

# 2008 No Child Left Behind–Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Public  Private

**Cover Sheet**

Type of School (Check all that apply)  Elementary  Middle  High  K-12  
 Charter  Title I  Magnet  Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Laura Hamacher

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

Official School Name Elden D. Finley Junior High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 10835 South Lombard Avenue

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Chicago Ridge

Illinois

60415-2190

City

State

Zip Code+4(9 digits total)

County Cook

State School Code Number\* 14-016-1275-02

Telephone (708) 636-2005

Fax (708) 636-0045

Web site/URL crsd1275.org

E-mail lhamacher@crsd1275.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature

Name of Superintendent Dr. Joyce Kleinaitis

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

District Name Chicago Ridge 127.5

Tel. (708) 636-2000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Lynn Barker

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

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 3, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Mail by commercial carrier (FedEx, UPS) or courier original signed cover sheet to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 5E103, Washington DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office 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 2007-2008 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have 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 2002 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. Throughout the document, round numbers to the nearest whole number to avoid decimals, except for numbers below 1, which should be rounded to the nearest tenth.

### DISTRICT (Question 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Elementary schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Middle schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior High Schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ High schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_ 7597  
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_ 9488

### 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 are  
 Suburban  
 Small city or town in a rural are  
 Rural
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 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
Pre K			0	7	83	64	147
K			0	8	72	66	138
1			0	9			0
2			0	10			0
3			0	11			0
4			0	12			0
5			0	Other			0
6	66	53	119				
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							<b>404</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- |    |                                    |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 0  | % American Indian or Alaska Native |
| 1  | % Asian or Pacific Islander        |
| 6  | % Black or African American        |
| 13 | % Hispanic or Latino               |
| 80 | % White                            |

**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 4 %

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

<b>( 1 )</b>	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1 until the end of the year	10
<b>( 2 )</b>	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1 until the end of the year	6
<b>( 3 )</b>	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
<b>( 4 )</b>	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	419
<b>( 5 )</b>	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
<b>( 6 )</b>	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 7 %
- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 31 | Total Number Limited English Proficient |
|----|---|

Number of languages represented 7

Specify languages: Arabic, Spanish, Lithuanian, Polish, Korean, Greek, Vietnamese

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals 42 %

Total number students who qualify: 174

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:  $\frac{17}{71}$  %  
 Total Number of Students Serve

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>4</u>	Autism	<u>1</u>	Orthopedic Impairment
<u>      </u>	Deafness	<u>3</u>	Other Health Impairment
<u>      </u>	Deaf-Blindnes	<u>32</u>	Specific Learning Disabilit
<u>7</u>	Emotional Disturbanc	<u>15</u>	Speech or Language Impairment
<u>      </u>	Hearing Impairment	<u>      </u>	Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>8</u>	Mental Retardation	<u>1</u>	Visual Impairment Including
<u>      </u>	Multiple Disabilities	<u>      </u>	Blindness

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

**Number of Staff**

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>      </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>21</u>	<u>1</u>
Special resource teachers/specialist	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>3</u>	<u>      </u>
Support Staff	<u>7</u>	<u>      </u>
Total number	<u>43</u>	<u>3</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of 19 : 1 students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Please explain a high teacher turnover rate. 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 in attendance, dropout or the drop-off rates. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates, and only high schools need to supply drop-off

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Daily student attendance	96 %	94 %	94 %	94 %	94 %
Daily teacher attendance	95 %	93 %	95 %	%	%
Teacher turnover rate	3 %	2 %	1 %	%	%
Student drop out rate (middle/high	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Student drop-off rate (high school	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %

Please provide all explanations below

Finley has an excellent attendance pattern due to the partnership with the Chicago Ridge Police Department. The police make wellness checks to prevent any unexcused absences and the village has implemented a procedure where parents/guardians could

receive a fine if students are absent without cause. These procedures have supported attendance in the district. Because of the diversification of the English Language Learners and the variety of cultures that are present in Chicago Ridge, more staff has been added to support these students. The school has also seen a rise in special education students and additional staff has been employed to work with these students.

Teacher turnover rate in 2007 was due to staff member who were eligible for retirement and there were several teachers who left positions to seek administrative positions and others left to raise their own families.


## PART III - SUMMARY

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Finley Junior High School is located in Chicago Ridge, Illinois, a southwest suburb, approximately 17 miles from downtown Chicago. Finley services 390 students from grades six through eight with a pupil-teacher ratio 19:1. Over 151 students are from a non-English background and 31 are considered LEP. Eighteen different languages are spoken by the students and their families throughout the community. The low income rate for this Title I school is 44.3%. Many students come from single family homes, are considered 'latch-key' students and have families that are struggling with economic hardship. The 2005 census report lists the district 10th in poverty status for the surrounding suburbs and 55th in the state.

A very active Parent-Teacher Association provides financial support for assemblies and other activities. The Chicago Ridge Fire and Police Departments provide the Risk Watch programs on safety, crisis management, character education and health issues. Two police liaisons work with students, families and staff. The Chicago Ridge Public Library supports the Caudill Book Contests and a Teen Advisory Board, as well as provides staff development for teachers and various student reading programs. Worth Township offers programs for students and parents in the areas of anger and stress management and various counseling services.

The Finley National Honor Society and Student Council are also visible leaders who sponsor food drives, Walk-a-Thons for charity and model the assets of the Character Counts program which dictates the mission and values of the school. Students earn Viking Vouchers as they display acts of good character. After school activities include math, reading and English Language Learners tutoring, as well as Homework Help, Spanish Club, Physical Challenge and Science Inquiry. A new support program, Failure Is Not an Option was begun last year in the fourth quarter. Another new incentive is Rebecca Caudill Contest, designed to create a 'read for enjoyment' environment in school and build opportunities for students to interact with staff members in a positive way while relating to reading. The goal is to have every student and staff member read twenty Caudill books chosen by the students. Rush to Read is another incentive. There are also strong athletic and band program.

The goal of the Finley educators is to meet the needs of the middle school student. Finley is a child-centered environment that utilizes a middle school philosophy. The 'school within the school.' model has existed for over nine years with students at each grade level divided into teams. Each team is composed of teachers who are highly qualified in the major academic subjects and the students who are placed on the various teams. Staff members share common lunch and planning periods and meet regularly to review student needs and curricular topics. They are joined by the school nurse, social worker, special education teachers and administrators. Scheduling is based on a modified blocked schedule that supports cross-curricular instruction. This environment supports the mission statement: to provide a nurturing and safe learning environment to meet the unique needs of adolescent students while preparing them for life-long learning and responsible citizenship.

Student recognition is an important component of the middle school model. Students receive recognition through Postcards Home, Viking Vouchers, assemblies, school board presentations, newsletters and newspaper articles. Morning announcements begin with a Character Quote of the day. The 'Finley Family' environment is further visible at lunch time where students sit at round tables alongside staff members.

Parent and community participation is evidenced through band and sports activities, Family Reading Nights, ELL Family Nights, Open Houses, Parent Teacher Conferences, PTA activities as well as fundraising and volunteer events.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. **Assessment Results:**

Each year in March, Finley students participate in the ISAT state-wide assessment. The ISAT provides detailed student test results, including nationally-normed results. There are four performance levels to reflect student performance:

Exceeds Standards: Student work demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in the subject.

Meets Standards: Student work demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in the subject.

Below Standards: Student work demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in the subject.

Academic Warning: Student work reflects limited knowledge and skills in the subject area.

From 2002-2005 s, mathematics was not tested through ISAT for grades six and seven. However, at the eighth grade level, a significant gain in students meeting and exceeding standards over the past five years is evident. Taken as a whole group, eighth grade students' performance on the ISAT has progressed upward. For example, in 02-03, 47% of all eighth grade students performed at the meets/exceeds level. In 04-05, 56% performed at the meets/exceeds level and in 06-07, 91% of all eighth grade students performed at the meets/exceeds level. After categorizing students into sub groups, a similar trend in gains was recognized. Some disparity between sub group scores became a focal point for school improvement efforts. For example, in 02-03, Finley had 0% of special education students performing at the meets/exceeds level. However, in 04-05, performance rose to 21% in the meets/exceeds level and by 06-07, 84% of special education students at the eighth grade level, were performing at the meets/exceeds level in mathematics. With the special education population remaining stable, Finley School realized a great gain in closing the achievement gap for our special education population over a five year span. In addition, our low income students progressed to the meets/exceeds level from 31% in year 02-03, to 44% in year 04-05, to 89% in year 06-07.

In the area of mathematics for the sixth and seventh grade, only two years of ISAT results data exists due to the change of subjects being tested at each grade level. As a result, we decided to focus on cohorts of students at these levels, tracking a specific grade level of students' performance over several years. For example, with all 120 students tested in mathematics in 05-06, 81% of students scored at the meets/exceeds level. In 06-07, 85% of the same students scored at the meets/exceeds level, reflecting a sizeable gain. Likewise, the Hispanic sub group of this larger group had 83% of students scoring in the meets/exceeds level in 05-06. In 06-07, this same sub group had 93% of students meeting/exceeding standards.

In the area of reading, ISAT scores for the sixth and seventh grade cohorts reflect similar patterns. In 05-06, the total population of sixth grade students considered (120 students), 66% scored at the meets/exceeds level. The following year, this same group of students had 72% of students scoring at the meets/exceeds level. Similar trends for the sub groups of this cohort were reported.

In reviewing, the ISAT results in the area of reading for groups of eighth grade students over the past five years, a huge increase in eighth grade students' performing at the meets/exceeds level has been accomplished. In 03-04, 60% of all eighth grade students performed at the meets/exceeds level. By 06-07, 88% of all eighth grade students performed at this level. Likewise, dramatic gains for the special education sub groups at this level were reported. In 02-03, only 6% of special education students performed at the meets/exceeds level. By 2006-2007, 83% of special education students performed at the meets/exceeds level. Further information may be found at <http://www.isbe.net/>

### 2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Student achievement data is disaggregated for analysis by administrators, grade level teams, departments and curriculum committees. There is also articulation and data review discussed between elementary teams, as well as with the local high school. Gaps are identified, as well as strengths. The data is utilized as an accountability tool to determine student success, effectiveness of programs, achievement of goals, utilization of instructional strategies and the focus for professional development. Areas for improvement are then prioritized and decision making begins with an emphasis on student needs.

One of the results of reviewing assessment data was the implementation of the Math Plus and Reading Plus classes for Finley students. Math Plus and Reading Plus classes were designed to create small group instruction classes for students who were not eligible for special education services. Assessment results allow staff members to measure if the school is meeting Adequate Yearly Progress and if best practices and high quality instructional strategies are also being implemented. This data is also utilized for decision making steps in reviewing determinations for student placements for special education services, gifted classes and foreign language classes.

The decision of implementing after school tutorial programs are also determined through the analysis of student achievement data. Homework Help and Failure Is Not an Option programs were also implemented as a result of analyzing assessment results.

In designing the new foreign language curriculum and criteria for student entrance, student achievement data was also reviewed. Working with the local high school curriculum coordinator allowed communication to parents and students about the emphasis on strong reading and writing skills necessary for studying Spanish. Teacher, parent and student surveys are informal assessments of academic success and needs for students. Prior to the implementation of the foreign language curriculum, surveys were utilized to determine the need for these classes.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

An important concept of partnership with parents and community members is communication and Finley staff realizes this is a priority in the continuation of success for students and validates the home-school connection. A new technology system has been implemented to communicate grades and student achievement which also supports the home-school partnership. The future goal is for parents to have access to view daily grades, assignments, test results and other assessment data. Computer generated progress reports are sent home on a quarterly basis. A new form of communication has been implemented this year at Finley where all staff members are required to send Good News post cards to parents of every student they teach. ISAT scores are mailed to parents with report cards. Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year. Staff members utilize email and phone call communications. Teachers are required to call parents of students who are in danger of failing before progress notes or reports are sent home. The district website shares school report card data as well as current information on curriculum and assessment. Newsletters from teachers and administrators are also utilized to communicate assessment results. A community breakfast is held once a year by the superintendent where the student assessment results are shared, as well as the various curriculum updates, professional development themes and Character Counts activities. Parents are also invited to attend assemblies where students are recognized for academic achievements. The Board of Education hosts the 'Straight A Student' Presentations three times a year. Family Reading Nights and English Language Learner workshops are also events that communicate assessment results. Orientation is held for fifth grade students and parents as these students become sixth graders. Parents were also invited to attend Foreign Language Orientation Night.

### **4. Sharing Success:**

Finley Junior High teachers and administrators feel that it is very important to share successes with other schools. Teachers are involved and participate in articulation meetings with the feeder schools of High School District 218. At these meetings, successes of instructional strategies, curriculum topics and professional staff development issues are discussed by the Finley teachers in each subject area. Administrators continue the communication to other schools by serving on the Administrative Team Articulation Meetings for the high school. The superintendent sits on the Eisenhower Cooperative Board and shares successes with other superintendents. The administrators are also involved in implementing the Moraine Valley Community College Career Grant which helps support the Career Fair that is sponsored by the junior high students. Finley is also host to the area universities whose students observe classes or student teach. The junior high shares the success of the Rebecca Caudill program in its annual contest with Our Lady of the Ridge School. The Finley staff worked with the high school curriculum coordinator by sharing the progress and success of the implementation of the foreign language curriculum. The staff is also sharing the data and information that was collected through its foreign language committee study with other feeder districts that have not yet implemented a foreign language program. Finley Junior High staff will continue to share successes with the feeder schools of the high school through its participation in the various articulation meetings. They will continue to host student teachers and allow participation of other schools to visit their classrooms and view teaching strategies, best practices and curriculum events.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

All Finley Junior High students are offered a strong core academic program that consists of math, science, reading, language arts and social studies. All levels of students are challenged by the curriculum. Engaged learning is evident by the classroom lessons, science inquiry and applied technology activities, as well as cooperative learning and center activities. Students utilize technology in PowerPoint presentations and simulated activities. Teachers implement best practices which focus on differentiated instruction, Response to Intervention and cooperative learning. The curriculum is guided by curriculum committees, School Improvement Teams and Illinois State Standards.

All students are enrolled in the encore classes which include fine arts: music, art and/or band, applied technology, physical education and health. Foreign language was introduced during the 2007 school year. Students in grade 6 who qualify may take Introduction to Cultural Spanish; 7th graders take Introduction to Spanish 1 and 8th graders complete the Spanish 1 program. Finley was one of two feeder schools that did not offer foreign language. With the support of the district school board and much research and planning, Spanish became part of the curriculum. Working in alignment with District 218 High School curriculum coordinator allowed an easy transition for students entering foreign language classes in their freshman year. Spanish Club is also offered as an after school activity to extend the learning activities.

Technology is incorporated through all curricular areas. Applied technology lab is set up in modules where content is delivered through interactive multimedia curriculum video. The modules integrate math, science, technology, careers, writing, reading and research. A new module, Forensic Science will be introduced in the next school year.

Math Plus and Reading Plus allow students to work in a small class environment with support for these curricular areas. These classes are financially supported through the Title I Grant. Reading Plus emphasizes focus on best practices, extension of comprehension strategies, vocabulary and writing skills. Math Plus provides skills in problem solving and emphasizes everyday math. In science, students participate in laboratory activities which reinforce scientific concepts. Music, art, literature and architecture are integrated into the Social Studies themes that students study. Students study the state and U.S. Constitution with an emphasis on citizenship and responsibility. They participate in debates and mock elections.

Students participate in information literacy lessons in the media center. Students have access to printed materials, as well as technology services for research and other assignments.

All students receive health and education lessons which focus on knowledge and skills that are necessary for growth and development, as well as fitness and team skills.

Finley also has a co-taught bilingual program, as well as an English Language Learner curriculum that assists students who do not speak English. These classes are taught five days a week. Special education students receive services in resource and co-teaching environments. A program for gifted students KOT (Kids on Target) is also available for students.

Students are prepared for employment through Career Education. Sixth graders participate in a computer generated interest survey; seventh graders complete weekly time sheets and eighth graders take personal value surveys. A Career Fair is held yearly that focuses on a variety of job choices for students. The outside classroom is a strong connection to curricular areas; students participate in Mathletes, Scholastic Bowl, Outdoor Education trips and local and national spelling bees. Students visit the Chicago Symphony and participate in a trip to Springfield, the state capital. Students also participate in local and community essay contests.

Students with special needs receive special education services ranging from cross categorical instructional program to resource. Speech and language services are also provided for students with special needs.

### 2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

Instruction in reading is part of the language arts block. Literacy instruction is provided through direct instruction, whole and small group and is divided into four skill strands: comprehension, language, literature and word development. Components focus on elements of fiction and non-fiction, as well as writing skills.

Multiple genres of literature are explored with supplemental literature included with interdisciplinary themes. Interpretive reading and critical thinking are also developed through novel selections. The Gifted Reading courses focuses on cultural and historical eras, World Regional Mythology, Contemporary literature, Shakespeare and literature of the Holocaust. A new series from McDougall Littell was adopted two years ago. The program was chosen because of the differentiated curriculum, technology support and English Language Learner support, as well as intervention strategies. Professional staff development is also offered through the adoption of the series and it has provided very good support for teachers.

Because reading is taught in the block model, the curriculum offers students the opportunity to review grammar with an emphasis on mechanics that will be utilized to support writing assignments. Components of the reading curriculum focus on the skills of questioning, predicting, and summarizing, as well as analyzing various author techniques that will strengthen comprehension and understanding.

There are also English Language Learner classes offered to students with limited English proficiency. These students are provided with differentiated instruction to improve listening, speaking, reading, writing and oral language skills.

In implementing the newly created foreign language program, a creative scheduling plan was devised to offer Spanish to the students within their language arts block. Reading Plus is offered to students as an additional opportunity to reinforce skills. This is small class, limited to ten or less students and provides much support in the areas of comprehension, vocabulary and reading in the content areas.

### **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Character Counts is a very strong component of the middle school and supports the mission to educate each child holistically to reach his/her full potential by providing a safe environment where students, teachers and community create enthusiasm for lifelong learning. The six pillars of character: respect, responsibly, trustworthiness, fairness, caring and citizenship are woven throughout the school with expectations for behavior and academic success. The themes are prominent on all of the buses that the students travel, reminding them of six pillars. Students participate in Character Counts Walk-A-Thons and are trained for Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution activities. The No Bullying Theater emphasized no tolerance for bullying that the school demonstrates. Students also participate in the outdoor team building Iron Oaks activity.

Students learn how to be good leaders, as well as team members through the various survival skills. Further recognition of these six pillars is implemented through Viking Vouchers. Students are 'caught being good' and given coupons that are entered in drawings for prizes. Police and fire departments teach the skills necessary for safety, problem solving and critical thinking through the Risk Watch program. Literature and reading activities focus on characters and themes that demonstrate these traits. Health lessons focus on a healthy body and mind. Each day begins with a Character Counts thought and various discussions in class reflect on the traits of the month. Students also participate in food and mitten drives and Pennies for Puppies helps support the local animal shelter. Student assignments books were designed with the focus on the pillars so that students received a daily reminder of the Character Counts program. A new program this year is Band Buddies where junior high students are mentors to elementary band students. The band also performs for the mayor's lunch and at local senior citizens' retirement homes.

### **4. Instructional Methods:**

Teachers utilize differentiated instruction strategies to improve student success. English Language Learners are taught in a co-teaching model by the ELL and bilingual teachers. This model is also employed in classes for students who receive special education services. These students are also mainstreamed into regular classroom instruction. Students experience engaged learning activities through hands- on activities in the science lab, as well as the applied technology classroom. Emphasis on exploration, observation and practical experimentation are utilized. Strategies also include small and whole group instruction, cooperative learning activities and literacy centers that align to best practices and learning standards. Field trips are aligned to the curriculum and allow students to experience the outdoor classroom lessons. Teaching strategies in reading across the curriculum and in the content areas focus on

prediction, summarizing, critical thinking skills and problem solving. Technology is integrated across the curriculum and utilized as practical application for collection of data, research and presentation. Video streaming has become another tool that allows students to connect history and literature. Staff members also utilize audio and video to enhance instruction. The focus for improvement of instruction strategies is Response to Intervention which allows teachers to create interventions to assess student learning, progress monitoring and support needed for academic success. Daily oral language supports writing and grammar proficiency. Journaling by students is a tool that teachers utilize to improve writing skills. The smart board technology in the classroom also assists as a strategy for improvement of learning. Homework Help and Failure Is Not an Option, after school tutorial programs, are implemented to improve student success. Collaborative planning for the staff in the middle school also supports student achievement. Through the mentoring program for new teachers, opportunities for classroom observation are another support for gaining instructional strategies that will improve student achievement.

##### **5. Professional Development:**

Teachers receive professional growth opportunities with an emphasis on Response to Intervention, English Language Learner Strategies, guided reading and differentiated instructional strategies. Failure Is Not an Option and The Professional Learning Community has been the theme for all staff members this school year. A Professional Development library was created to support professional growth. Funding for most of the professional development activities and materials are from the Title I Grant. These workshops and conferences have supported the bilingual and ELL students and have also impacted student achievement. Every teacher in the school has received professional growth support with an emphasis on teaching students who have special education needs, diverse language needs and social and economic situations. Every staff member, including support staff, participated in the Ruby Payne A Framework for Poverty. Kagan Strategies for Success, which supports cooperative learning strategies, is another area of professional growth that is offered for all staff members. Understanding the needs of middle school students, as well as the culture and diversification of our student population is a priority for the Finley staff. The staff benefits from the Eisenhower Special Education Cooperative professional growth opportunities that focus on Response to Intervention strategies, 504 accommodations and special education issues. A unique opportunity has been the partnership between the Finley staff and the Chicago Ridge Public Library. A grant for the library has afforded additional professional growth opportunities for the staff in the area of technology and reading. Teachers received technology support for student research through the grant and the librarians presented workshops for teachers in utilizing picture books across the curriculum as well as book talks. The library has also developed a professional library for the staff that was funded through the grant. Further partnership in the Rebecca Caudill Reading Program has also impacted student achievement.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Subject Math Grade 6 Test Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year 1999-2007 Publisher Harcourt/Pearson Educational

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March			
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards					
Meets & Exceeds	84	81			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	131	120			
Percent of total students tested	100	99			
Number of students alternatively assessed	6	4			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	3			
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
	85	83			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	100	97			
2. Black					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
	63	50			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	11	10			
3. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
	89	83			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	19	12			
4. Low Income					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard					
	79	77			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	49	52			

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March			
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards meets & exceeds	74	66			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	131	120			
Percent of total students tested	100	99			
Number of students alternatively assessed	6	4			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	3			
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	76	69			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	100	97			
2. Black					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	36	60			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	11	10			
3. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	84	50			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	19	12			
4. Low Income					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	65	70			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	49	52			

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March			
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards meets & exceeds	85	90			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	120	106			
Percent of total students tested	100	99			
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	0			
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	87	92			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	96	91			
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	93	0			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	15	0			
3. Low Income					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	82	88			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	55	33			
4. Special Education					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	50	60			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	18	12			

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March			
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards meets & exceeds	72	74			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	120	106			
Percent of total students tested	100	99			
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	0			
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	69	76			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	96	91			
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	86	0			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	15	0			
3. Low Income					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	71	57			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	55	33			
4. Special Education					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	22	42			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	18	12			

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards meets & exceeds	91	89	56	39	47
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	101	103	110	116	103
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	3	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	3	1	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard meets & exceeds	90	93	58	40	46
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	101	103	110	98	100
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard meets & exceeds		85			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested		13			
3. Low Income					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard meets & exceeds	89	79	44	36	31
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	34	39		47	29
4. Special Education					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard meets & exceeds	84	63	21	5	0
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	12	11	14	20	16

	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Testing Month	March	March	March	March	March
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standards meets & exceeds	88	82	71	69	60
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	101	103	110	117	103
Percent of total students tested					
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	3	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	3	1	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
1. White					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard meets & exceeds	88	84	72	68	57
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	88	79	95	104	93
2. Hispanic					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard		69			
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested		13			
3. Low Income					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	88	70	61	70	48
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	34	39	43	47	29
4. Special Education					
% "Meeting" plus % "Exceeding" State Standard	83	55	43	24	6
% "Exceeding" State Standards					
Number of students tested	12	11	14	21	16