves teachers to describe the current level of performance of their students in many ways. The assessment process begins when teachers analyze the overall results of the state ISAT and MAP tests to determine the greatest area of need for the

upcoming year. This process allows the Leadership Team to establish school improvement plans, which drive the development of team SMART goals.

Teacher-developed quarterly benchmark assessments coupled with shorter-term common assessments serve to monitor how students are learning throughout the year. These common assessments allow classroom teachers to intervene early in the learning process when students experience difficulty. The intervention administered may include a differentiated lesson or extra help during lunch or before or after school. Once students are given benchmark assessments, our systematic Intervention Program is applied to provide additional time and support for students who still have not mastered essential outcomes. Twin Groves teachers use mandatory intervention in the areas of literacy and math to re-teach concepts in very small groups outside of class time. The entrance and exit criteria are established and administered in short cycles in the same way for all students.

Twin Groves teachers made a commitment to do whatever it takes to assure student success, then developed a variety of approaches for offering support. Students struggling with organization and work completion issues often are assigned to a team mandatory study hall three days a week. If more support is necessary, a student may be assigned to a small-group mandatory study hall five days a week. In addition, teachers use the Lunch and Learn—a daily intervention for children who come to class unprepared. Students receiving study skills instruction also participate in interventions on-line; in the computer lab, Study Island helps students strengthen their understanding of fundamentals. Still another option for students in need of academic support is to pair them with peer tutors in the after-school program, Lean On Me.

3. Communicating Assessment Results: Twin Groves teachers, students, and parents function as a team to improve student learning. The teachers recognize that their feedback to students during the assessment process must be detailed enough for the students to know how to improve at their next assessment opportunity. Their feedback to parents also is important in strengthening the home/school partnership that benefits students' learning. Teachers go beyond the traditional report card and mid-term progress update to make sure that students and their parents have current and accurate academic performance information: We implemented a Web-based grading program that allows parents and students to check a teacher's grade book at any time. Teachers enter the assignment and any related pertinent details that would be beneficial for parents to know. Information on this on-line "homework hotline" is timely and complete, making it easier for both working and stay-at-home parents to be informed and to support teachers' efforts on behalf of their student if he or she falls behind.

We recognize that middle school students sometimes need support in organizing and completing their homework assignments. For students still working at developing these skills, teachers partner with parents by providing them with a weekly list of the child's missing/incomplete assignments. Many teachers ask parents to sign tests and quizzes to assure notification of important grades. Phone calls and even daily e-mails are typical means Twin Groves parents use to monitor their children's learning. Fall conferences provide an opportunity for teachers, parents, and students to discuss current progress and to determine the kind of additional support or enrichment that would be most beneficial. The spring student-led conference has a different focus. The purpose of this second-semester conference is for the student to take the lead in discussing his or her strengths and weaknesses, asking for additional support as needed, and setting goals for the rest of the year.

The results of our annual ISAT and MAP tests are publicly reported at a Board of Education meeting. ISAT results also are published on the district Website, in the local newspaper, and in our School Report Card, which is made available to all the community. In addition, student accomplishments are regularly highlighted at open Board meetings, in district and building newsletters, and in the local press. (Information about the ISAT can be found at <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/ISAT.htm>).

4. Sharing Success: As a Professional Learning Community, Twin Groves teachers recognize that meeting and sharing ideas with teachers from other schools will extend their understanding and build knowledge in specific aspects of their craft. One regular opportunity for celebrating successes and sharing

learning comes with colleagues from District 96 and five neighboring districts—members of a consortium of Stevenson High School feeder schools who participate with Stevenson teachers in a comprehensive institute day program every other year.

Over the past two years our teachers have also begun hosting visitors from school districts across the country. Twin Groves teachers make presentations describing our program of continuous improvement. As teachers work together to prepare these presentations, they reflect on the strategies they developed to improve student achievement, the numerous and varied opportunities they put in place to support student success, and the accomplishments that are the result. Within the district, monthly job-alike meetings that connect our teachers with those from the other middle school in the district bring collaboration opportunities the teachers make the most of, sharing lesson plans, analyzing assessment results, and monitoring curriculum and instructional practices.

The district encourages our teachers' active participation in many professional organizations and publicizes news of their involvement in the monthly district-wide Staff Newsletter. Also, several staff members teach university-level courses to pre-service and current teachers. The community enjoys news of student successes as a monthly feature of Board of Education meetings. Parents are invited to join individual students and teams to be recognized for academic, artistic, and athletic achievements, as well as service work.

PART V-CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum: The Twin Groves School faculty is proud of the systems they built and continue to refine to assure students learn at high levels in a supportive, caring environment. Teachers embrace the National Middle School Association standard that calls for a curriculum that is “relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.” The curriculum is rigorous and holds students to very high standards. In designing the curriculum, teachers and administrators took care to align it closely with the Illinois State Standards as well as the national standards for the curricular area, including the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). In order to help students reach the high standards, the staff differentiates the curriculum, measures and monitors learning, and intervenes for those students who need more time and support to be successful. The goal at Twin Groves truly is success for all by focusing on every student, every day.

Twin Groves teachers have made literacy a priority, devoting a two-period daily block to literacy instruction. All subject-area teachers support the application of skills learned in the language arts classes by developing assignments that require students to use the knowledge they have acquired through integrated study of reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and conventions. Teachers use varied reading and writing genres to deliver instruction to large groups, small groups, and through individual conferences in honors and grade-level classes. At the honors level, 8th-grade students learn content and strategies typically taught during the freshman year.

In order to provide challenge for all students, Twin Groves offers three levels of mathematics instruction. The students are placed in grade-level math, advanced math, or honors math. The curriculum for the grade-level classes reflects the standards for the grade level. Advanced math classes are one year above grade level, with 56 percent of 8th-grade students completing the high school Algebra I course. The honors level students, approximately 22 percent of the 8th-grade students, learn concepts usually taught in courses two years above their grade level and complete the high school Algebra II course. The program at Twin Groves is designed to be the bridge between the elementary *Everyday Mathematics* course, which emphasizes hands-on and discovery learning, and the more traditional high school program, which emphasizes the teaching and application of algorithms.

At Twin Groves, the majority of students take Spanish in their 7th- and 8th-grade years, with the first half of Spanish I taught the first year and the balance the second year. The Twin Groves’ Spanish program mirrors the award-winning program taught at the high school, using the same materials and curriculum. The highly communicative program places a strong emphasis on writing Spanish in grade 7 and reading and speaking it in grade 8. Students enter high school prepared to take Spanish II and many continue on to AP Spanish.

A constructivist philosophy is the foundation for the Twin Groves science program, requiring students to demonstrate problem-solving strategies through inquiry-based activities. Students learn and apply the scientific method and investigate how technology can be used to solve real-life problems. A strong research component requires students to create a hypothesis and do a literature search. The strategies for the culminating research paper are co-taught in language arts and science.

The social studies and language arts curricula frequently are integrated. Students enjoy many opportunities to read a variety of period literature. Social studies instruction involves students in comparing the past to the present with the goal of preparing students to be critical thinkers and contributing members of the global society. One tool we use for this is a DBQ (document-based question).

In addition, the Twin Groves curriculum includes art, general and instrumental music, physical education and wellness, family and consumer science, communications, and technology classes focused on a variety of problem-solving modules (rocketry, CAD, robotics, etc.). All 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade students take art as a part of our core curriculum. The art curriculum is sequential and taught with a problem-solving approach that gives students parameters, knowledge of materials, and rubrics, but also emphasizes creative and divergent thinking by encouraging each child to plan his or her individual response.

2a. Elementary Reading: The Twin Groves community has made reading a priority in our curriculum with a double period for English/language arts for all students. Although students read a wide range of classic and contemporary novels, short stories, articles, poetry, and folk literature, the curriculum is skills-based. Reading selections are chosen to teach particular reading and literary analysis skills. With differentiated instruction, each student learns a progression of skills, regardless of his or her reading level. Self-selected, independent reading is integral. All students and their parents are made aware of the child's Lexile level (a framework for relating a student's reading level to a specific text's difficulty) so they can choose appropriate books and set appropriate goals for improvement.

Reading skills are a focus each year of middle school. In grade 6, skills such as connecting background knowledge to reading and self-questioning the text to clarify and deepen meaning are taught in the language arts class. In grade 7, the school-wide skills are separating main idea from supporting details, drawing inferences, and monitoring one's own comprehension. In grade 8, the skills emphasized are using editing strategies, using sensory images to visualize and enhance comprehension, and synthesizing and extending the reading. All other classes reference and reinforce these skills in the context of their own content. After learning the skill in language arts, the students acquire the understanding to apply these strategies in contexts other than literature. By requiring students to employ these skills across the curriculum, we not only reinforce the skills but also demonstrate their broad application. Each quarter, district benchmarks demonstrate growth made by each student. Students not meeting standards receive reading intervention in a small group setting.

Clear, fluent writing is a major tenet of our language arts curriculum. Lessons modeled on the "6 + 1 Trait[®] Writing" model allow each student to develop his or her own voice while articulating, organizing, and supporting ideas. The model defines qualities of good writing at different levels of achievement, addressing ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation in assessing students' writing.

3. Additional Curriculum Area-Mathematics: The Twin Groves math teachers are a dynamic community devoted to responding to the needs of all learners. Teachers actively collaborate to align the mathematics curriculum to state standards and, at the same time, meet the expectations of the high school. As part of this process, teachers developed the three-tiered curriculum that meets students' needs at a variety of levels and monitors student progress through quarterly benchmark assessments. Teachers evaluate these assessments for validity after each implementation, then use the results to improve instruction continually in their classrooms. Based on analysis of student results, any students who do not meet the quarterly goals are included in an intervention program.

In this program, students receive additional support so they can attain the necessary skills and build their confidence in mathematics. Many other opportunities are available for all students to receive extra assistance before school, at lunch, after school, and online in the evening. Additionally, a math teacher always is available for after-school assistance in the school study hall program. For those students with interest in higher-level mathematics, math clubs meet weekly in which students explore topics not taught in class and prepare for math competitions with area schools.

Highly coordinated articulation between the grade levels reduces redundancy and increases the efficiency of instruction. This increase in efficiency is particularly evident in the areas of measurement and geometry, in which our state scores have shown significant growth. Teachers collaborate in writing lesson plans, assessments, and projects to assure an education that is challenging and equitable for all students. The focus of these lessons is on demonstrating to students the connection and application of mathematics to real life. As such, technology is a vital part of the curriculum. Computer programs, Smart Board, and the Internet engage students. Students in grade 6 and the majority of those in grade 7 use scientific calculators; all others in grade 7 and all in grade 8 use graphing calculators, which enhance the lessons and build understanding. Further, each student is expected not only to solve problems, but also to be able to communicate clearly the approach and process that he or she used to solve the problem.

4. Instructional Methods: Instructional decisions are made as a result of an assessment cycle that recognizes that some students come already knowing information, some will learn it quickly, and some will need additional time and support. Teachers differentiate their instruction based on the needs of the students in their classrooms as evidenced by the results of common assessments. Varying the delivery method from whole group to small group to individual conferencing opportunities, teachers match the expected outcome and student needs to the appropriate strategy.

Understanding the nature of middle school students, teachers also break the instructional period into several teaching segments to keep students engaged. For the same reason, they use active learning strategies. For example, when teaching research, students might be directed to use the Internet to gather information and work together to pick the most salient facts related to their topic. Teachers discuss the difference between primary and secondary source documents and assign authentic projects for cooperative group work. In the classroom, they engage students in discussions around literature, historical events, and environmental issues. Further, Twin Groves teachers strongly advocate teaching reading and writing across the curriculum. Document-Based Questions introduced by our social studies teachers require students to use primary and secondary source documents to answer complex questions involving economics, history, and geography. Science teachers, too, emphasize using research to establish and explain their hypotheses. Likewise, our math teachers expect students to be able to explain the process and reasoning they use to solve real-world mathematical problems.

Because teachers write and analyze common assessments given to students, they also discuss the strategies they plan to use in teaching a particular topic. For professional development, this year Twin Groves teachers are using the Japanese Lesson Study process to design a lesson, observe a colleague, and refine and re-teach a concept to improve student learning.

Instruction methods also include expectations for student reflection. Student-led conferences in the spring, for example, require preparation through activities that lead students to identify areas of strength and weakness and to set goals for future learning. Through our study of using assessments to motivate student learning, Twin Groves teachers continue to gain in understanding how to better support students as they reflect and respond.

5. Professional Development: At Twin Groves Middle School, staff development is embedded into our professional practices and “the way we do business.” Believing in the Professional Learning Communities model, teachers recognize that they function more effectively as teams. They know that it is through their own continuous learning that they can best foster student achievement and through the collaborative process that they can perfect their craft.

Staff meetings are almost wholly devoted to professional development, with a focus closely related to district initiatives. At these meetings, typically held twice per month, teacher leaders who have attended workshops outside the district share what they’ve learned and its application to their colleagues’ needs. Team and job-alike meetings offer more opportunities for growth as teachers share research-based pedagogy. Likewise, book studies, Japanese Lesson Study, and action research extend our teachers’ understanding.

Twin Groves teachers use release time eagerly and efficiently, learning collaborative scoring methods, writing essential outcomes and common assessments, participating in curriculum development, analyzing assessment data, and sharing ways to use the results of the assessments to increase student achievement.

Regardless of the amount of experience they bring, for their first two years teachers new to District 96 participate in a mentoring program. This thoughtfully planned program provides opportunities for teachers to learn about not only the curriculum and assessment program and our culture, but also to receive support with day-to-day operations and procedures. The mentoring program helps to draw new teachers into our school and district with a fuller understanding of their roles as important members of collaborative teams, charged with helping students to achieve at high levels.

PART VII-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Subject Reading Grade 8 Test Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year 2005-06 Publisher Illinois State Board of Education

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	March	March	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	98%	88%	88%	85%	87%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	38%	29%	20%	23%	23%
Number of students tested	200	190	247	226	245
Percent of total students tested	100%	97%	100%	100%	98%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. <u>Students w/Disability</u> (specify subgroup)					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	82%	56%	63%	45%	38%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	12%	8%	11%	6%	5%
Number of students tested	23	25	35	36	21
2. <u>Asian</u> (specify subgroup)					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	100%	92%	89%	100%	85%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	52%	50%	33%	25%	33%
Number of students tested	28	26	27	24	27

Subject Mathematics Grade 8 Test Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year 2005-06 Publisher Illinois State Board of Education

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	March	March	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	99%	88%	86%	77%	78%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	68%	40%	37%	32%	31%
Number of students tested	200	190	246	227	247
Percent of total students tested	100%	97%	100%	100%	99%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0	0%	0%	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. <u>Students w/Disability</u> (specify subgroup)					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	94%	44%	44%	38%	29%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	29%	20%	12%	3%	0%
Number of students tested	23	25	34	37	21
2. <u>Asian</u> (specify subgroup)					
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	100%	96%	100%	92%	85%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	91%	62%	67%	67%	62%
Number of students tested	28	26	27	24	26

FORMAT FOR STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

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

Subject Reading Grade 7 Test Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year 2005-2006 Publisher Illinois State Board of Education

	2005-2006
Testing month	March
SCHOOL SCORES*	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	93%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	19.6%
Number of students tested	214
Percent of total students tested	97%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. <u>Students w/Disability</u> (specify subgroup)	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	75%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	3.1%
Number of students tested	32
2. <u>Asian</u> (specify subgroup)	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	100%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	33.3%
Number of students tested	27

Subject Mathematics Grade 7 Test Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year 2005-2006 Publisher Illinois State Board of Education

	2005-2006
Testing month	March
SCHOOL SCORES*	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	94.4%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	51.9%
Number of students tested	214
Percent of total students tested	97%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. <u>Students w/Disability</u> (specify subgroup)	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	65.6%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	15.6%
Number of students tested	32
2. <u>Asian</u> (specify subgroup)	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	100%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	74.1%
Number of students tested	27

Subject Reading Grade 6 Test Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year 2005-2006 Publisher Illinois State Board of Education

	2005-2006
Testing month	March
SCHOOL SCORES*	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	96%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	38.5%
Number of students tested	174
Percent of total students tested	98%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. <u>Students w/Disability</u> (specify subgroup)	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	80%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	4%
Number of students tested	25
2. <u>Asian</u> (specify subgroup)	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	95%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	60%
Number of students tested	20

Subject Mathematics Grade 6 Test Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year 2005-2006 Publisher Illinois State Board of Education

	2005-2006
Testing month	March
SCHOOL SCORES*	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	98.3%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	43.1%
Number of students tested	174
Percent of total students tested	98%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. <u>Students w/Disability</u> (specify subgroup)	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	88%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	16%
Number of students tested	25
2. <u>Asian</u> (specify subgroup)	
% "Meeting" plus "Exceeding" State Standards	95%
% "Exceeding" State Standards	70%
Number of students tested	20