

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

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet

Type of School: Elementary Middle High K-12 Charter

Name of Principal: Mr. Jeffrey W. Coppes

Official School Name: Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School

School Mailing Address: HC 61 Box 437, Vo-Tech Drive

Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, 17060-0902

County: Huntingdon State School Code Number: 111312503-000007620

Telephone: (814) 643-3038 Fax: (814) 643-6920

Web site/URL: www.hasd.tiu.k12.pa.us/brady.asp E-mail: jcoppes@huntsd.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: January 16, 2007

Name of Superintendent: Ms. Jill D. Adams

District Name: Huntingdon Area School District Telephone: (814) 643-4140

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: January 16, 2007

Name of School Board President: Mrs. Janice R. Metzgar

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 Signature) Date: January 16, 2007

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

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

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$8,643.00
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$10,283.00

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.

NA: 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	8	9	17	7	0	0	0
K	12	14	26	8	0	0	0
1	11	15	26	9	0	0	0
2	10	9	19	10	0	0	0
3	12	7	19	11	0	0	0
4	11	6	17	12	0	0	0
5	11	14	25	Other	0	0	0
6	0	0	0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							149

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 98% White
 1% Black or African American
 2% Hispanic or Latino
 0% Asian/Pacific Islander
 0 % American Indian/Alaskan Native
100% Total (based on rounding up to the whole number)

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 9%

[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	7
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	4
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	129
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	.09
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 0%
 0% Total Number Limited English Proficient
 Number of languages represented: 1
 Specify languages: English
9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 57%
 Total number students who qualify: 85

10. Students receiving special education services: 19%
24 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.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 Autism | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 0 Deafness | 2 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness | 11 Specific Learning Disability |
| 3 Emotional Disturbance | 6 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 0 Hearing Impairment | 0 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 0 Mental Retardation | 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| 1 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)	0	1
Classroom teachers (Including PreK)	9	5
Special resource teachers/specialists	2	3
Paraprofessionals (Including Pre K)	3	0
Support staff	6	0
Total number	20	9

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers is 17:1.
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%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	95%	92%	94%	86%	90%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	NA%	NA%	NA%	NA%	NA%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	NA%	NA%	NA%	NA%	NA%

Part III-Summary School Snapshot

Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School is one of four elementary schools within the Huntingdon Area School District. Students that attend this rural school reside in the townships of Brady and Henderson and the borough of Mill Creek. The school has one Pre Kindergarten classroom, two kindergarten classrooms, two first grade classrooms, and one classroom each for grade three, grade four and grade five. Area specialists for art, music, library, physical education/health and instrumental music instruction are shared between two schools. Title I and Learning Support services are provided to children in an inclusion model. The average enrollment for the school is 130 children.

As one of 6 schools in the district, the Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School supports the Mission and Vision that were created during our recent strategic planning process. The mission of the Huntingdon Area School District was established to serve as a filter when making decisions relating to the education of students. Our mission, *“Working together to inspire students to become lifelong learners and productive global citizen,”* is personified by the Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School community. Working together, we have established a long-standing tradition of creating a learning environment that is designed to make children feel valued and respected, while at the same time, meeting the unique educational and social needs of children that reside in an area identified as high poverty. Parents and staff members work diligently to inspire these young learners to reach their potential. The school is the center of the community. During typical Family Night activities, the attendance at this school is equal to that of the larger schools that have three to four times the number of students enrolled. Working together, the parents and the staff raised over \$25,000 to build a new playground in 2001, and the Parent-Teacher Group continues to provide enrichment experiences and family-based activities each year. There is also a culture of commitment by the teaching staff of this school. Integrated, project-based learning was the norm for this school early in the 70’s, and the teaching staff has lead the way to other district-wide successful initiatives such as Inquiry Learning, Balanced Literacy and most recently, total inclusion through a teacher-driven, co-teaching model of instructional delivery. The school is frequently visited by other school districts to observe our consistent and successful kindergarten through fifth grade approaches to teaching reading and writing. The staff is extremely committed to the needs of the students and their families as evidenced by providing extended learning opportunities such as the two after-school tutoring programs and the summer reading and math program.

Our vision statement challenges those of our teaching and support staff to guarantee families that, *“Everyday, all students are challenged to develop their full potential and experience success, leaving school inspired and eager to return the next day.”* As educators, we know the first priority is to have quality prevention programs in place rather than focusing on interventions after students fail. In this effort, a pilot all day kindergarten classroom was instituted at the Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School during the 2003-2004 school year. It was placed at this school due to the fact that there were not adequate pre-kindergarten opportunities in the area. Because of the success of this all day kindergarten pilot classroom, all kindergarten children in the district are now afforded this wonderful opportunity. During the 2006-2007 school year, we again increased early childhood interventions by starting a Head Start Supplemental Classroom at Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School. This program is presently offering 17 children a quality pre-k experience that would have not been a reality without the funding that was made available through three distinct funding sources: the Head Start Supplemental Grant, the Pennsylvania Accountability Block Grant and the Pre K Counts grant.

The inclusion model has created an environment where flexible grouping is the norm and where students have a greater sense of community by not being made to feel different based on their educational needs.

Children are inspired and eager to return to school each day because the teachers have created a culture of quality teaching. If I could summarize the school, its teaching staff, the support staff and the families into two words, those words would be **Total Commitment**.

Part IV, 1. Assessment Results

School districts in the state of Pennsylvania are required to have all students participate in the Pennsylvania State System of Assessments (PSSA). This annual assessment is used to monitor the progress of individual students on the Academic Standards for reading and mathematics. The Academic Standards clearly indicate what children should know and be able to do. Originally, the PSSA was only given to fifth grade students, and that data was used to determine each student's progress toward meeting these standards, as well as the school's overall achievement in meeting Adequately Year Progress (AYP) as determined by No Child Left Behind. Three years ago, a third grade version of this assessment was implemented in Pennsylvania. This year, all students in grades three, four and five will take the PSSA, and the combined scores will be used to determine the AYP for the school.

There are four performance levels for the PSSA are: Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic. It is our goal to help all learners be Proficient, and preferably Advanced, on the assessment of these important Academic Standards. A score of Basic indicates that the child is progressing toward the Standard, but s/he does not have a strong understanding of the Standard. A score of Below Basic, indicates that the child is significantly below grade level expectations and serious interventions are needed to bring that child up to the proficient/advanced level.

Assessment data can be examined two ways. First, we can look at the fifth grade scores each year. It is important to note that this data represents different groups of children each year. The data for math clearly indicates the fifth grade students at Brady-Henderson Mill Creek are excelling, and that the school is improving over time. During the 2001-2002 school year, 48% of the fifth graders scored at the proficient or advanced levels. The following school year, 56% of the students were proficient or advanced. During the 2003-2004 school year, 72% of the students were proficient or advanced in mathematics. We again saw growth during the 2004-2005 school year when 74% of the children scored at the proficient or advanced levels. During the 2005-2006 school year, 78% of the fifth grade students scored at the proficient or advanced levels. The data is clear; student achievement in math continues to grow every year. In fact, there was a 30% growth in the percentage of students proficient or advanced in mathematics over the five-year testing window.

In reading, there was a 17% growth in the percentage of students proficient or advanced over the past 5 years. During the 2001-2002 school year, 53% of the students were proficient or advanced with respect to the Academic Standards. In 2002-2003, this percent increased to 56%. During the 2003-2004, 71% of fifth grade students scored at the proficient or advanced levels. During the 2004-2005 school year, the proficient level dropped to 52%. This drop directly reflects the challenges of this particular class of fifth graders. Last year, 2005-2006, we again saw 70% of the students at the proficient or advanced levels.

To determine the effectiveness of our educational programs, it is also important to follow a class of children as they progress through our school. When the fifth grade class of 2005-2006 was in third grade, 61% of the students were proficient or advanced in mathematics on the PSSA. In fourth grade, 74% of that same class scored at the proficient or advanced levels in mathematics on the TeraNova assessment. Last year, as fifth graders, 78% of the students scored in the top two quartiles on the PSSA. In reading, 35% of those students, while in third grade, scored proficient or advanced in the PSSA. As fourth graders, 70% of the students in that class scored proficient or advanced on the TeraNova. Then in fifth grade, 70% of the children scored either proficient or advanced. In both mathematics and reading, there is a positive upward trend in the achievement of that particular group of children. When examining the progress of our last fifth grade class, anyone can clearly conclude that we are offering a quality program at Brady-Henderson.

The "Economically Disadvantaged" is our most significant subgroup. During the 2005-2006 school year, 72% of those students were proficient or advanced in math. This was similar to the school-wide score of 78% proficient or advanced. In reading, 54% of those students in the subgroup of "Economically Disadvantaged" were proficient or advanced. We believe the discrepancy indicates a need on our part to continue to help parents understand the importance of modeling reading and having resources that support literacy in their homes. PSSA data can be found at: www.pde.state.pa.us.

Part IV, 2. Using Assessment Results

Four years ago, our district curriculum leaders implemented the philosophy of data analysis based on the book *Results*, by Mike Schmoker. In the front cover of *Results*, Schomoker stated, “This book is dedicated to the day when we regard teachers and their organized expertise as the center of school improvement.” With this in mind, we have created a variety of structures that would enable and encourage teacher collaboration as a means to improve student achievement through data analysis.

Each year, a day is set aside for our teachers to review data (Pennsylvania State System of Assessment, Terra Nova, DIBELS, Rigby Benchmark Assessments, district writing assessments, etc.) and set achievement goals for each grade level. Through this process, teachers examine the proficiency levels of their current students and set achievement goals relating to specific Academic Standards for reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout the school year, the curriculum leader (a teacher) for our building conducts monthly goal setting meetings. During these meetings, teachers bring class-set examples of work that relates to a specific goal area. Teachers examine student work through a variety of protocols and develop lesson plans to assist their students in achieving the grade level achievement goals. These grade level achievement goals are posted throughout the building, and parents have copies of the goals and the proficiency level for each grade level.

Through numerous assessment tools, we have identified students that need additional support in reading and math. The progress of these students is monitored each month, and teams of educators meet monthly during our Response to Intervention meetings to examine their progress and to discuss program modifications that will support them as learners. Students that are not achieving at the benchmark levels (Tier I) receive additional support through Tier II and Tier III interventions. We are currently using the 4-Sight Assessment and DIBELS assessment to look at both student and curricular needs. Additionally, we created a quarterly reading assessment for grades 2-5 that mirrors the state assessment. The quarterly assessments focus on the literacy genres and the standards that are taught during a particular time period. An assessment report is organized in such a manner to help teachers see areas that need addressed during their daily literacy instruction.

During the 2005-2006 school year, the staff changed the delivery model for Title I and Special Education from a pull-out model to a full inclusion model with co-teaching. Each month, we provide our regular education teachers, our Title I teachers and our Special Education teacher with a co-teaching planning day. During these monthly planning days, these teachers review student data and create lessons to address both the challenges and strengths of the learners.

By examining the assessment data, our teachers have identified students in kindergarten through fifth grade that would benefit from extended learning opportunities. Eligible students in kindergarten through second grade participate in an after-school tutoring program that focuses on rereading their guided reading leveled text, practicing their high frequency sight words, and comprehension strategies through the Interactive Read Aloud model. Tutors from nearby Juniata College provide one-on-one tutoring to children not at the proficient level in reading. The students from Juniata College are part of the Americor project, and they visit our school two days a week. We are also currently operating a morning tutoring session for children in kindergarten and first grade. Fifth grade students are using tutoring techniques directly related to the needs of the identified students in grades k-2 based on the DIBELS results. An after school tutoring program (3 days/week) connects data from the 4-Sight Assessment to the online learning program Study Island. Students are engaged in learning activities that are reflected in their 4-Sight results. The computer lab is supervised by one of our teachers, and she shares student progress information with the regular education teachers. Additionally, last year’s PSSA results indicated that our present fourth grade students need additional support in reading. We have ten of those students currently working at home in the evenings with the Catapult Project. The Catapult Project is an experimental grant project that pairs students with one-on-one online tutors. Students that successfully complete the online project are allowed to keep the computer at the end of the 40 hour tutoring program.

All decisions (staffing, budgeting, scheduling, etc.) are made after examining student assessment information.

Part IV, 3. Communicating Assessment Results

Data relating to the overall progress of the school is shared publicly in a variety of ways. At the district level, each October, a presentation is made to the Huntingdon Area School Board in the form of the *Huntingdon Area School District Annual Community Report* as required by No Child Left Behind. This report provides information regarding the school's performance on the Pennsylvania State System of School Assessment (PSSA). It includes information regarding the progress of the entire school, as well as subgroup categories. In addition to the yearly scores, we provide community members with the "Most Recent Five-Year Trends." Information regarding this report is printed each year in our local newspaper, *The Daily News*. All parents within the district receive a copy of this report, and it is also posted on the district website at: www.hasd.tiu.k12.pa.us.

At the building level, we post Academic Achievement Charts throughout our school. These charts clearly indicate the percentage of students that are proficient or advanced in reading, writing and math standards. Achievement goals relating to specific standards are created by our teachers and are included in this chart. Copies of our school's Academic Achievement Chart are sent home to parents as part of our monthly newsletter, *The Messenger*. Additionally, three Keystone Achievement Awards (signifying meeting Adequately Yearly Progress for two consecutive years) are on display as you enter our school.

At the family level, we send all parents copies of the Pennsylvania Parent Report that provides information regarding the progress of the district, the school and their child. Parents are encouraged to meet with school personnel to discuss any aspect of their child's progress or the report. This year, we have instituted the Response to Intervention model in our school. Our educators meet on a monthly basis to review individual student progress. Teachers and support personnel examine the data and brainstorm ideas to help our at-risk learners. The ongoing assessment information and program modifications are always shared with parents throughout the school year.

Throughout the school year, we schedule Writers' Celebrations for our young writers. Writers' Celebrations are designed to provide a forum for the students to share their work with families and friends. During the celebrations, students have the opportunity to share published work that relates to the current genre study. While this is a "soft form of assessment information," parents can easily see the progress of our writers throughout the school year. During the last week of school, we have a school-wide Writers' Celebration. It is always the best day of the school year!

Part IV, 4. Sharing Success

For years, many of the teachers at Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School have attended the week-long Governor's Institute for Early Childhood Literacy. By attending the Institute, our staff members became the lead learners of the teaching strategies that are presently the norm in our district. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, had the expectation beginning in 2004 that the schools that attended the Institute would help "build capacity" across the state. With that in mind, we have had teams of educators from Brookville, Juniata Valley and Juniata County school districts visit to see our model for reading and writing instruction. During these site visits, we created teaching schedules that allowed the visitors to see a specific area of instruction. Some teams of visitors wanted to observe our K-5 Writer's Workshop model so we modified our teachers' schedules to allow visitors to see what this model of delivery looks like at each grade level. We have also done a similar modification in our schedules so that other school districts could see our reading program. During visitations, our teachers met prior to the day to discuss (and hand out) their lesson plans and to share their teaching resources. Two of our teachers provided training during four visits to Brookville, to our county teachers during the annual Huntingdon County In-service Day, and for the past four summers during our weekly Huntingdon Area School District's Academy of Excellence designed for new, substitute, and experienced teachers. Two of our teachers have also provided demonstration lessons for the Governor's Institute for Early Childhood Literacy at Juniata College and Keystone College.

With Juniata College just eight miles away from our school, we constantly have practicum as well as student teachers working in our school. These future teachers have the opportunity to see highly qualified professionals modeling research-proven approaches to literacy instruction. Throughout their time here,

the college students have the opportunity to try those strategies under the guidance of exemplary teachers. This enables the student teachers to start their profession with a high level of expertise.

On January 23, 2006, two of the Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School teachers were hired by the District to assume new roles as Literacy Coaches. In their new positions, those former teachers will help to support teachers K-12 in their effort to implement the vision for literacy instruction in the Huntingdon Area School District.

The teaching staff of Brady-Henderson will continue supporting others within and outside the district. If something works really well for the children at Brady-Henderson Mill Creek, it is professionally and morally right to share this with other educators.

Part V, 1. Curriculum

In an effort to create a school system rather than a system of schools, we have created consistent curricula across all elementary schools in the district. The key to the success of our current curriculum review cycle has been the emphasis on aligning our curriculum to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. The following curricular areas have gone through a three-phase curriculum review process: (1) Math ('01-'02), (2) Science ('02-'03), (3) Social Studies ('03-'04), (4) Language Arts ('04-'05), and (5) Special Education ('05-'06). We are currently in the process of reviewing our curricula for physical education and health.

In addition to purchasing a math program that best matched the standards-based math curriculum, we increased our daily instructional block of math from 45 to 75 minutes. A special part of the math block is devoted to problem solving. Teachers use a consistent approach (K-5) in helping children not only solve the problem, but also to have them write the steps in the process. Since the completion of this review cycle, we have seen steady gains in math achievement from a low of 48% of the students proficient or advanced to a high of 78%, last year.

Our standards-based science curriculum in grades kindergarten through second grade is an integrated component of our language arts program. It is hands-on based and an integral part of center-based learning. Our reading program has a heavy emphasis on non-fiction texts, and students learn how to access the information in science-based books through Interactive Read Aloud (intentional comprehension), Guided Reading, and the Shared Reading of texts. As part of the science curriculum review, teachers ordered multiple copies of leveled texts that provide information relating to the science standards. Students in grades 3-5 have a core science program. Additionally, all teachers have materials that make science an active part of their day. Through ongoing professional development, our teachers have learned how to use the Shared Reading strategy to help all learners, regardless of ability, access the science content found in text books by using techniques that help them understand non-fiction text features.

Our social studies curriculum in kindergarten through third grade is an integrated component of our language arts program. Students in grade four and five use a program that supports their understanding of our state and nation, respectively. The resources for K-5 were selected to support the teaching of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Social Studies and Citizenship.

We have spent the majority of our time and energy creating a language arts curriculum that is based on the unique learning needs of our students. Much of our focus for the past five years has been spent aligning our professional development, learning resources, hiring practices, and finances to our vision for literacy instruction. Our language arts curriculum supports the findings in the National Panel for Reading in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Another major focus area for our teachers relates to the intentional teaching of comprehension strategies. In addition to aligning our curriculum to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and the work presented in the National Reading Panel, we have spent considerable time creating a learning climate where there are established instructional strategies/approaches from kindergarten through fifth grade. After completing the language arts curriculum review, our teachers created Literacy Frameworks that help them understand the integration of the reading standards, learning resources, assessment practices and the connection to Writer's Workshop. All of our children receive a minimum of 90 minutes of reading per day. All children in grades K-5 participate 45 minutes each day in the Writer's Workshop model that was created at Columbia University.

Students at Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School receive 45 minutes of art instruction every six days by a certified art teacher. Art education is integrated into all aspects of our k-5 school. Art history and information about artists are incorporated into all lessons whether they focus on a math concept like 3-D art or in the illustrating of the "published books" as part of our Writers' Celebrations.

At Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School, all children participate in a full inclusion, co-teaching model of learning. Title I and Special Education teachers meet with our regular education teachers on a regular basis to plan for successful learning opportunities for all children.

Part V, 2a. Reading

We know that children need to be exposed to a variety of strategies to help them become readers and writers. Our goal in revamping our literacy curriculum was to establish a consistent approach that would meet the individual needs of every student. We also wanted to create a reading and writing program that would help children meet the Academic Standards, and even more importantly, to become readers and writers because they “have to.” After considerable research, we moved in the direction of using a variety of research-proven approaches that fall under the philosophy of Balanced Literacy. We also know that children learn best when learning is presented through the “Gradual Release of Responsibility” model of delivery. Children learn best through effective modeling, guided practice and then independent practice. Students receive effective modeling of comprehension strategies through the Interactive Read Aloud approach with their entire class. They have strategic, guided practice with leveled texts in flexible groups with other children with similar reading strengths/challenges for the important comprehension strategies and the Academic Standards for Reading (comprehension and vocabulary) through Guided Reading. They learn how to access difficult science and social studies content through instruction in the Shared Reading strategy with their text books. And, there is an expectation to read independently during the school day and as a requirement each night in order to read a minimum of 28 books per school year. We have spent considerable time and resources to provide professional development over the past four years in these four main approaches to reading instruction. Our teachers at Brady-Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School use a consistent lesson design format that minimizes adjustment periods for students as they progress from year to year.

We believe there should be a strong connection between reading and writing instruction. At each grade level, students are exposed to specific genre studies. Our teachers have made a conscientious effort to make a link between reading instruction and their daily Writer’s Workshop. High quality children’s literature is a key component of the modeling process during our daily writing activities.

Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on phonemic awareness in kindergarten and first grade, and we use a systematic approach to phonics instruction in kindergarten through second grade.

Our teachers have access to 1,616 titles (bags of 6 copies each) in our “Book Room” to support literacy instruction and integrating reading instruction in science, social studies, and mathematics.

Part V, 3. Additional Curriculum Area: Physical Education/Health

Beginning in kindergarten, the students at Brady-Henderson Mill Creek learn about choices that will affect their health for a lifetime.

Our voluntary, out-of-school walking program has taught students the importance of exercising thirty minutes each day, and that walking is an exercise that they can do at any age. We recognized thirty-two students that participated during the 2005-2006 school year, totaling over 65,000 minutes of walking.

Our Christmas CAN-AEROBICS program combines aerobic exercise during physical education classes with contributing to our community food bank. Since 1991, the students at Brady-Henderson, along with the students in the other three elementary schools, have contributed over 26,000 cans to our local food bank. Each year, our children participate in our local JUMP ROPE for HEART (American Heart Association), and we are a RELAY for LIFE (American Cancer Society) school. Each child learns that s/he can make a difference!

Beginning in kindergarten, our students learn information on both legal and illegal drugs and how decisions made now can affect their future. Our physical/health education teacher works with our Parent-Teacher Group to provide Red Ribbon Week activities for our students. Each day is filled with fun activities that help our students understand the dangers of drugs and alcohol. The first, third and fifth grade students have a sequential unit on protection from disease and healthy habits that include hand

washing, the immune system, and AIDS. Students learn hygiene and safe behaviors to hopefully protect them for a lifetime.

Most of our elementary physical education units are designed to help students lead active lives as teenagers and adults. Although some units are team sports, our units are fun and useful toward life-long physical fitness. We provide intramural sports for our students in class, as well as on the playground. The main focus is always on good sportsmanship.

Our fourth and fifth grade students participate each year in the “Day of Celebration.” During the “Day of Celebration,” these students and others from the other three elementary schools come together for fun and games.

Our physical/health education program is a critical component of our overall educational program as it inspires lifelong habits for health while teaching the importance of helping others in our community.

Part V, 4. Instructional Methods

By examining our student achievement data over the years, we discovered many of our students’ learning challenges were directly related to the fact that children were being pulled from regular education classes to receive support from separate Title I or Learning Support teachers. At times, the instruction was not coordinated, and students did not feel a part of the bigger whole. We instituted the Response to Intervention (RtI) model at Brady-Henderson in an effort to provide as much support as possible for our at-risk learners. Monthly RtI meetings are held for each grade level. During these meetings, individual student assessment information (both internal and external assessment information) is shared with those individuals working with the child in a co-teaching environment.

The RtI team recommends interventions that extend beyond the reading and math curricula for those children not performing at the benchmark levels. The co-teaching team consisting of the classroom teacher, the Title I teacher, Learning Support Teacher and, when possible, a paraprofessional meet together on a regular basis (and one whole day per month) to coordinate services and plan for the research-based intervention. The co-teaching team provides these coordinated interventions throughout the month, and students are reassessed prior to the next monthly RtI update meeting. RtI interventions are discontinued for those students that reach the benchmark levels. Students that are not at the benchmark levels continue with those interventions (Tier II-an additional 30 minutes per day) or receive additional interventions (Tier III-an additional 30 more minutes per day) recommended by the team. In most cases, parents are also trained in the interventions so that they can provide the same support at home.

All students receive these interventions within the regular education classroom. This approach has provided children with the interventions they need without going through the process of a formal evaluation and being given a label. In addition to improving achievement, this co-teaching model has reduced discipline problems and increased self-esteem for our students.

Part V, 5. Professional Development

As with many districts, teachers in the Huntingdon Area School District used a variety of approaches to the teaching of literacy. Many approaches were successful, and many were not. The assessment data clearly indicated this. As educators, we wanted to create a learning environment where children engaged in reading and writing the way people really read and write. With this in mind, we set out to create classrooms where most promising practices occurred each and every day. We knew that a consistent philosophy would be good for the learners as well as the school. Since June 2001, we made professional development a top priority in our school. To date, our district has had 161 professional development workshops that focused on our core beliefs of how reading and writing should be taught. The four main focus areas of literacy have been: Interactive Read Aloud (Intentional Comprehension), Shared Reading, Guided Reading, and Writer’s Workshop. Initially, professional development was provided by trainers outside the school district, but as our teachers gained new knowledge, there has been more of a balance between outside and internal trainers. Two of the teachers from Brady-Henderson have provided a 5-day

workshop for the past five summers in these specific areas for new, experienced and substitute teachers. At the onset of our work in Balanced Literacy, our professional development was provided in a workshop manner. During the past two years, the training format has moved more into the Gradual Release of Responsibility manner with modeling, co-planning, and reflecting as the approach to improve teacher quality. On January 23, 2007, two of the teachers at this school began new roles as district-wide literacy coaches. Their charge will be to help teachers across the district become more proficient in those approaches, as well as all areas identified under the National Reading Panel Report.

The presenters that helped us in our journey with Balanced Literacy gave us the big picture, but we needed a way to keep the important talk about teaching at the center of all we do. In addition to the ongoing commitment of the District to provide professional development workshops, our school has participated in monthly study groups for the past five years. Each year, we read and discussed a book that related to the ideas that were being presented to our teaching staff. During monthly meetings, we would use a text-based protocol created by the National School Reform Faculty as a means to keep the important talk about teaching at the center of all we do. Last year, the monthly study groups took on an even greater meaning when teachers began to bring student work for all staff members to see. This simple act, has made a huge impact on the school and its achievement. The books that the teachers have read and discussed are: *Writer's Workshop: The Essential Guide*, *The Revision Toolbox*, *What a Writer Needs*, *Mosaic of Thought*, and now, *Strategies that Work*.

Additionally, all the teachers have the opportunity to attend the District's three Professional Development Days and conferences that are approved by the Travel Conference Committee made up of their peers.

Part VII-Assessment Results

Subject: Math Grade: 5 Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Edition/Publication Year: Annually

Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs____ Scaled scores Percentiles____

	2005- 2006	2004- 2005	2003- 2004	2002- 2003	2001- 2002
Testing month: (March 2006) / (April for 2002-2005)					
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	78	74	72	56	48
% Advanced State in Academic Standards	61	17	43	23	24
Number of students tested	23	23	14	18	21
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
Economically Disadvantaged					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	72	63	NA	NA	20
% Advanced in Academic Standards	45	27	NA	NA	0
Number of students tested	11	11	6	6	10

The Pennsylvania Department of Education will provide a score when there are at least 10 students. An "NA" indicates that there were less than ten students in this category.

Assessment Results

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Edition/Publication Year: Annually

Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

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

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month: (March 2006)/(2002-2005 April)					
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	70	52	71	56	53
% Advanced in Academic Standards	22	13	43	17	10
Number of students tested	23	23	14	18	21
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
Economically Disadvantaged					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	54	64	NA	NA	30
% Advanced in Academic Standards	9	9	NA	NA	0
Number of students tested	11	11	6	6	10

The Pennsylvania Department of Education will provide a score when there are at least 10 students. An "NA" indicates that there were less than ten students in this category.

Assessment Results

Subject: Math Grade: 4 Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Edition/Publication Year: Annually beginning 2006 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs____ Scaled scores Percentiles____

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month: (March 2006)					
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	80	NA	NA	NA	NA
% Advanced State in Academic Standards	40	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of students tested	25	NA	NA	NA	NA
Percent of total students tested	100	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
SUBGROUP SCORES					
Economically Disadvantaged					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	64	NA	NA	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	18	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of students tested	11	NA	NA	NA	NA

The Pennsylvania Department of Education will provide a score when there are at least 10 students. An "NA" indicates that there were less than ten students in this category.

Assessment Results

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Edition/Publication Year: Annually beginning 2006 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

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

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month: (March 2006)					
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	60	NA	NA	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	24	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of students tested	25	NA	NA	NA	NA
Percent of total students tested	100	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
SUBGROUP SCORES					
Economically Disadvantaged					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	55	NA	NA	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	27	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of students tested	11	NA	NA	NA	NA

The Pennsylvania Department of Education will provide a score when there are at least 10 students. An "NA" indicates that there were less than ten students in this category.

Assessment Results

Subject: Math Grade: 3 Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Edition/Publication Year: Annually Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

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

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month: (March 2006)/(2002-2005 April)					
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	100	80	63	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	69	52	27	NA	NA
Number of students tested	13	29	22	NA	NA
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	NA	NA
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	NA	NA
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	NA	NA
SUBGROUP SCORES					
Economically Disadvantaged					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	NA	69	50	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	NA	44	20	NA	NA
Number of students tested	9	16	10	NA	NA
IEP					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	NA	44	NA	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	NA	9	NA	NA	NA
Number of students tested	0	11	2	NA	NA

Assessment Results

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Edition/Publication Year: Annually

Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

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

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month: (March 2006)/(2002-2005 April)					
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	31	52	37	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	8	14	14	NA	NA
Number of students tested	13	29	22	NA	NA
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	NA	NA
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	NA	NA
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	NA	NA
SUBGROUP SCORES					
Economically Disadvantaged					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	NA	44	20	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	NA	19	10	NA	NA
Number of students tested	9	16	10	NA	NA
IEP					
% Proficient and Advanced in Academic Standards	NA	9	NA	NA	NA
% Advanced in Academic Standards	NA	9	NA	NA	NA
Number of students tested	0	11	2	NA	NA