

Burton St. Elementary School

37 Burton Street

Cazenovia, New York, 13035

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Principal: Susan A. Gorton

Named a New York State School of Excellence in 2000-2001 School Year

The following document contains information which was submitted in our award nomination application. Below is a summary of questions to which we responded. To learn more about our award winning Burton Street School, click on the links at the left.

Summary Statement

Vision/Mission Statement

A. Student Focus and Support

A1. How would you describe your student population? What are your students' needs: How do you assure that the needs of all students are met?

A2. What non-academic services and programs are available to support students and how do they relate to the student needs and school goals identified?

A3. How does your school determine and address the developmental needs of students as they move from grade to grade?

A4. What cocurricular activities are available for students and how do those activities extend the academic curriculum?

A5. How does your school address the accessibility of its' facilities to students and others with disabilities?

B. School Organization and Culture

B1. How does the culture of your school support the learning of all its members and foster a caring community?

B2. What opportunities do students have to build sustained and caring relationships with teachers and other adults? How does your school promote a healthy peer climate among the students?

B3. How are teachers hired in your school? How are teacher assignments made?

B4. What is your school's plan for school safety, discipline and drug prevention? What was your record for the past five years?

C. Challenging Standards and Curriculum

C1. How does your curriculum serve the broad goals for student learning and development that the public generally expects education to achieve: personal and intellectual growth, citizenship, and preparation for work? What relative emphasis do you place on these goals in your curriculum?

C2. How is your school organized to provide for differing student academic needs within the school's goals, priorities, and curriculum?

C3. How do you ensure that diverse learners (for example, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, students with limited English proficiency, migrant students, and students placed at risk) all have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels?

C4. What is the process for continuous curriculum renewal at your school? What question about curriculum is your school currently addressing?

C5. Successful schools offer all students opportunities to be engaged with significant content. How does your school ensure that students achieve at high levels in the core subjects?

C6. What other content areas play essential roles in your school-wide curriculum goals? (Select 2 content areas or programs that you feel should be highlighted because of their central importance to your school's vision/mission.....)

C7. What requirements must be satisfied before a student is promoted to the next grade or level of schooling?

D. Active Teaching and Learning

D1. How are teaching practices and learning experiences in your school consistent with current knowledge about successful teaching and learning?

D2. In what ways do your teaching practices support student-initiated learning?

D3. How are resources made available to teachers and students for gathering information and sharing the results of their efforts

D4. What technology applications are you using? How do they relate to your curricular goals and how do they support teaching and learning?

E. Professional Community

E1. What opportunities do teachers and other staff have to build professional community that enhance their collective capacity to work together to support student learning?

E2. How does a coherent approach to professional development for teachers and other staff ensure their ability to implement effectively the school's curriculum, instructional strategies, and support system? How do organizational arrangements, such as time and teaching assignments, and school norms and culture, make professional development a priority?

E3. How does the school tailor professional development and support to take account of differences in career experience or professional responsibility?

E4. How does your school use the processes and results of student assessment, staff evaluation, and school review to support professional growth? How has teacher's professional development improved teacher and resulted in higher achievement and success?

F. Leadership and Educational Vitality

F1. How does leadership move your school toward its vision/mission? How is the instructional leadership role defined and implemented? How are resources aligned with goals?

F2. How does the school engage its internal and external stakeholders in leadership and decision making? What is the relationship between the principal and stakeholders?

F3. What kind of participatory school improvement process operates at your school? How did your school prepare its Self-Assessment for the Blue Ribbon Schools Program and how did this initiative relate to other school improvement and planning efforts?

F4. How does your school leadership use the most current information about education to promote continuous improvement in your school? How does such evidence influence decision making?

F5. As you look back over the last five years, what conditions or changes have contributed most to the overall success of your school?

F6. What is your vision for integrating technology into your school, including benchmarks that guide your plans, problems that must be overcome, and training approaches? To what extent and how is technology used to improve management efficiency and effectiveness?

F7. What do you consider the major educational challenges your school must face over the next five years, and how do you plan to address them?

G. School, Family and Community Partnerships

G1. What are the goals and priorities of your school, family, and community partnerships? How have your school and community both improved as a result of these partnerships, and how did you measure the improvements?

G2. How does your school involve families in their children's education?

G3. How are educational resources in the school and the community used to extend learning opportunities for teenagers and families?

G4. How are educational resources in the school and community used to extend learning opportunities for teachers and families?

H. Indicators of Success

H1. What is your school's overall approach to assessment? How do your methods align with your educational vision/mission and curriculum? What questions about assessment is your school currently addressing?

H2. How do you use assessment results to understand and improve student and school performance? How do data influence decision-making?

H3. What assessment data are communicated to students, parents, and the community? What is the purpose of these communications? How does the school ensure that these stakeholders understand the standards for judgment and the meaning of the data?

H4. What standardized tests (norm referenced) developed on the national, state, or district level has your school given in the last five years? What are the results for the last five years?

H5. What nonstandardized (criterion-referenced) or alternative assessments of student performance do you use? What are the results for the last five years?

H6. What was the school's record for the past five years in the following areas that may serve as quantitative indicators of school climate and engagement?

H7. Which awards received by your school, staff, or students are most indicative of school success?

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Nomination Application Follows:

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Ten thousand years ago the area where our school now sits was covered by a huge glacier. Fourth graders in our school learn that when the glacier eventually melted it left behind not only the panoramic hills and valleys that we are so accustomed to seeing in central New York and in our own backyards, but also our very own glacier lake.

Well before John Lincklaen first visited the area and was impressed with its beauty and fertile soil, Native Americans who lived on the shores of Owaghena Lake hunted bear, fox, and otter and fished for perch, trout and catfish. It wasn't until 1793 that Lincklaen purchased the first properties which he named the Cazenovia Establishment in honor of Theophilus de Cazenove, agent for the Holland Land Company. The village of Cazenovia now rests on the shores of the lake created by that huge glacier, first known as the Owaghena now called, Cazenovia Lake.

The first school, built by the Holland Land Company in 1796, looks far different from the modern, state of the art buildings that house our district's 1800 student body today. It has been more than two hundred years since students first wrote using chalk and hand-held slate boards. Today, students in every elementary classroom can be seen sitting at a bank of 5 computers using software to reinforce math concepts, display data in a bar graph, create a story using ClarisWorks for Kids or email a pen pal in another state. Two multi-age classrooms of first and second graders, team teachers in first grade, and inclusion classrooms on every grade level provide a diverse learning environment in our 21st century school far removed from the one-room school house that is a model at our village's state historic site, Lorenzo.

The Cazenovia School District encompasses an area of 75 square miles and in 1930 was centralized to include most of the town of Cazenovia, and parts of Fenner, Nelson, Lincoln, Sullivan, and Georgetown. Today, Burton Street School (BSS), the only elementary school in the Cazenovia School district, houses 650 students, pre-k through 4th grade, and 75 staff and faculty members. Built in 1957, BSS has since undergone two facelifts and is often described by community members as a vibrant, positive, and caring learning environment.

Despite all of the changes in the fast-paced world in which we live, Cazenovia has retained its small town charm and community values. Recent pressures by Wal-Mart spokesmen have been ignored and their hoped-for, super-sized store to be built in

rural Cazenovia was easily defeated. While it might make shopping more convenient, the residents of Cazenovia and its surrounding small communities chose to invest in local businesses and people rather than in big business.

The community displays strong feelings for their schools as well. There is evidence of this throughout the year when the public library hosts every other PTA meeting; when P&C donates ice cream for summer school students during their ice cream theme program; when Project Café provides free, after school tutoring to elementary students; when the local post offices provide materials and information for Wee Deliver; or when the Cazenovia Lake Association sends guest speakers to 4th Grade Lake Week to teach children about the ecosystem of a glacial-created lake in their very own backyards. Our school and community work closely together on numerous events that, over time, have become traditions and a way of life in our school district.

While many school districts in the area and throughout the country struggled to recover lost instructional time from bomb threats and violence, ours took a more proactive approach. Last fall our school district simulated an emergency evacuation drill that required us to move 1800 students to safe sites in the community. Excellent planning, lots of written and verbal communication and cooperation by all was key to the success and implementation of our drill. Although we never did receive a single bomb threat all last year, we were well prepared and knew that the youngest children in our district could board a school bus quickly and quietly and that 3rd and 4th graders could walk 1 mile in an orderly manner (in the rain) to safe sites throughout the community!

A safe school environment does not exist on just one day, however, or teach children the life long habits of healthy behavior. Throughout the school year, we use the “No PutDowns” program created by Contact in Syracuse to combat negativity and to teach children strategies which they can use to respond to conflicts in positive ways. All of our teachers are being trained in “Responsive Classroom” practices as well. “Respect ourselves, respect our classroom, and respect our school” are common phrases heard throughout the building and as reminders throughout the day. The “No PutDowns” program and the “Responsive Classroom” practices are not add-ons to our curriculum. They are embedded within lessons and integrated throughout the school day. The terminology used is part of our everyday conversations and is reinforced by the adults in our school as they regularly model the intentions behind these programs.

The academic needs of our students receive the highest priority in our district as well. A comprehensive plan for curriculum renewal was spearheaded as a result of a curriculum audit, the New York State Learning Standards and the rigorous new assessments. As a result of our staff development work in this area, we are experiencing improved success rates on the 4th grade ELA and Math assessments. The hard work of our students and teachers was realized when our results showed a phenomenal 22% increase in students passing this year’s ELA test!

As we all know, systemic change does not occur without the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders. The efforts of our Shared Decision-Making Team, our School Board, PTA, the district Curriculum Committee, and several other committees have resulted in curriculum and instructional changes that have already begun to help us realize improved student achievement. Programs such as, Project

Read, Reading Recovery, Responsive Classroom, technology integration projects, and lower class size have all contributed to the success of our students.

Our work, however, is never done. We will implement our first, extended-day kindergarten program this September. After three years of research, study and discussion with all stakeholders involved, our half-day kindergarten program will become a 5.5 hour program. In addition, we will be adding a second Reading Recovery teacher for first grade and lowering class size in second grade to less than 15 students per class. A rigorous plan for staff development continues in order to familiarize teachers with the very best practices in teaching and learning. As we watch our students learn and grow, we are excited about the challenges ahead and look forward to the success our whole community will experience.

Vision/Mission Statement

The beliefs that guide our school district support the growth of not only the students attending our schools, but the adults who work with them as well. This focus distinguishes us from many other school districts whose view of the educational environment addresses only student growth.

Each individual will attain his/her potential in a positive learning environment in which the entire school community encourages a sense of responsibility, high expectations, self-esteem, caring for others and a realization of measurable goals.

In addition to having one of the most comprehensive in-service programs in the surrounding counties, our district has a rigorous curriculum renewal process (see C) to stay abreast of the most recent state education initiatives; an academic intervention program (see C) that is preventative in nature and; a promising new annual professional performance (see C) review process that encourages best practices in teaching.

The spirit and ethos of our elementary school comes through our mission statement as well:

The mission of Burton Street School is to provide a safe, courteous and stimulating environment where children are accepted, valued, and expected to learn.

The most recent changes in the required assessments in 4th, 8th and high school helped us to focus our attention on how best to improve student achievement and to identify the practices needed to achieve our goals. Thanks to the support of our Superintendent and school board, we have substantially improved student achievement over the past two years (see H1) and accomplished a significant number of our goals:

1. Develop additional programs to meet the needs of at-risk students (see section A for PROJECT READ, Reading Recovery, after school tutoring, and summer school)

2. Provide assistance to teachers for meeting the new standards and assessments (see section D for in-service courses, summer curriculum writing, conferences and workshops)
3. Encourage parental involvement in all areas of the school (see section G for 15 different PTA activities)
4. Recommend changes in the school for greater efficiency and use of teacher and student time (see section A for lower student-teacher ratio, recess tutoring, schedule changes, extended-day kindergarten)

We attribute our school's success to a number of different factors. First, we involved a broad base of stakeholders in helping us determine goals. Our site-based, decision-making team sought the input of all faculty and staff members before they set goals for the year. Once goals were identified, we examined each one to determine possible implementation problems, cost to the district, measurable effectiveness and practicality. Then we presented our goals to our school board for support and approval. Implementations of a number of new initiatives based on our goals have resulted in improved student success demonstrated on both criterion and norm referenced measures (see H4 and H5 for standardized tests, Reading Recovery assessments and the 4th grade assessments).

The first year of the new millenium will herald our first ever extended-day kindergarten program, a second Reading Recovery teacher, and our very own Wee Deliver Post Office program for enhancing and promoting literacy. The new programs invite both an excitement, a challenge and an opportunity to assess and improve the way we do things at BSE.

A. Student Focus and Support

A1. How would you describe your student population? What are your students' needs: How do you assure that the needs of all students are met?

Burton Street School (BSE) serves 615 students in grades kindergarten through 4th grade. Its size and population is deceiving because of the personal and nurturing climate that pervades the building. Our attendance rate of over 95 % every year suggests that children enjoy attending school and parents in Cazenovia value the importance of education. In addition to our own programs, we also house a **Boces inclusive, pre-k program** and an **after school program**.

There are 31 classrooms in our building with an average class size of 19.3. Our district has worked hard to lower class size in the primary grades resulting in a student/teacher ratio of less than 20 in most classes. This is reflective of our site-based team's primary goal to improve student achievement by reducing class size.

Student needs in our school vary. Our greatest diversity lies in the economic background of our children. As a result of the wide range of needs, we have had to be creative and innovative in providing programs that meet the needs of all children without sacrificing high standards for all. Programs such as **after school tutoring** and **summer school** offer proactive intervention for the neediest of our students.

An experienced faculty with an average of 15 years of service formally and informally tests students throughout the school year to determine strengths and weaknesses. All children benefit from our challenging curriculum, which emphasizes problem solving in math and critical analysis and evaluation in the English/language arts area. We feel that our standardized test results (H4 and H5) indicate that we have a high achieving student population because of our high expectations for all students. Many of our teachers have completed training in the use of the **Early Literacy Profile** which is a way to measure student progress in reading, writing and listening over time.

When necessary, students can be recommended for one of our remedial math or reading programs based on teacher recommendation and/or test results. Most recently, our first graders are tested to determine those eligible for **Reading Recovery**. Others may receive special education services, which also include occupational, speech, and physical therapy. A visitor to our school may see students with various handicapping conditions working alongside their peers in the regular classroom. Teaching assistants may be working closely with the special education teacher and classroom teacher to provide individualized support to students with autism, students with visual and hearing disabilities, cerebral palsy and/or students identified as emotionally disturbed (J1 special emphasis focus).

The use of technology in our school has benefitted all students as well and specifically students with handicapping conditions who may need a communication board, a laptop or adaptive p.e. equipment. The integration of technology in our classrooms has been a great motivating factor in children's interest in writing and publishing stories, playing math games, designing graphs to display data and in enhancing problem solving skills (D4).

In summary, our Committee on Special Education, Child Study team and academic intervention plan ensures that the academic and/or emotional needs of students in our school are met at the earliest possible time.

A2. What non-academic services and programs are available to support students and how do they relate to the student needs and school goals identified?

In order to support the development of an emotionally and physically healthy child, our school offers many nonacademic services and programs throughout the school year. The purpose of some of these programs is intended to support and enhance our K-4 curriculum. Other programs target children with specific needs. While the needs of children have become more and more complex, schools have had to expand programs to address these issues. Depending on the grade level and need, participation in these programs may range from 20% to 100% of our students.

Non-academic programs are currently offered in the areas of education, safety, physical and social and emotional. The services are provided to support our

educational goals and to encourage each student to develop into a positive member of our community. One excellent example is our **PIP (Partners in Prevention)** program that is funded by a combination of local, county and state funds. PIP is a counseling service provided to families in crisis. A key component of our PIP program is the required parent participation.

The majority of our students participate in one or more of these programs. Depending on the program, students may be recommended through a variety of formal and informal vehicles such as, a referral to the Committee on Special Education, a review by the Child Study Team or a grade level team meeting, a parent request, and/or a review of assessment data.

To address the student's educational needs, BSE provides a number of non-academic programs in conjunction with activities planned by our PTA (G1), our public library and community. Both the public library and Project Café have offered free tutoring to our students.

To address a student's safety needs, BSE also provides many non-academic programs. School bus safety programs presented by our bus drivers, emergency preparedness drills, drug awareness programs (i.e., **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Education Program**), personal safety programs, and fire department and police demonstrations are all regular events offered at our school each year. Last year, our local fire department brought the "smoke house" to BSE to simulate how our children would escape from a smoke-filled house. Programs such as these are life saving educational opportunities.

Our "**Banana Splits**" program supports children whose parents are separated or divorced or who are dealing with other family transition issues. To strengthen a child's ability to deal with peer pressure, BSE also sponsors a program called "**Peer Proof**" that is taught to fourth graders by a certified health teacher. And to enhance self-esteem, BSE encourages students to become involved in community programs, such as making contributions to local book drives and to the local food pantry.

Our school nurse, Mrs. Hirt, conducts vision and hearing screenings each year and spearheads many programs that provide clothing, school supplies, or Christmas gifts to needy children. We also have dental hygienist services for first and second graders. Fluoride treatments on Wednesdays and a breakfast program each morning are available to all students in our school. Approximately 50-75 children take advantage of our **breakfast program** each day. It is also an opportunity for children to have casual conversations with peers and our school principal. These moments are important times to promote positive attitudes about school and improve self-esteem.

Our **Special Education Department** provides many services to meet the diverse needs of our classified students. We offer both occupational and physical therapy, adaptive physical education and inclusive classes. Our inclusion classrooms are assigned fewer students and often have both a special education teacher and teacher assistant teaming with the regular classroom teacher to help all children in the classroom (J).

A3. How does your school determine and address the developmental needs of students as they move from grade to grade?

Our school believes that it is important to provide developmentally appropriate programs. To ensure that we are providing appropriate programs, kindergarten screening is conducted each spring before the children enter kindergarten in the fall. Students scoring below average in any area are noted so that those areas can be addressed throughout the year. Any student that is suspected of having a handicapping condition is referred to our Committee on Special Education. Our students receive on-going assessments throughout the school year that are both norm referenced and criterion referenced (H4, H5). The results of these assessments are combined with anecdotal records and teacher's classroom observations to determine the rate of progress of each student. We focus on the amount of progress or lack of progress students make each year to determine if remedial or special services are necessary. Visible evidence of student progress is crucial, however. Portfolios, displays of student work, presentations and checklists are all ways in which we show parents evidence of growth.

Progress is measured in other areas as well. Students who work hard, cooperate with their peers, attend school regularly, listen attentively and attempt to solve their own problems before seeking help are successful learners. Every grade level report card communicates a child's abilities in the areas of citizenship and life skills emphasizing our focus on responsible behavior even at the earliest grades.

If a student does not show developmentally appropriate growth, he/she may be referred to our **Child Study Team** to determine if other services are necessary. A classroom teacher, parent or administrator can complete a Child Study Referral. When completed, a Child Study Team Meeting is convened to discuss the child. Test scores, remediation or interventions made to date, teacher observations, historical data and other pertinent information are analyzed and discussed. Members of the team include our school's speech pathologist, a special education teacher, our school psychologist and our building principal. Often, testing is conducted to determine a child's strengths and weaknesses. The team also suggests vision screenings when there is evidence of reading difficulties. Some students are referred directly to the Committee on Special Education. Nine of the thirty-seven Child Study referrals last school year were referred to the CSE.

We group our students heterogeneously and include special needs students as well. We try to keep our inclusion classrooms smaller than other classrooms and provide teacher assistant support. Individualized Education Plans stipulate the details of each identified student's needs and help the special education student communicate with the regular classroom teacher.

To address the diverse needs of our students, we offer a variety of programs and supports that range from least restrictive to more restrictive. The programs include an elementary summer school for at-risk, first, second, third and fourth graders. We also offer a special education summer school program for identified special education students.

Transitions from grade to grade are made smoother by regular communication between grade levels and our efforts to align our curriculum. Our efforts in this area have increased dramatically in the last two years as we prepare for the changes in Regent's requirements and higher expectations for all students (E3). One of our goals is to align our curriculum with the NYS Standards. During the summer months, teams

of teachers wrote and revised learning units (E2). For example, we teamed a kindergarten and first grade teacher to design and write a full day kindergarten curriculum prior to changing from our half-day program to our current extended-day program. The work that they completed was a compilation of all of the topics, concepts, assessments, activities and standards that make up our program. This work not only formalizes the kindergarten curriculum, it is intended to improve the way in which we communicate our expectations to parents and other teachers. Our curriculum renewal plan helps us plan staff development in order to improve student achievement and ensure the success of all of our students.

Supports for the diversity of our students include smaller class size, teacher assistants for classrooms with special needs students, and volunteer tutors. Our teachers have received formal training in **Math Their Way, The Responsive Classroom, the Eileen Griffin Institute for Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Lola May, Hands on Algebra, Effective Reading Practices for At-Risk Readers, ITIP, Dimensions of Learning, and Cooperative Learning** all in an effort to meet the developmental needs of students on all levels.

Strategies to ease transitions for kindergarten students include a parent orientation in the spring prior to fall enrollment and a first day, preview day for kindergartners and his/her parents. When new students enter the district, they are paired with a classroom buddy and are given a school tour. In many cases a parent/teacher conference is scheduled soon after their enrollment. Recently, some kindergarten, first and multi-age teachers have scheduled a playground night at the end of August to provide an opportunity for students to meet their new classmates.

“Curriculum Night” takes place on September 21 this fall so that we can communicate to parents what is expected on each grade level. The most recent changes in assessments and requirements make this communication even more crucial.

The move to the Middle School is a significant event for our fourth graders. To ease this transition, the Middle School principal holds an orientation meeting and tour in June for students and their parents. Our special education teachers take selected students on a tour during the school day to help prepare them for the change. Fourth and fifth grade teachers and the middle school counselor meet in June to share important information about the new fifth grade class.

A4. What cocurricular activities are available for students and how do those activities extend the academic curriculum?

Several extra-curricular activities are available to students at BS. Activities are supported and funded by a variety of organizations, however, the majority are sponsored and, at least, partially funded by the PTA and/or the district’s Enrichment Committee. We are fortunate to have a \$20,000 Enrichment Committee budget that provides for special programming in grade kindergarten through seventh. Some of our activities are listed below with the rest listed in section G.

- **Discovery University** is a program offered to fourth through seventh graders for a week in August each summer. Workshops in the Performing and Fine Arts are offered to students in both the elementary and middle schools.

Area artists and craftspeople assist in developing and presenting the workshops.

- The **"Floating Festival in February,"** sponsored by our PTA, occurs during our February break and is designed to give our elementary students activities to participate in while school is not in session. This program has been highly successful and completely full each time.
- Religious instruction is offered to interested students. Provided weekly, students have the option of participating in either the Protestant or Catholic programs. Transportation is provided by the school district. Our PTA also offers a **Gymnastics program** to students at minimal cost. Presented by CNY Gymnastics (Syracuse, NY), the program is very popular, and gives students the chance to be exposed to the elementary aspects of gymnastics.
- **Cazenovia Youth Soccer** works in conjunction with Burton Street School to provide a fall and spring program for all grade levels. The program provides instruction, and offers an opportunity for competition through scheduled games.
- Enrichment Committee grants are offered to people who can offer specialized programs to our students. For example, local experts on gardening and farming have taught our third graders about growing vegetables. The program includes helping the children plant a small garden, harvest the vegetables and create and eat a feast. Other presentations have included topics such as, endangered species, the rain forest, and the life cycle of butterflies.
- We have four or five assemblies each year as well. Last year, second graders attended *Velveteen Rabbit* in the high school auditorium. This year, *Curious George* will be presented on our own stage. Many authors, poets, illustrators and musicians have been guests at our school.
- Our students also designed **"Clouds of Blue Butterflies,"** a collection of original literary works by our students, teachers and parents. This project was partially funded by a grant from the Central New York Teacher Center and supported by a group of parents interested in enhancing our students' reading and writing skills.
- Many of our teachers and students also participate in **NIE (Newspapers in Education)**. Our local Rotarians who provide the funding for it have supported this real life use of newspapers to enhance reading instruction. Mr. Evans, one of our phys. Ed. teachers, organizes intramural basketball for boys and girls in third and fourth grade after school in the late winter.

A5. How does your school address the accessibility of its' facilities to students and others with disabilities?

In a two-year project that began in 1997, the PTA raised money to compliment a \$10,000 grant from Senator Nancy Lorraine Hoffman's office. The combined funds

were used to make our playground handicapped-accessible, as well as to increase the general safety features for all children using the facility.

Other features that improve the handicapped-accessibility of our facility are wheel chair ramps at entrances, ramps inside the building, handicapped parking, access to phone and water fountains, handicapped sinks and toilets, wider doorways throughout our building, and fire alarms with lights and sound. Many of our children with handicapping conditions have specially designed equipment.

B. School Organization and Culture

B1. How does the culture of your school support the learning of all its members and foster a caring community?

The **BS Shared Decision Making Team** works closely with the faculty to establish goals for the school year. A survey conducted by the team last fall served as a vehicle for involving all of the stakeholders in our school. Data results from the survey were disaggregated and formed the recommendations that we sent to our school board. The process of gathering information, prioritizing goals, and communicating information to everyone involved is a time consuming job. However, the results of all of this work help us improve student achievement and recognize the efforts of everyone involved in the process. A tremendous sense of accomplishment was felt by our shared decision making team when our school board made the decision to add an additional Reading Recovery teacher, lower class size in third grade and change from a half-day kindergarten program to an extended-day program all in a combined effort to improve student achievement in the early grades (F2).

Our **PTA** plays an important role in establishing goals in our school as well. Their work on studying the complex issue of half-day kindergarten vs. full-day kindergarten laid the foundation for further study. The parent members of our shared decision making team act as liaisons to the PTA board to share information and combine resources and efforts so that everyone is working toward the same purpose of helping children succeed (G1).

While much of the work that goes into running a successful elementary program is done behind the scenes, the displays of student work in the hallways and the quiet hum of active learning in the classrooms provide evidence of the caring community that exists in our school. Visitors, guests, friends and family remark on the friendliness of our school despite the 600+ students and 75 staff and faculty members that fill it each day.

B2. What opportunities do students have to build sustained and caring relationships with teachers and other adults? How does your school promote a healthy peer climate among the students?

We are fortunate to live in a small, rural community that naturally fosters a strong sense of community and values the importance of education. The roots of this extend as far back as 1796 when the first school built by the Holland Land Company opened and Joshua Bain, the first teacher, taught reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Over 200 years later, we continue to teach these subjects and many more. Second, third and fourth graders proudly carry their “**student agendas**” to and from school keeping track of important school messages, homework assignments and teacher/parent notes. Funds from our PTA and our **Drug Free Schools grant** help to purchase these agendas because we value the importance of regular communication between home and school. Many problems have been averted because of this simple tool.

“**Student of the Week,**” “**Birthday Books,**” “**Reading Buddies**” and “**Good Sport of the Month**” contribute to our students’ self esteem. By recognizing students for themselves and their special talents, we model how to care about others and how to treat people with respect. Our **No PutDowns Program** also sets the standard for respecting others and learning how to solve conflicts in positive ways in and outside of school (C1). This school-wide program teaches children in grades K-4 the concept of “building up” others. Students work on changing “put downs” to “build ups” and learn how to get along with everyone.

Responsive Classroom, Partners in Prevention and Peer Proof (A2 and 3) are other programs that help to build and sustain caring relationships between students and teachers in our school. All of these programs are part of a comprehensive plan to help children succeed in elementary school. Since children have varying needs, we need a wide variety of programs to serve them. Some students may benefit from free books donated by our PTA. Others receive school supplies from “**Caz Cares,**” a community service in our village. The **Lion’s Club** of Cazenovia donates glasses and vision screening and the **Rotary Club** has provided funding for our **Newspapers in Education Program (NIE)** . Many things happen at BSE that are the result of caring individuals that live in the Cazenovia School District.

B3. How are teachers hired in your school? How are teacher assignments made?

We have six new teachers in our building this year. It is an exciting time for them and us. The change to an extended-day kindergarten required us to hire two additional kindergarten teachers. And, the state and federal grants that are funding our lower class size initiatives brought us an additional second grade teacher last year and another third grade teacher this year. Two Reading Recovery teachers have also been added to work solely with first graders in an effort to “catch students before they fail.”

Who are the new teachers in our building and where did they come from? Two different interview committees reviewed resumes and applications and then selected ten to interview last spring. Several of the candidates were well-known to us because they had been favorite substitute teachers for us in the past or had filled long-term substitute positions. Their proven record of success as substitutes got them an interview, but their knowledge and expertise about child development, Burton St. School, NYS Learning Standards, assessments and curriculum impressed our committee.

To prepare for the interviews, committee members met to discuss general criteria and sample questions. Many of the questions focused on teacher knowledge of

developmentally appropriate practices. Candidates who were invited back for a second interview were asked to bring an English Language Arts lesson to present to the committee. Not surprising, the best candidates could articulate why they chose a specific lesson and student objectives. The candidate who was eventually hired as our second Reading Recovery Teacher had presented a lesson that she had used "pushing in" to a regular first grade class. The lesson hinged on a team approach (the remedial teacher working with the classroom teacher to provide reading services within the classroom). Part of her lesson required students to compare the characters in two different stories. Although she differentiated instruction for some of her students, we were impressed that all of the first graders were involved in a higher level thinking activity that asked them to compare, contrast and form an opinion.

New teachers to our school attend an orientation day during the summer to help acclimate them to our district. Many are assigned mentors who attend the orientation day as well. New teachers at BSE also attend monthly meetings devoted solely to topics and issues that are relevant to them. This fall we are offering a 15 hour inservice for new teachers titled, Seminar for Beginning Teachers and Teacher Assistants. Once teachers are hired, we do a lot to provide the support and resources necessary to help make them successful.

B4. What is your school's plan for school safety, discipline and drug prevention? What was your record for the past five years?

Our school superintendent, **Dr. Read**, recently told new teachers to our district that in the 21 years that he has worked in Cazenovia we have never had a bomb threat! While this is exceptional news, we continue to take steps that will ensure the safety of the children and adults in our schools in the event that we do have an emergency.

Safe practices begin in kindergarten; are present in the cafeteria kitchen; are evident in the fanny packs that our playground monitors wear; and during a fire drill when more than 600 children and adults can quietly and quickly exit our building in approximately 115 seconds! Video cameras monitor every exit and entranceway to our building. Our teachers have pass keys that unlock the main doorway and then electronically relock them and record the pass key owner's name. Our safety officer, Craig Benson, conducts training workshops for monitors, custodians, and bus drivers. And, our transportation director, John Durfee, schedules regular bus drills so that all children know how to behave during a bus emergency. Health fairs, special guest speakers, a Student Handbook and practice drills all contribute to the safe environment at BSE.

BSE is fortunate to have several professionals who are skilled in dealing with student discipline issues that interrupt teaching. Whether it is our ADAPEP counselor, Mr. DeHaas, our school psychologist, Dr. Brady, our PIP counselors or school nurse, Mrs. Hirt, we always have someone available who can soothe an upset child, help resolve an issue between angry children or refer a parent to an appropriate community service provider. Our Crisis Team can be activated at any time to respond to emergencies or assist families dealing with a loss or crisis.

Programs such as **Love and Logic** taught by our PIP counselors each year as an inservice is frequently requested by both parents and teachers. Participants learn

new strategies and techniques for supporting students with challenging behaviors in school and at home. **Banana Splits** is also a popular activity for many of our students who are looking for peers experiencing divorce or separation in their lives. All of these programs support our children so that they are better prepared for school each day.

The health and well-being of our students includes visits from the **dental hygienist**, **vision and hearing screening** with Mrs. Hirt, and physicals conducted by our school physician, Dr. Osborne. We even dedicated Wednesdays as **Fluoride Day** to ensure that everyone who should receive fluoride does so on Wednesdays! Good health is a concern to the adults in our district as well. More than 40 teachers, administrators, and board members participated in this year's **Corporate Challenge** by either running or walking in this annual, noncompetitive event.

C. Challenging Standards and Curriculum

C1. How does your curriculum serve the broad goals for student learning and development that the public generally expects education to achieve: personal and intellectual growth, citizenship, and preparation for work? What relative emphasis do you place on these goals in your curriculum?

Two programs have had a significant effect on both our students and teachers in the way of personal and intellectual growth. The **No PutDowns** program provided by Contact of Syracuse and **Responsive Classroom**, a 5-day workshop offered at our OCM BOCES have been instrumental in helping us rethink how we can integrate character development within our core curriculum and prepare children for citizenship.

Our first Superintendent's Day last school year focused on violence prevention issues and training in the No PutDowns program. The Contact consultants trained all faculty members on our staff and gave an evening presentation to parents at a PTA meeting in September. When parents told us that their children were using the No PutDowns terminology at home, we knew the program was effective. The program emphasizes fostering friendships and curbing bullying through proactive ways. The skills taught in the program emphasize responsibility for one's own actions and choices, self-control, empathy, community building and effective listening and speaking skills. We believe that an early focus on these skills will help prevent negative behavior and violence in the succeeding school years of middle and high school. Research tells us that early intervention is most effective in promoting children's sense of connectedness to others and to the world in which they live.

Although many character education programs have a situational quality (issues are dealt with when they occur), the No PutDowns program and Responsive Classroom practices are embedded in lessons throughout the day. Some of the literature we choose to use during reading/language arts time exposes children to cultures, languages, and traditions different from their own. These multicultural experiences help children develop the skills and knowledge that will assist them throughout their school career and as citizens in their own communities.

Building community within our classrooms and in our school is important to us. We see examples of this in classrooms where children work in cooperative learning groups to achieve a goal; when reading buddies pair up to read in the hallways; when the Good Sports of the Month is a medal everyone in the school works hard all year to receive; when students with special learning and physical needs are included in classrooms and provided with the support they need to be successful; or when 700 students, parents and teachers all contribute to a hall display by helping to weave a section of the mural.

While the objectives for each activity and lesson may differ for some students depending on their needs, all students participate throughout the school day whether it is morning meeting time or guided reading time. Our mission is to provide an environment where *all* children are accepted, valued and expected to learn (Part IV). An observer may see differentiated learning experiences in our school when some students are working on a laptop computer and others are using a graphic organizer to take notes while they read. Attentiveness to the diverse needs of the learners in their classrooms is often the key to our teachers' success with students.

C2. How is your school organized to provide for differing student academic needs within the school's goals, priorities, and curriculum?

Our classrooms are grouped heterogeneously and inclusively. However, in some situations during English/language arts and math, children are grouped according to ability to better address their weaknesses and/or strengths.

We are in our fifth year of using the Houghton Mifflin's **Invitations to Literacy Reading Program**. We are pleased with the series because it allows for whole group instruction with flexible, guided reading groups. Children are administered an informal assessment at the beginning of the year and assigned to small "guided reading" groups. Continuous monitoring using checklists and the various assessment tools that accompany the program help us determine the movement of children from one group to another. In addition, our teachers have begun the process of leveling books so those children are provided with books that match their instructional and independent reading levels.

Children identified by our teachers or by low-test scores receive additional support through our Reading Learning Center or Reading Recovery program. Children in Reading Recovery receive one to one instruction one-half hour a day in addition to the time spent with the Reading Recovery teacher during the teacher's push-in time. We believe that coordination between our special reading and math teachers is a key component of our remedial programs.

Our Learning Center for reading is a resource for children and adults in our building. Mrs. Buck, our district's teacher of the year in 1996, heads our Learning Center with over 25 years of experience teaching children how to read. She supervises two teaching assistants and together they work with small groups of children in combinations of pull-out and push-in environments depending on the skills, lesson or activity planned for the day. Students may move in or out of any of our remedial reading groups depending on need. Progress is measured on a daily basis informally and regularly on the theme tests that go with our reading series. In the fall, we will

begin using the **Early Literacy Profile** to measure student progress in reading, writing and listening.

Mrs. Buck has played a pivotal role in planning and organizing inservice workshops for teachers during the summer based on the input she receives from them during the school year. This past summer, teachers practiced using **running records**, the **ELP**, **leveling books**, and **guided reading** activities. Mrs. Buck has also helped teachers align their English/language arts curriculum and assessments with the 4th grade ELA test. It is with her guidance that we selected the Houghton-Mifflin series that is aligned with the NYS assessments.

Our standardized test scores in 4th grade strongly indicate that our regular and remedial reading programs are closely aligned and effective (H4 and H5). This alignment begins in kindergarten starting with Big Books, recognizing simple sight words, and focusing on phonemic awareness. In preparation for an **extended-day kindergarten program**, our teachers rewrote and redesigned our kindergarten curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and aligned with the NYS learning standards.

Our third and fourth graders' reading and language arts instruction is a combination of trade books and language activities. We are fortunate to have over 50 class sets of trade book titles in our third and fourth grades giving us a wide variety of literature to interest and engage all of our readers. Our titles include both nonfiction and fiction titles and chapter books that interest both girls and boys. **Our 90-minute English/language arts block in grades 1-4** demonstrates the importance we place on reading.

Cooperative learning, peer tutoring, reading buddies, multi-aging (C5), looping, team teaching, and inclusion programs are all examples of how we provide differentiated learning experiences for a variety of children with diverse needs. We believe that "one size does not fit all" children and that learning can be personalized so that all children benefit. Research on cooperative learning has demonstrated positive effects on learning achievement as well as student self-esteem, attitudes toward school and ability to work together. All of these skills, we believe, are necessary to be successful in today's society.

C3. How do you ensure that diverse learners (for example, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, students with limited English proficiency, migrant students, and students placed at risk) all have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels?

Children with special needs are placed in the least restrictive environment according to their I.E.P. Where appropriate, a child may be assigned to a teaching assistant in an inclusive classroom depending upon the child's needs. Given the appropriate support, materials, instructional strategies and guidance, we feel that all children can benefit from learning along side their peers in mainstream classes.

Children who receive additional remediation in reading and math are also exposed to more advanced vocabulary and literature during their reading/language arts time, read-aloud time and DEAR (Drop Everything And Read). The books that are used in

our literature-based program and reading series incorporate activities in both whole group and small group instruction so that the needs of children in small groups are met.

All children are given the opportunity to experience activities that are offered through our locally developed enrichment program. **Section A4 and G** describe many of our enrichment programs funded with our Enrichment Committee budget.

Migrant students and students with limited English proficiency have tutorial programs available to them to supplement their classroom experiences. With the help of our local college, we were able to provide an English/Chinese tutor for one of our fourth graders who only spoke Chinese. Also, Mrs. Habeyeb, from the Migrant Tutorial Program of Madison County visits us once a week to work with children whose families work on local farms. Mrs. Habeyeb works with the classroom teacher to coordinate teaching efforts and to decide on push-in or pull-out instruction. Finding, accessing, and providing necessary services for children so that they meet with success are our school's priorities.

C4. What is the process for continuous curriculum renewal at your school? What question about curriculum is your school currently addressing?

Our district has an on-going process for monitoring and adjusting curriculum development. Part of the evaluation process for BSE teachers is to show how we are relating the NYS Standards to our curriculum. One of our district's goals is to train all teachers in the district in unit writing and aligning their curriculum with the NYS Standards. Our School Board is committed both financially and philosophically in this training process. In addition, our district has hired a curriculum coordinator to continuously work with our teachers to achieve this goal. Money, personnel, and time have all been increased in order to better serve our students. This collaboration between teachers, Board and administrators clearly demonstrates our commitment to help all of our students.

Through the recommendations of the Educational Advisory Committee (EAC) our district continuously offers courses that provide professional growth in several areas (E2, F6). Each year, the courses offered vary according to the needs of our staff. Input from them to the EAC help the committee determine what the needs are each year. Last year's choices included:

- Introduction to Designing Unit Lesson Plans Based on the New York State Standards
- Teacher Vista (an individualized technology plan for teachers)
- Introduction to eMate
- Creating ClarisWorks Slide Shows
- Using Electronic Library Resources
- Scanning and OCR

- Dimensions of Learning

Superintendent Conference Days are geared toward curriculum renewal and development. The 1996-97 school year conference days focused on math workshops and learning about the new math assessment planned for fourth graders in 1999.

Our 1997-98 school year conference days focused on reading topics, especially those programs that provided ideas for reaching at-risk readers and learning more about the ELA assessment planned for fourth graders in 1999.

C5. Successful schools offer all students opportunities to be engaged with significant content. How does your school ensure that students achieve at high levels in the core subjects?

English (Language Arts):

A **twenty-two percent increase** in the number of students scoring on levels 3 and 4 on the January 2000, ELA 4 test says a great deal about the improvements we have made in our English/language arts program over the past few years (H4,5). Students scoring on Level 4 increased significantly from the previous year as well indicating that **high standards result in higher achievement**.

Our 90-minute English/language arts block in grades 1-4 combines a whole language and phonics approach. Instruction in our reading series includes whole group activities, guided reading, shared reading, spelling and grammar and Make A Word activities. As discussed in C2, student progress is measured by teacher observation, writing assignments based on a 4-point rubric and thematic unit tests that are aligned to the NYS Assessment Tests. Our K-4 teachers with the guidance of Dr. Mack have also developed a series of listening assessment activities (E1) that was missing in our curriculum previously.

Pre-reading instruction begins as early as kindergarten using a variety of language-rich activities developed by our kindergarten and first grade teachers. Kindergartners can expect to learn 20 carefully selected sight words and participate in reading, writing and listening activities. Some kindergartners may use only pictures, but others may produce whole sentences using invented spelling so the performance standards must be broad and take into account the developmental levels of the students. Many of our reading activities in kindergarten involve movement and music to address the developing needs of 5-year olds.

Third and fourth graders use trade books associated with thematic units such as mysteries, biography, history, or humor as the basis of the reading/language arts program. This approach offers high interest subject matter to challenge all readers. Reading skills are taught and assessed using teacher-developed tests as well as expecting students to respond to literature through writing assignments and projects. These performance tasks give children choice in ways to demonstrate their abilities.

Throughout the year, our students are exposed to experts in the field. Our librarian, Mrs. Elliott, invites two authors/illustrators to visit our school during PARP (Parents as Reading Partners) week. Authors such as Bruce Hiscock, Donna Joerg, Bernard

Waber and Peter Catalanotto have been frequent visitors to our school. Students learn very quickly how to become better writers and illustrators.

Avid readers in 3rd grade become members of our **Reading Hall of Fame**. Once there, their picture is posted in the foyer of our school for all to see. To become a Reading Hall of famer, students read and record the number of books they have finished then discuss the book with a parent volunteer or their teacher. Students reaching the highest level are invited to a McDonald's lunch with our Superintendent, Dr. Read.

Teachers at BSE promote reading literacy through a number of ways. Pizza Hut Book It program, Reading Hall of Fame, reading buddies, DEAR, Harry Potter read-a-louds, historical fiction, after school reading clubs, and thematic units all contribute to successful reading programs at BSE.

b. Math

Our math curriculum is based on the state curriculum and is coordinated with the objectives tested in our CIMS program. We have used this management system for more than ten years to track student progress. This curriculum has 3 key components: computation, concepts, and problem solving. At each grade level there is a list of objectives to be taught using a variety of techniques and materials. **Math Their Way, Math A Way of Thinking**, Addison Wesley texts and work books are also used in our math program. Recently, we have begun to focus more on problem solving skills, higher level thinking skills and relating math to real life activities to improve student achievement. We expect that children will move from the concrete level to the abstract level given the appropriate time, environment and materials. Often, a math lesson will include time for students to explore manipulatives (math materials) in order to understand how numbers and objects are related. These activities move students towards more traditional paper and pencil tasks that are expected on each grade level.

Children are tested periodically using the CIMS tests. There are approximately 14 tests per grade level to be administered during the year. These tests are returned to the teacher and student to show what skills needs to be reviewed and what skills the child has mastered. We use pre and post survey tests in grades second through fourth to determine instructional needs for the year and student growth. The end of the year survey test covers the entire curriculum for each grade level. (Please refer to our criterion-referenced test data in section H5 for details.)

Results of the CIMS tests become part of our students' permanent record so that the next year's teacher has ongoing information about a child's progress. This record also reminds teachers what has been taught. The end of the year survey results are compiled by classroom and by grade level. Scores are studied and analyzed by our math specialist and teachers so that changes can be made in instruction or materials. Because the CIMS program emphasizes skill development, our teachers have worked hard to enhance the problem solving component of the program. We have purchased new materials, and increased our efforts in teaching problem solving strategies and critical thinking skills.

A newly formed math committee will be involved in discussing issues, planning a school-wide vocabulary list and planning math activities to celebrate the new millenium.

c. Science

The science curriculum in our building is based on kits developed by teachers and provided by our local BOCES. Teachers supplement these kits with additional materials and activities depending on the unit. All grade levels receive the science kits that cover such topics as water, plants and animals, buoyancy, and electricity. The kits provide the materials for hands-on experiments, worksheets, and assessment tools. Through the activities, our children are taught to observe, record, analyze, and discuss results. A third grade unit on buoyancy is a perfect example of hands-on activities. Third graders design and build their own model boat and then take a field trip to Cazenovia Lake to "float their boats." This lesson has been a tradition in our third grade for many years.

Three of our teachers are involved in a program called MSTe mentoring. They learned how inquiry-based learning helps children to be better problem solvers and critical thinkers. Their work included using the Internet to communicate with other teachers across the country to share ideas and experiences. Lessons involving deductive and inductive reasoning skills are also emphasized giving students opportunities to acquire intellectual habits that will make them better learners throughout their school career.

We have worked to design parallel tasks in all subject areas to give our students practice on performance-based tasks that provide evidence of their abilities. These tasks are easiest to design in math and science where hands-on activities have always been the most effective in presenting information to students. The alignment of these tasks and tests is important work for us today and for the next few years.

During the last two years, with the help of a marine biologist, our fourth grade teachers developed an extensive unit on our very own Cazenovia Lake. It is an integrated unit covering the biology, ecology, and history of the lake. Presentations by experts in the field, a field trip to the lake and student projects all contributed to the success of this program. Our students now consider the effects of water pollution on their lake and what they can do to preserve the natural resources around them.

d. Social Studies

The social studies curriculum has 3 components: communities, history, and geography. Our textbooks and workbooks are supplemented with field trips and guest speakers. Assessment is on going and may be in the form of teacher-made tests, published tests from our social studies series or performance tasks like student-made projects.

Whenever possible, we use literature to teach historical concepts. Fourth graders use books such as Indian in the Cupboard because of its connections to NYS history. They use Treasure in the Trunk to learn more about the history of the Erie Canal and Family under the Bridge to learn about holiday traditions in other countries. Fourth grade field trips include trips to our own historical sites like the Lorenzo Historical Site, Ste. Marie of the Iroquois and the Chittenango Landing Museum. Guest speakers

have included Native Americans who have shared their folktales and legends with us in our classrooms and at assemblies.

Two years ago fourth grade teachers selected a new social studies textbook. They studied a number of textbooks, met with salesmen and voted on the final selection. Other grade levels use Scholastic News, Time for Kids or the newspaper to supplement their curriculum and to expose children to a variety of resource materials. Last year third grade teachers selected the same social studies text to provide continuity in instruction.

e. The Arts

The students in our building are fortunate to have creative art and music teachers who teach art as a discipline as well as a creative process. They strive to integrate other areas of curriculum as often as possible.

The Fine Arts teachers work diligently to ensure that all students have an opportunity to meet high levels of achievement. It is evident in all aspects of their programs. They utilize a vast variety of materials, skills and resources to ensure instruction not only meets, but also surpasses the standards (J1).

Foreign Language (Optional)

Although our formal foreign language program begins in fifth grade at our Middle School, each year our fourth graders receive a 10-week mini unit presented by our high school students in either French or Spanish. This early exposure to a foreign language is a positive and fun learning experience for our students.

C6. What other content areas play essential roles in your school-wide curriculum goals? (Select 2 content areas or programs that you feel should be highlighted because of their central importance to your school's vision/mission.....)

Our technology program

We are fortunate to have a state of the art computer lab and a cluster of five computers in every classroom in our building. As a result of careful planning, we are in the final year of a five-year plan to place a cluster of computers in every classroom. In addition, we have purchased a mini computer lab on a cart (D4 and F6).

Planning, research, site visits, staff development and training, financial commitment from the School Board and a computer lab assistant have been integral to the success of our technology program.

Each classroom has a scheduled lab time, supervised by the classroom teacher and a teaching assistant. Additional lab time can also be scheduled for long-term writing and publishing projects.

Hundreds of software titles are available on our server and in our classrooms. It offers students the opportunity to practice reading and math skills, problem solving, keyboarding, and publishing.

We have both a district Technology Committee and a building level Technology Committee. It is the combined efforts of both these committees that have helped us to incorporate so much technology into our curriculum. Two years ago our committee wrote a K-4 Technology Curriculum that is the basis of all the technology work done in our classrooms.

Our multi-age program

Children grow and learn at different rates and in different ways. The BSE multi-age program allows children the flexibility and opportunity to learn at their own pace and in their own way. These two classes contain students of various ages, rather than the traditional one age group or grade. The NYS curriculum is followed for grades one and two.

The multi-age classes use a literature based reading program. They have a shared reading time of whole group instruction in which comprehension and vocabulary skills are emphasized. They then break into guided reading groups in which a phonetic skill is taught. These guided reading groups are small, and ability based. The emphasis is placed on providing children opportunities to practice reading strategies.

These classes also experience a yearlong theme integrating the language, math, social studies and science concepts and skills. The themes of "Wet Places" and "Journey across America" are alternated each year. Children are involved in developmentally appropriate, hands-on activities based on these themes. For example, children make a model of the ocean floor, and learn how this relates to dry land. In addition, the theme of "Journey across America" was enhanced by an enrichment grant through which the students learned about the regions of the United States. Following a presentation on the desert regions, the children worked in cooperative groups to make models representing a desert in relation to a mountain range.

Children are in the multi-age program for two years. Younger children use older children as role models and older children have the opportunity to apply and extend their learning. Team teaching allows the teachers to utilize each other's strengths in developing open-ended activities to reach a wide range of ability levels. Providing these experiences for children increases self-esteem and social responsibility. Our multi-age classrooms are a mixture of heterogeneously grouped first and second graders. Highlights of the program include the family atmosphere, the high degree of parental involvement, and the cooperative grouping arrangements that enhance learning.

C7. What requirements must be satisfied before a student is promoted to the next grade or level of schooling?

We have a policy to determine if a child is appropriate for promotion or retention that considers the following factors:

teacher recommendation	IQ and achievement
parent input	chronological age
strengths/weaknesses of child	special needs
maturity of child and physical size	student learning style
test scores	teacher style
student interest and motivation	academic performance

A review of the literature has taught us to consider very carefully the accelerated promotion of any student and that many factors must be studied and discussed. A team that includes the teacher, parents, principal, and various support staff is convened to make a shared decision that best meets the needs of the child. An analysis of the research about acceleration warns us to make these decisions very carefully. Various amounts of support are needed to ensure the success of the child.

Research emphasizes that individual evaluation of the child is essential and that there are a variety of strengths that cannot be objectively determined (e.g. maturity and physical size). In some cases, a transition period is implemented so that the gifted child has the time and support to become acclimated to the new grade. This also helps us to prevent problems that might cause the child undue stress. It is our intent to provide the most appropriate program that best meets the child's needs and that decisions for promotion or retention are done very carefully.

Decisions about retention or promotion must be made on an individual basis. There are as many proponents for retention as there are against and the arguments on both sides are very legitimate. The best possible way to decide what is best for a child is to involve as many people as possible who know the child.

D. Active Teaching and Learning

D1. How are teaching practices and learning experiences in your school consistent with current knowledge about successful teaching and learning?

Visit a classroom at BS and you will quickly observe how our teaching practices incorporate the most current knowledge about successful teaching and learning. Begin your observations in kindergarten where you will see children gathered in a circle at **Morning Meeting** discussing current events, weather, time, math, and listening to language-rich stories. Head down the hall to first grade (or Rose Hill Drive as it is listed in our Wee Deliver address directory) and you will encounter students playing games that promote community building, enhance language skills and practice tasks that improve memory skills. Their teachers have learned how to implement these activities during the one-week **Responsive Classroom Workshop** that they attended. We know that learning occurs when it is active, social and built upon previous experiences and knowledge.

A visitor will see similar learning experiences in second and third grade. Our teachers have been trained in **Math Their Way** and **Math Their Way of Thinking** so that they can design lessons that begin first on a concrete level and move to more abstract levels in fourth grade. It is no surprise that we have high math scores on standardized tests on all grade levels (H4 and 5). A strong focus on problem solving skills using our **Addison-Wesley** math series in grades 1-4 demonstrates our knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices as we move from more simple, hands-on tasks to complex and abstract ones. Our success in the area of math can also be attributed to **CIMS**, a math management system that we have used for many years to track student progress on individual math objectives. Teachers utilize the testing data to determine whether there is a need for reteaching or reinforcing concepts.

Our special area teachers in art, music, library, physical education and technology create environments that support successful teaching practices as well. Our art teacher, Mrs. Damon, is a member of **NYSATA and NAEA** and has attended conferences that focus on aligning our curriculum with the NYS Standards and the NYS Arts Assessment. She has worked closely with local artists to make learning about art real to life as well as hands-on.

Fine Arts Night last June 2000 unveiled the most recent addition to our Alligator Garden. Local artist, Daphne Pietrafesa, with help from the third grade class of 98-99 designed and created the fish sculpture. As a hundred spectators looked on, the students saw their work incorporated into a professional art piece that will be a part of BS long after they have graduated from high school.

BSE is well known for its annual 4th grade musical. Choreographed by our music teacher, Mrs. Decker, the musical is a tribute to our students and our phenomenal music program. Mrs. Decker incorporates the **Orff Schulwerk** model in all of her lessons. Fashioned for children of all levels and abilities, this model includes singing, movement, dance, improvisation, instruments, performances and music literacy. The program is not only developmentally appropriate and supportive of how children learn best, but it is extremely motivating as evidenced by the performances of our children.

Last spring's **Singin' and Swingin'!** performance by our 4th graders was not only a musical hit, but also a fourth grade journey. As they sang, "We Are the People of the 21st Century," the audience of 300 applauded the ease and skill in which their ten-year olds made the transition to the new millennium. All of the teaching and learning experiences that they have enjoyed in elementary school have prepared them well for middle school and the challenges that will face them there both academically and socially.

D2. In what ways do your teaching practices support student-initiated learning?

Students in our school are encouraged to actively participate in the planning and implementing of some of their learning experiences. The goal is to help students learn how to learn by allowing them freedom to choose activities which have the potential to enhance and enrich our curriculum. By allowing student choice, we increase student motivation and engagement, responsible behavior and independent decision-making.

Examples of this can be seen in grades K-2 where our students are introduced to a wide range of real-life experiences. We use field trips to reinforce concepts taught in the classroom and to teach children that learning occurs outside of school as well. Kindergarten trips to the apple orchard, the post office, and the Stone Quarry Art Park all validate the concepts taught in our classrooms. Teachers and students participate in follow-up activities that accommodate different learning styles as well as different levels of ability. Students choose from building a model, diorama, collage, or boat. Others may draw a map, design a travel guide, or write a story. There are students who even tape record their responses rather than speak in front of a group.

Hands-on learning and student choice occur in the area of math as well. Our students are encouraged to solve problems by using manipulatives to kinesthetically explore

ways to solve a problem. Small groups and cooperative learning groups allow students to develop their strengths and to learn how all members of a group can be contributing members. Teachers at BSE plan activities that involve brainstorming, experimenting, and creative problem solving to challenge students to examine things more critically.

Third graders take part in a Pond Study Unit supported by a grant from our PTA. After learning about life in the pond, students use various art materials to create their own water animal and design a simulated pond environment in which it would live. Upon completion, students demonstrate their knowledge by explaining to the class how their animal's physical adaptations correspond to the pond environment made for them. A field trip to **Highland Forest** is a culminating activity to reinforce the concepts learned in this unit. Students rotate through five, hands-on stations that teach them about the ecosystem of ponds and the specimens that live there.

A rite of passage at BS is our famous **3rd Grade Speech Night**. For more than 15 years, Speech Night has been an annual tradition at BS. Third graders use resources in the library and on the Internet to investigate a topic of their choice. Then they write a speech that they will deliver in front of their classmates, parents and friends. From researching to organizing a writing piece to presenting it orally, 3rd Grade Speech Night incorporates all four English Language Arts Standards.

Students at BS have many opportunities to complete independent projects such as the pond environment project; to work in collaborative groups and; to engage in real-life, problem solving. The **Science Fair**, **Math & Science Discovery Day**, and the fourth grade **Lake Week Project** allow students opportunities to use math and science in real-life, problem solving ways.

D3. How are resources made available to teachers and students for gathering information and sharing the results of their efforts

The BS Library Media Center is the hub of our learning community. The library collection numbers over 15, 000 library and reference books with the yearly addition of approximately 600 titles. Our certified library media specialist ensures that the collection supports the curriculum and promotes recreational reading. The instructional media collection, consisting of 1,300 print and non-print resources, allows teachers to augment their instructional units through their own perusal, or by request to the library media specialist or library aide. Students and faculty may search our networked online catalog from the library, computer lab, or any classroom. The library's collection may also be accessed via the BS library's link on our district's web site. Internet access is available in the 30-station Mac lab in the library wing. Promoting information and technological literacy is an ongoing task.

To facilitate congruency and alignment between our classroom teachers and our media specialist, teachers complete a curriculum mapping form, which indicates when, what, and how a topic will be presented in a unit of study. This information allows the library media specialist to schedule joint units with the teacher, and to decide how best to integrate library skills and information problem solving with grade level curriculum. Our library media specialist, Mrs. Elliott, is always mindful of how the NYS Standards can best be supported by library instruction. The addition of a library instructional classroom when our library was renovated now allows library class

instruction to occur without disrupting open access to the library. Students may use the library at any time, and are also scheduled to visit the library one day each six-day cycle.

Our school is particularly proud of the close relationship we have forged with the Cazenovia Public Library, ensuring that we are truly a community of learners and readers. Together, we have shared authors, promoted reading, and encouraged library card sign-up. Prior to major units of study where research is involved, our library media specialist communicates with the public library so that books and reference materials on that topic may be placed on reserve. Through cooperation, our students have access to both the school and public library collections, and the option of interlibrary loan through the **Mid-York Library System** and the **OCM Boces School Library System**.

BS library promotes the sharing of student work on a rotating basis by displaying student author/illustrators' books and poetry, and by showcasing research projects. The library staff works hard to provide a welcoming, nurturing environment for the sharing of learning and reading.

D4. What technology applications are you using? How do they relate to your curricular goals and how do they support teaching and learning?

During the last few years we have seen a tremendous influx of technology in our school (F6). Technology has had a positive effect on many of the things that we do to improve student achievement. Although it has been a challenge to keep up with the changes in technology, our teachers have been involved in numerous opportunities for staff development from software preview days to use of the Internet to enhance lessons and integrate technology into their curriculum.

All of our K-4 classrooms, special education classrooms and some of our special area classrooms have a cluster of five Macintosh computers with multimedia capabilities. Our network has over 100 software titles and we have hundreds of stand-alone software programs. Walk into a kindergarten classroom and you will see kindergartners wearing headsets, logging on with their own password, running simple programs, and typing simple words independently. Like all grade levels, the kindergartners will visit the computer lab once per 6-day cycle for formal instruction by Mrs. H., our full-time technology assistant. They may play "I SpyÖ." to learn the parts of the computer, trace animals using **ClarisWorks for Kids** or search for information on a topic using "**First Connections Golden Book Encyclopedia**."

This fall our 4th grade teachers may sign up to use the **portable iBook lab** during their research unit on New York State. With enough laptops for every student in the classroom, student engagement will increase significantly and improve time on task. With the help of our K-4 Technology Curriculum document, teachers can easily determine the specific technology objectives, activities, assessments, key ideas and benchmarks required on every grade level. This curriculum work was completed by the Burton St. Technology Committee in early 1999 and continues to be updated annually. Many of our newly aligned curriculum documents include references to specific software that can be used to enhance a lesson or classroom activity.

Technology is evident in other ways as well. Every classroom has a ceiling-mounted t.v. and vcr and an overhead projector; we have access to digital cameras, video cameras and a LCD panel. Several teachers are piloting a **Blackboard Project** through a grant from OCM Boces where they are learning to design their own classroom web page. Other teachers are working with colleagues from Boston University on the **MST Telementoring Project** where classroom teachers share ideas about teaching hands-on math and science.

As result of the technological advances in our school, communication between home and school has improved. Many teachers write weekly newsletters on their computers; others use the Homework Hotline to post daily assignments; and everyone has voice mail so that parents can leave messages for teachers at any time of the day. Our district's web page posts our monthly Burton St. Newsletter and lots of other valuable information. Teaching and learning in our school has improved as a result of our long-term commitment and investment in technology that has been philosophically and financially supported by our school board and community.

E. Professional Community

E1. What opportunities do teachers and other staff have to build professional community that enhance their collective capacity to work together to support student learning?

As busy as we are, we find time to schedule weekly team meetings and monthly meetings for the following: faculty meetings, Early Literacy Support meetings, Guided reading and Reading Recovery Support meetings, new teacher meetings, technology meetings, district curriculum meetings, shared-decision making meetings, Blue Ribbon meetings, safety meetings, Child Study meetings and PTA meetings! Of course everyone does not attend all of the meetings listed (and there are some not listed), but there is representation from every grade level on each committee. Members of each committee return to their grade level team to share what transpired at each meeting and to get input from teammates.

Grade level teams receive release time from their classrooms to work on curriculum (listening skills, technology benchmarks and goals) and to preview software. Special area teachers and special education teachers are included in these groups as well. Often special education teachers will attend a conference with the regular classroom teacher who they team with. This teamwork has strengthened our inclusion program and improved the skills and knowledge of both teachers.

Our **Child Study team** convenes whenever a teacher has a concern about a student. The team consists of our principal, school psychologist, speech therapist, school nurse, reading teacher and a classroom teacher. After a review of the Child Study referral, test data and other pertinent information, the team may determine that testing is necessary (see also A3).

E2. How does a coherent approach to professional development for teachers and other staff ensure their ability to implement effectively the school's curriculum, instructional strategies, and support system? How

do organizational arrangements, such as time and teaching assignments, and school norms and culture, make professional development a priority?

Teachers at BS are committed to preparing their students for success on the new assessments and life after graduation. It is easy to support this statement when 100 % of our staff participated in district inservice workshops and over 90 % attended workshops or conferences off campus. In addition, we received approval for numerous district grants that focused on specific ELA topics.

The curriculum and staff development work in the area of English Language Arts in the past two years resulted in a higher percentage of our students scoring on levels 3 and 4 on the NYS, ELA 4 test (H5). Supported by our professional development plan and the goals we established to increase student achievement in the primary grades, a K-8 committee worked to develop an English Language Art curriculum that was aligned with the NYS Learning Standards and assessments.

Both teachers and teacher assistants participated in the following workshops during the 99-2000 school year to increase their knowledge in the area of English Language Arts:

- The Early Literacy Profile and running records
- The use of Guided Reading Groups and Its Role in a Balanced Literacy Program
- Introduction to Writing Learning Units Based on the NYS Learning Standards
- Understanding and Implementing our district=s newly developed K-12 ELA Curriculum
- Designing Classroom Assessments that Parallel NYS Assessments

We also developed a K-4 document devoted entirely to listening skills, which lists activities, materials and parallel assessments. Identified as a weak area in our curriculum, listening skills are now well represented.

Several teachers received grants to improve or create curriculum that enhances and supports student achievement in reading. Our Reading Recovery teacher and a first grade teacher teamed to create leveled book sets for each of the first grade teachers. In an effort to replicate many of the successful Reading Recovery strategies into all of our first and second grade classrooms, we increased the amount of funds dedicated to purchasing more of these book sets. Teachers will continue to be trained in using guided reading groups to improve literacy and using running records to accurately assess each student=s reading level.

Kindergarten teachers teamed to create and organize materials for AThe Road to the Code Phonological Awareness Program for Young Children.@ Our speech teacher teamed with a teacher assistant to create activities for second graders. Their grant focused on creating simple, emergent reader and predictable books that can be utilized to support students receiving speech and language services.

First grade team teachers, Mrs. Conway and Mrs. Scammell, received an Onondaga County School-to-Careers grant to help establish our **Wee Deliver In-school Post Office**. Our plan is to improve written language skills using a motivating letter writing program. Students complete job applications to apply for post office jobs and learn important life skills. This team also received a grant that provided the funds to purchase multicultural English language arts materials for use in their classrooms.

We have invested a lot of time training our K-2 teachers to use the **Early Literacy Profile**. Our plan is to monitor student progress throughout the school year using a standardized system that all teachers understand and to be able to predict which students will need additional help to be successful in fourth grade and the fourth grade assessments. The work we have done in the area of ELA has resulted in an aligned curriculum **within each grade and across all grade levels**. The success our students have experienced has made us feel confident that our efforts to collaborate with one another have been worthwhile. Many of our teachers remark that the curriculum alignment work that they have participated in required teamwork and cooperation that has made them stronger and more effective teachers.

E3. How does the school tailor professional development and support to take account of differences in career experience or professional responsibility?

New faculty members to our district have the support and guidance of a seasoned staff. This year all new teachers participated in a daylong orientation and those assigned to BSE will meet monthly to discuss issues and concerns. Many of our veteran teachers offer to mentor new teachers in specific academic areas such as reading or social studies (B3). In addition, new teachers have the opportunity to participate in an inservice designed especially for new teachers.

Our safety coordinator and school nurse train new playground monitors in universal safety precautions and first aid. Once a year all faculty receive Right to Know information and our physical education teacher, Mark Evans, offers **CPR and first aid training** to all coaches and special education staff.

Technology workshops offered in our school district have evolved over the last five years to now include training on specific software such as, video editing, webfolios, AppleWorks 6.0, digital imaging, and Internet Explorer 5. Many of our teachers have expert skills in word processing, integrating technology into their curriculum, and using software to reinforce skills and concepts taught in the classroom. In addition, our district technology committee will custom design training in any area for any teacher requesting it. Whether a teacher needs one hour of help or 15 hours of help, they can get it by requesting technology assistance.

Our principal provides a great deal of support to both new and veteran teachers. She has supported teachers who have sought training in Responsive Classroom, ITIP, Dimensions of Learning, looping, multiage and teaming. Teachers trying out new ideas are supported with the materials and/or training that they need. She also attends one field trip with each grade level to show her support and enthusiasm.

E4. How does your school use the processes and results of student assessment, staff evaluation, and school review to support professional

growth? How has teacher's professional development improved teacher and resulted in higher achievement and success?

Our district's formal evaluation plan has remained the same for almost 20 years. This past summer, our superintendent convened an **APPR (Annual Professional Performance Review)** committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to update and modernize it. Throughout the committee work, we realized that more than ever before teachers need to be lifelong learners.

The APPR process is an opportunity for educators to develop new knowledge, skills, approaches, and dispositions to improve their effectiveness in their role as educators within our school district. Our formal teacher evaluation plan (APPR) delineates the specific methodology used for collecting data on evaluative criteria for the purpose of enhancing professional development and improving student achievement.

Our new plan includes teacher choice in evaluation methods. Tenured teachers may choose a peer or self-evaluation once every three years. The peer and self evaluations are based on the same criteria that is used for the traditional teacher evaluation process and may include a video tape, portfolio of lessons, activities, and instructional units.

Teachers who need help in one or more categories of the evaluation process may elect to participate in the **Peer Assistance Program**. These enable teachers to choose a mentor from a list of volunteer mentors whose strengths match the teacher needs.

Nontenured teachers may elect to participate in our new teacher inservice course. This course, offered for the first time this fall, is specifically designed to focus on topics and issues relevant to new teachers and to provide them with structured support. Support from mentor teachers, their department or team, and their principal are also key components to helping teachers succeed.

Student test results also indicate areas in which we need to focus our attention. Within the last few years, we have revamped our ELA, math, social studies, and technology curriculum all in an effort to prepare our students for the higher standards and new assessments. Staff development, release time for teachers and administrative support all contribute to our overall plan to increase student success. Third and fourth grade teachers recognized the importance of curriculum and assessment alignment when they analyzed the results of our 4th grade ELA and math tests. By studying their students' test papers, they realized that we needed to design more listening activities, order additional problem solving materials, provide additional help to at-risk students through an after-school tutoring program, and collaborate more regularly with the teachers in the primary grades. Two of our teachers attended a Teacher Center workshop to learn how to design document based questions using historical documents from our own community. This work will help our students be better prepared when they take the fifth grade social studies test in the fall of 2001.

F. Leadership and Educational Vitality

F1. How does leadership move your school toward its vision/mission? How is the instructional leadership role defined and implemented? How are resources aligned with goals?

A Cazenovia parents' first encounter with its school district is often at kindergarten screening time, a developmental milestone for both the kindergartner-to-be and the parent. Their first contact with school personnel is almost always with the principal, the school secretaries and the kindergarten teachers. These first contacts help to set the stage for a positive experience throughout their school career in Cazenovia. These "first impressions" are crucially important to our school's mission:

To provide a safe, courteous and stimulating environment where children are accepted, valued and expected to learn.

Envision a school where students, teachers, parents and principal all play leadership roles. Picture kindergartners with their 4th grade reading buddies sitting in the hallways outside their classroom; worn, rubber-soled sneakers resting alongside the much shorter, loosely tied shoes of the 5-year old; both heads huddled over a book; both minds focused upon a story. Watch the kindergartner's eyes widen as their buddy reads to them using a finger to point out words or pictures the same way that they had learned to enjoy a story. You're watching children who are accepted, valued and expected to learn.

Leaders come in all sizes in our school because we recognize that people have different strengths and roles to play. Whether it begins with pairing the oldest and youngest children in the school as reading buddies or a 25-year veteran teacher mentoring a first year teacher, our school is recognized as a place where character and leadership is valued (see C1, E4).

Many of the special events and activities at BS have been traditions for a long time because they occur every year almost effortlessly, but a closer look will show you that a phenomenal volunteer corps is behind the scenes of every event making sure that all goes well. Leadership here comes from our active PTA (see section G) and our parent volunteers.

The principal, as leader, is evident throughout the school as well. Like most principals, ours plays many roles. She may be the first person students see when they enter the school building each morning and those who attend the breakfast program will eat with her. Breakfast is one of the few times during the day when kids can meet friends from other grade levels, have a quiet meal with their younger sibling, or make a lunch appointment with our principal, Mrs. Gorton. Spending time with students during breakfast and lunch sends a message to students that their principal is available to them and willing to spend time to be with them.

Beyond the main office and cafeteria and into the classrooms, we can see the influence our principal has had on curriculum renewal and instruction. She has played a pivotal role in the design and implementation of our **elementary summer school program** (C3), now in its fourth year, and in the addition of two, **Reading**

Recovery teachers over the past three years. Both programs started out as pilots to help meet the needs of our at-risk readers and those students who are developmentally delayed. The success of our remediation programs and teacher effectiveness is evident in our test results (H2) and in the improved attitudes of our students. Having identified at-risk students as an area in need of improvement, we have been able to focus resources successfully. Feedback from teachers, students and parents for our new programs has been only positive.

It is not hard to identify the leadership in our school. It is all around us and is fed by the careful planning, goal setting, and need's assessment of the people spearheading committee work, curriculum writing, special events and activities.

F2. How does the school engage its internal and external stakeholders in leadership and decision making? What is the relationship between the principal and stakeholders?

The Burton St. School Shared-Decision Making Team has **met every single month for the last seven years and sometimes, more than once a month.** The team's unflinching commitment to shared decision making is not only unparalleled within the district, but a feat few other schools can match. The team consists of our principal, 4 teachers, 1 teaching assistant, 2 parents, 2 board members and 1 community member. Major goals in the past that the team has accomplished includes the addition of a teaching assistant in our Mac lab, a volunteer after school tutoring program for at-risk, 4th graders, a grant to fund staff development for the new math 4 assessment, and a school handbook for parents and students.

More recently in the past three years, the team has been actively involved in researching the concept of a full day or extended-day kindergarten program. They began their study three years ago as a possible way to better prepare children for first grade. Subcommittees were formed to study each area that would be effected by an extended-day program from busing and building issues to curriculum writing. The following year, the PTA distributed a survey to future kindergarten parents to solicit their views and opinions (see G1). After the three-year study of the kindergarten issue, which included several informational meetings for parents, our Board of Education voted this past spring to implement an extended-day kindergarten program in September 2000.

The BSE Shared-decision Making Team didn't stop at investigating only extended-day kindergarten. Last fall they worked with, Dr. Pat Richards, assistant superintendent, OCM BOCES, to determine goals for the year. Their work with Pat led them to design a survey that would involve every faculty and staff member in our school in helping to determine school goals. To increase the rate of return, team members distributed the survey at a faculty meeting. The results of the survey demonstrated our commitment to an extended-day kindergarten program. In addition to extended-day kindergarten, the top choices included adding an additional Reading Recovery teacher and lowering class size in the primary grades.

Test data analysis (see H), a study of best practices, thorough planning, open communication with all stakeholders and responsive leadership by our principal and the people involved in the committee work were all key components that contributed

to the achievement of our goals. **Last spring, our school board voted to fund all three top initiatives!**

Success such as this demonstrates the supportive involvement of the parents and community at BSE. With their help we have been able to increase funding for additional programs that will better prepare our students for the new standards and assessments. We recognize that the home-school connection that we work hard to establish and maintain is an integral part of our success. Their voices can be heard at PTA general membership and board meetings and on committees such as our Shared-decision Making Team, our Enrichment Committee and during Open House and Curriculum Night Events. Our principal also plans two meetings a year to meet with parents to discuss school issues, new programs and policies and testing information.

F3. What kind of participatory school improvement process operates at your school? How did your school prepare its Self-Assessment for the Blue Ribbon Schools Program and how did this initiative relate to other school improvement and planning efforts?

Although our first experience two years ago with the Blue Ribbon Program was not successful, our team feels confident that Burton St. Elementary School is an exceptional place for adults and children to learn and grow. One need only walk into the foyer of BS to get a sense that our school is a special place. And, because we believe strongly that what we do positively affects children and student achievement, we feel confident in assessing all of our programs, practices and policies.

The 1998 Blue Ribbon committee was reconvened this past June. In 1998, our Shared-decision Making Team spearheaded the self-evaluation process. Today's committee consists of many of our Shared-decision Making Team members, but other faculty members have been added as well to increase participation among all stakeholders.

At the first meeting, team members selected the section of the Blue Ribbon that they felt confident working on. For example, our curriculum coordinator, Dr. Kevin Mack, chose to work on sections C and E because of the staff development and curriculum work that his job focuses upon. Our special education director, Kathy DeSanctis, accepted the job of detailing the innovative work we have done in the area of inclusion. With less than 10% of our district's student population classified as special education, our focus has been on early identification of special needs and early intervention to remediate them. As past PTA president and current school board member, Margaret Lane, decided to work on section G because of her first-hand knowledge of the positive relationship between school and community in our district. Teachers, community members, parents and our principal combined their skills to work on the rest of the application.

Our principal, Sue Gorton, scheduled one meeting per week throughout the summer so that team members met regularly to check in or receive feedback on their work. Often, brainstorming and informal conversations brought interesting and surprising information to the surface. It wasn't unusual to hear comments such as, "Well, I didn't know that we have been doing speeches in third grade for that long!" The process has helped us learn more about ourselves than we would have ever thought possible.

Actual meetings were scheduled on a rotating morning/noon/evening basis so that all members had an opportunity to meet when it was most convenient to them. Team members were urged to gather evidence for the application from faculty and staff members. Mrs. Gorton met with testing coordinator, Wayne Wolfgang, from the OCM BOCES to assemble test data for the past 5 years and determine how to display it in readable form. She also sought advice from Marilyn Greer, principal at Waterman Elementary School in Skaneateles. Mrs. Greer and kindergarten teachers from Waterman have visited BS in the past to learn more about our kindergarten program so we had already established a professional friendship and willingness to share information.

The application process currently and in 1998 has compelled us to thoroughly evaluate the many procedures and practices in our school. Our work on the application in 1998 helped us to develop a comprehensive, prioritized list of the issues that we needed to consider in greater detail in order to provide the most enriching education for our students. This summer's work on the application is helping us analyze whether we did work on those issues and how well they have worked. The process has been a way to evaluate the goals set for the past two years.

F4. How does your school leadership use the most current information about education to promote continuous improvement in your school? How does such evidence influence decision making?

A recent review of the literature on effective early reading programs helped us design a new program that incorporated much of Marie Clay's work with at-risk readers. **PROJECT READ** (Reading Education for Advancement and Development) was a pilot program offered at BS two years ago. An analysis of both test scores and the current literature about how children learn to read, caused us to reconsider how we deliver remediation services to some of our most at-risk students.

Today, our PROJECT READ program has evolved into **two Reading Recovery teachers**. Our Reading Recovery teacher, Shannon Meagher, has learned a great deal from Marie Clay's work during her formal Reading Recovery training through OCM BOCES. The tremendous success of our Reading Recovery students has affected instruction in all of our first and second grade classrooms. Guided reading groups have sprung up in many classrooms; funds have been increased to purchase multiple copies of leveled books so that reading instruction is appropriate for all levels of readers and; and our primary special education teacher utilizes many of the Reading Recovery principles in her own program and takes these practices into the inclusion classrooms.

Much of what we have learned from inservice training and workshops has confirmed what we already knew about reading success. We believe and our current practices reflect that:

- Early intervention is the key to reading success.
- Teacher training and development is crucial.
- Students need specific instruction in phonemic awareness.

- Individual tutoring for short-term periods is effective.
- Curriculum alignment between regular education teachers, special education teachers, and support teachers improves communication and articulation of goals and expectations in every area.
- Lessons need to be a combination of literature, skills and phonics activities.
- Learning needs to be active and social.
- Reading and writing should be closely connected.

Research on systemic change and successful learning organizations has taught us that teachers need to be lifelong learners, as well. Our district has one of the best inservice programs in central New York (see section C for details from Dr. Mack). In addition, we have embarked on a curriculum renewal process that has resulted in curriculum alignment in the areas of math, ELA, social studies, technology, and foreign language. We have accomplished this work during the past three summers with the participation of teachers and administrators.

As our society becomes more and more complex and the needs of students and families grow, we have learned that we have to be more creative in how we deliver services and access funds for new services. Our PIP (Partners in Prevention) program is a direct result of the problems and issues facing our children today.

The new assessments in 4th grade have had a tremendous effect on the way we monitor student progress at BS (see section H). Over the past two years, teachers have been trained to utilize the Early Literacy Profile to measure student progress in reading, writing and listening. When we looked at how often we asked students to respond in writing to listening activities we realized that our curriculum was weak in that area. To address this issue, Dr. Mack scheduled release time for team meetings with each grade level (see section C) to design listening activities aligned with the 4th grade ELA assessment. The work resulted in a K-4 culminating packet of activities specifically designed to enhance and develop listening skills.

F5. As you look back over the last five years, what conditions or changes have contributed most to the overall success of your school?

- The expansion and completion of our building renovations to provide more space for art, music, computer labs, an expanded library, a new gymnasium, improved playground facilities, better storage, bathrooms in the primary classrooms, a modernized learning center, and handicapped accessible facilities.
- The introduction of a cluster of 5 multimedia computers in every classroom.
- A Shared-decision Making Team comprised of members, who are committed, focused and action-oriented.

- A general philosophy or culture in the building that fosters and encourages collaboration and cooperation between faculty, staff, parents and administration for the benefit of children.
- A community that supports the schools.
- A seasoned faculty that continues to acquire education, learn new approaches, teaching strategies and applications.
- An active PTA and parent volunteer committee.
- Identified goals to improve student achievement based on input gathered from all stakeholders.
- The addition of two Reading Recovery teachers after researching best practices in the area of reading.
- An elementary summer school for grades 1 through 4 as a proactive alternative to retention.
- An aligned curriculum in the core subject areas.
- Inservice courses in the area of learning units, the Early Literacy Profile, running records, and integrating technology in the classroom.

F6. What is your vision for integrating technology into your school, including benchmarks that guide your plans, problems that must be overcome, and training approaches? To what extent and how is technology used to improve management efficiency and effectiveness?

The **state-of-the-art cluster of multi-media computers in each classroom** is the result of the efforts of many teachers, our technology committee, and our principal. A 3-year written, integration plan, yearly software training, hardware and software allocations, a K-4 technology curriculum guide and site visitations were all carefully planned so that the insurgence of technology into the classrooms was done with the developmental needs of teachers in mind. The differing needs of each teacher conveniently helped to disperse the cost of our technology plan over the last four years. Today, all of our teachers are familiar with how to run word processing programs, access the net for research, design their weekly newsletters or record grades on a data base (see D4) all in an effort to improve student achievement. Our principal's leadership ability and focus on goals helped to move our technology plan forward with few problems.

Staff development, in the area of technology, has been one of our focus areas for the past three years. For example, teachers have attended workshops on integrating technology into their curriculum, using the Internet to enhance learning, and how to utilize various software packages. Our OCM technology consultants have trained our faculty in technology using the Vista model. We will have trained all of our teachers on how to use basic management systems using At-Ease and how to troubleshoot simple computer problems in their classrooms. The district provides training sessions for the beginner to the more experienced teachers.

Our district technology committee incorporates members of each building's technology committee and, in addition, formed subcommittees to address issues of policy, software and hardware needs and staff development. Within the last two years, the BS technology committee wrote a K-4 technology curriculum. This curriculum serves as the foundation for the district's technology program. Student benchmarks, created on a grade level basis, are carefully matched and refined, as student needs change. Every kindergarten student was provided with their own headset, which will follow them through each grade level at BS. Objectives on each grade level are identified as introduced, reinforced or mastered.

The use of technology as a management tool varies from teacher to teacher depending on their level of comfort and needs. Many teachers take advantage of the management portion of various applications to more efficiently follow and individualize a student's progress. Teacher Vista has been a way to custom design training workshops that help teachers define what they want to learn and know about technology and design an action plan to develop it.

A goal of one teacher might be to learn how to use a software program such as Inspiration to design graphic organizers for use with students. Special area teachers use their computers and assessment software to score tests. This software has made it easier to display scores and analyze them. This information can then be more clearly communicated and shared with other teachers and parents. Many of our teachers use word processing programs to design and write weekly newsletters to send home to parents. Access to computers has made this easy and fun. Some teachers require their students to contribute to the newsletter giving them writing and publishing practice as well.

Finding time for staff development in any area is our biggest challenge. Our superintendent, Dr. Read, has approved an enormous amount of release time to address all of the new initiatives, including technology integration. And, our inservice courses each year reflect the needs of teachers (see section E). Each spring a survey is sent to each grade level and department seeking input for the following year's inservice courses.

F7. What do you consider the major educational challenges your school must face over the next five years, and how do you plan to address them?

- Primary educational challenges anticipated over the next five years include:
- Universal pre-kindergarten opportunities
- Implementation of our extended-day kindergarten program
- Integrating computer technologies
- Meeting the needs of students through reduced class sizes
- Professional development
- Rigorous Regents requirements of all students

Our work with early intervention programs currently focus on initiatives such as universal pre-k opportunities in our community and full day kindergarten. Another challenge involves our ongoing work to enhance the changing computer technologies and computer- related opportunities for all students and faculty. Our

district's \$250, 000 budget for technology includes funding for hardware, software, and training.

There is more to reducing class size than lowering the student/teacher ratio in the classroom. Teacher behavior and instructional practices must change as well. The challenging curriculum and assessments now in place require us to rethink the way we do many things.

G. School, Family and Community Partnerships

G1. What are the goals and priorities of your school, family, and community partnerships? How have your school and community both improved as a result of these partnerships, and how did you measure the improvements?

The goals and priorities of school, family, community, and other partnerships are clearly stated and aligned with our school goals and activities. Fostering a positive relationship among these constituent groups enables us to provide a high quality education for our students that not only takes into consideration the needs of our stakeholders, but also effectively uses the assets of the community and area businesses to help us realize far- reaching academic goals. Our school's Enrichment Committee works closely with BSE to provide funding for the many programs we seek to offer.

Examples of recent partnerships include:

- A collaborative effort with Stearns & Wheler, a local environmental engineering firm and BSE to offer a comprehensive water conservation program. The project supported and enhances our fourth grade science curriculum.
- A PTA-sponsored lecture series open to parents, teachers, and the entire community were designed to advance awareness of pertinent children's issues in the community. To encourage everyone's participation, lectures were held at the public library. Lectures from local educators and published authors on a variety of topics included resiliency, children literature, safe Internet usage, homework skills, safety, and study strategies.
- The Museum of Science and Technology (MOST) collaborated with students to increase their interest and enthusiasm for science. The MOST conducted several weeklong center-based science activities and after-school programs open to all students, which culminated in a science fair where over 30 families exhibited projects. Each year this program has seen continued success with increased participation from parents and community members.
- A local environmental consultation firm donates their time, staff and expertise to conduct a hands-on, educational series on pond, lake and environmental awareness for third and fourth graders studying our own glacial lake, Cazenovia Lake.

- A semi-annual Safety and Health Fair is conducted by caring and enthusiastic health care workers to raise consciousness and instill a preventative mind-set of pertinent health issues.
- The local chapter of the Lion's Club offers district students with vision screening and provides, when necessary eye glasses for students in need.
- To increase our students' interest in creativity and love of reading and writing, local publishers and printer collaborate to publish student's original poetry, artwork and short stories distributed to the entire student body, as well as to interested community members.
- BS celebrates literature and encourages recreational reading in families by offering semi-annual Scholastic Book Fairs open to our students and the community.
- New York State authors, illustrators, folksingers, entertainers and artists perform and portray their professions and crafts to students during school-sponsored assemblies.
- Local ski areas offer discounted skiing and lessons to students.
- Local ski instructors volunteer their time to instruct students in cross-country skiing.

The advantages of the partnerships fostered among school, community and home are obvious, but are not easily measured. Attendance at all of our school functions is usually at capacity and increases annually. Not only do immediate family members participate in functions, but aunts, uncles and grandparents attend as well.

G2. How does your school involve families in their children's education?

BSE resolutely acknowledges a strong link between parent involvement and student achievement. Faculty and staff continuously support a parent's role in his/her children's education. Families at BSE are an integral part of their children's education beginning with the PTA. Parent orientation/information night provides teachers with the chance to discuss curriculum and student/ family expectations for the upcoming school year. A PTA recruitment table and a Volunteer form sent home with students invites and encourages parents to get involved in their child's education.

Additionally, they realize that despite a parent's interest in getting involved, circumstances often dictate the ways in which parents can participate in their child's education. Therefore, opportunities in and out of school are made available to parents and guardians through an open door school policy. The teacher makes requests for parent volunteers directly or through involvement in various PTA activities.

Teachers set the tone for parents at our annual Open house. Our teachers encourage volunteers to assist in the classroom. They encourage regular contact to keep an open line of communication throughout the year and hold four parent-

teacher conferences during the course of the school year for a formal conference. If parents ask for additional conferences, teachers are always willing to accommodate those requests.

To facilitate general and on going communication, a monthly school-wide newsletter goes home to inform parents of current issues. Many teachers also send home weekly classroom newsletters to acquaint parents of the many activities occurring specifically in their child's classroom.

Parents are encouraged to get involved at home as well. Agendas in third and fourth grades must be signed by a parent to assure that parents are aware of their child's homework responsibilities. Some teachers encourage projects where children and parents work together to learn or reinforce a certain concept. Homework Hotline and voice mail have also modernized the ways in which we have improved communication between home and school. A resource center in the library contains various brochures and books to help parents deal with school and family related issues.

Reading is a family expectation and is encouraged through programs such as Parents as Reading Partners (PARP) and the **Pizza Hut "Book-It"** promotion. The "No Put Downs Program," a self-help program designed to promote and encourage resiliency among children, particularly with respect to physical and emotional issues encountered. This program is integrated in our curriculum and informs and invites family participation through a weekly newsletter that highlights issues addressed in the classroom.

G3. How are educational resources in the school and the community used to extend learning opportunities for teenagers and families?

- The "Wee Deliver" program
- The PIP (Partner's in Prevention) program has done a great deal to assist families in our community.
- Through the BS Shared decision-making team
- Our school nurse is also closely connected to the families in our community. Our school nurse coordinates such services as vision and hearing screening, referrals to the Lion's Club for glasses and the Rotary Club for hearing screenings.
- Our school psychologist does psycho-educational testing. Referrals from both the Child Study Team and the CSE keep him busy all year.
- An after-school daycare program gives our students a safe and caring place to be until their parents can pick them up.

G4. How are educational resources in the school and community used to extend learning opportunities for teachers and families?

- **Project Cafe** offers free tutoring to students who desire such additional instruction.
- **Lorenzo Historic** site offers field trips to teach students about local and New York State history.
- Cazenovia's local historian provides lectures about the town's history.
- **Cazenovia College** student interns assist and observe teachers as part of their coursework.
- Local agriculturists provide fertilized eggs for the purpose of providing students with a hands-on learning experience in life cycles.
- **Community Memorial Hospital** provides programming to alleviate and minimize children's fears of possible medical emergencies and other health related issues.
- The public library offers Internet services and instruction for the community. Specific programs run in conjunction with the PTA will enable parents and children to learn about Internet safety and about educational resources for parents and children.
- Many community organizations (e.g. **Cazenovia Preservation Foundation; Cazenovia Lake Association; League of Women Voters**) provide educational programs that are open to BS students. For example, CPF ran a program, advertised in the school about several walking trails that featured historic and natural resources in the community. Brochures, available at the public library, detailing the historic significance and natural features of the trails were made available to students. This reinforced curricular issues such as conservation, NYS history and preservation.

The school offers its facilities for:

- Inservice educational opportunities
- PIP sponsored "**Love and Logic**" parenting skills workshops
- **Cazenovia WinterFest** children's art project workshop
- Hooked on Technology courses for parents and students
- Local police, D.A.R.E., firemen and the postmaster visit the school regularly.
- Girl Scouts, 4-H meetings
- PTA sponsored meetings featuring speakers discussing relevant educational and social issues.
- Soccer, volleyball, youth basketball, gymnastics and dance

- PTA sponsored activities such as movies, special events, Popcorn Day, family Photo Night and fund raisers
- Winter/inclement weather walking for Senior Citizens

H. Indicators of Success

H1. What is your school's overall approach to assessment? How do your methods align with your educational vision/mission and curriculum? What questions about assessment is your school currently addressing?

Our PTA moms sell popcorn for 25 cents a bag during the recess/lunch time on one Friday a month during the school year. The smell of popcorn permeates the whole building on those days and if you forgot your quarter, you find someone to borrow from. Popcorn day is not significant to this story except that it fell this year during the week our 4th graders were taking the ELA-4 test and as a reward for their hard work, the PTA treated all of them to free popcorn. As the 4th graders crowded around the popcorn machine, they laughed about their good fortune and chatted about the story that they had to write that day as part of the test. "I should have written about the day we got free popcorn at school," said one 4th grader. "Yea," replied his friend, "I think I like taking tests like this!"

Not all of the tests that we administer end with free popcorn, of course, but the message that we try to send to students and parents is that testing can be a positive experience that helps us in many ways. We use assessment tools to determine our students' strengths and weaknesses. We recognize that tests are not the only measure of student performance - to get a true picture of the abilities of each student we must gather evidence from a variety of sources. Our practice is to use a combination of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests, performance-based tasks, and teacher observations to accurately assess a student's needs and abilities. More importantly is that our teachers monitor student progress regularly throughout the school year so that changes in instruction can be made; remediation can be implemented when needed; and to provide feedback to both students and parents.

The move towards more authentic and performance-based assessments in recent years has caused us to analyze our testing procedures and to carefully consider the assessment tools that provide us the information we need to improve instruction and curriculum. We stopped administering the Cognitive Abilities Test in third grade and replaced it with theme tests from our reading series that are aligned with the 4th grade ELA test so that we could better predict student performance and remediation needs. And, we added Iowa's to third grade so that we could measure student progress over time in the areas of reading and math. We believe that standardized test scores give us a reference point that is useful for determining program needs, but it is not the whole picture.

The impetus for this change is also due to the new assessments in fourth and eighth grade and in high school. We have given teachers release time to analyze the

results of the new assessments and administered the pilots to our students prior to formal testing. The results have helped us to make curriculum changes, improve our teaching strategies, reinforce the importance of time on task and add new materials.

For example, we have purchased several sets of leveled books for use in first and second grade reading groups that better meet the needs of a diverse group of readers. Our curriculum coordinator met with each K-4 grade level team to design listening activities that parallel tasks on the state assessments (see E2). Teachers are also developing rubrics with their students to help them understand the criteria for each writing assignment or project.

Based on a curriculum audit conducted by our curriculum coordinator, we initiated a five-year plan to train all of our K-12 teachers in unit writing and aligning their curriculum to the New York State Standards. This work was a springboard to many other things, including how we assess our students. Teachers are taking a more critical look at what they do instructionally and how they do it. They are considering more ways to integrate subjects, relate learning to real life experiences and to teach through the use of themes that are interdisciplinary in nature.

We have a long history of performance-based assessments as well. Students in kindergarten through fourth grade learn to write using a writing process that includes rough drafts and student editing. By using this method, students are able to demonstrate their ability to write, spell, organize their thoughts, edit and share their efforts with others. Even our youngest students use graphic organizers to display their information in simple picture graphs, while older children use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast characters, novels, and complex concepts.

Our emphasis on performance assessments is evident in the area of math as well. Components of Math Their Way are used with our youngest children to ensure that they can master math concepts on a concrete level before they move on to more abstract work. "Working" with math manipulatives is sometimes seen as "play," but the social and active elements of these lessons are developmentally appropriate and important ways in which we improve student understanding.

H2. How do you use assessment results to understand and improve student and school performance? How do data influence decision-making?

Our testing results have influenced decision-making in several ways:

- As a result of the new assessments in fourth grade, our faculty has spent a great deal of time learning about the new assessments through workshops, guest speakers, conferences and inservice courses.
- K-3 teachers are being trained through inservice to use the Early Literacy Profile (ELP) to assess students in reading, writing and listening in order to better document student progress over time and to be able to predict which students will need additional time or help to be successful on the 4th grade state assessments.

- As a result of the research supporting early intervention strategies, we have added two **Reading Recovery teachers** to work with at-risk first graders.
- In the past two years we have added an **additional class section in 2nd and 3rd grade to lower class size** .
- For the past four summers, we have developed and implemented an **elementary summer school program** for at-risk, first, second, third and fourth graders. All fourth graders receiving a level one or two on the ELA-4 or Math-4 receive an application for summer school.
- Fourth grade teachers have analyzed the results of the last two ELA-4 and Math 4 tests and modified their curriculum and instructional strategies to better address weak areas.
- Test data has also reinforced the need to improve communication within and between grade levels in order to better serve our students and align our curriculum.
- Test results are shared with parents, at PTA meetings, at faculty meetings and in our Shared Decision- Making meetings.
- Last spring's ELA-4 results confirms that our efforts to improve student achievement have been effective and should be continued.
- When specific skills such as, problem solving and critical analysis and evaluation are identified as areas in need of improvement, teachers take the necessary steps.
- Members of our Shared Decision-Making Team attend workshops and training in an effort to understand new programs, state education regulations and the most recent information about best practices in education so that they are better able to determine goals.
- We will be implementing an extended day kindergarten program in the fall as a result of the input of our PTA and the higher standards.

H3. What assessment data are communicated to students, parents, and the community? What is the purpose of these communications? How does the school ensure that these stakeholders understand the standards for judgment and the meaning of the data?

Assessment data is communicated to parents in a variety of ways. Our spring testing schedule is printed in our school calendar each year. This is not the first time they will hear about the testing that occurs each school year, but it is a helpful reminder to keep those days clear of doctor and dentist appointments and to put children to bed early so that they are rested and ready to do their best work.

Assessment is on going, however. It occurs throughout the school year so that children have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability many times and to practice the tasks that they will be required to perform in a formal testing situation.

To find out how well their children are doing, parents may meet with teachers during any one or more of the four, parent/teacher conference days scheduled during the school year. Parent conferences may occur at other times as well, depending on the needs of the student.

Teachers share assessment information with parents when it becomes available. This might be at the end of the week when work and quizzes are sent home via student backpacks. It might be at the end of a unit or at the end of a marking period. Students in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade carry student agendas, which serve not only to train students to become more independent and responsible, but also as another way to communicate with parents.

Our principal and faculty members have presented test data at PTA meetings in April of each school year and in the fall during Curriculum Night. In this way, we can educate the school community about what is generally expected of elementary students today and what they can do at home to reinforce the skills and concepts taught at school.

H4. What standardized tests (norm referenced) developed on the national, state, or district level has your school given in the last five years? What are the results for the last five years?

H5. What nonstandardized (criterion-referenced) or alternative assessments of student performance do you use? What are the results for the last five years?

Grade	Test	Purpose/Subject
Screening	WPSSI	Screening for handicapping conditions/gifted
Kindergarten	Clymer-Barrett Marie Clay's Obser Survey	Reading readiness Reading Recovery student selection
First Grade	Gates-Mac Ginite Houghton-Mifflin Theme tests	Chapter I Reading Reading, listening, written language
Second Grade	IOWA's CIMS H-M Theme tests	Chapter 1 reading and math Math objectives Reading, writing, listening
Third Grade	IOWA's CIMS H-M Theme tests	Chapter I reading and math Math objectives Reading, writing, listening
Fourth Grade	ELA-4 Math 4 Science PET CIMS	English Language Arts Math Science Math

Noteworthy Information

In the area of math:

- Prior to 1998, 100% of our students passed the 3rd grade math PEP test every single year.
- In 1998, 74% those same third graders scored about the quality point (55).
- Standard deviation scores of less than 10 points for five consecutive years on the 3rd grade PEP test indicate an aligned math curriculum across all grade levels in the building resulting in all students receiving instruction on the same curriculum.
- In the 1998-99 school year, 84% of our 4th graders scored on levels 3 and 4 on the Math 4, a performance-based, highly rigorous new assessment test.
- Our CIMS pre and post survey results indicate that the curriculum that is taught on each grade level is congruent with the tested curriculum and that students are achieving at high levels.

In the area of English/Language Arts:

- For the five consecutive years prior to 1998, the mean NCE score on the 3rd grade Reading PEP test was 63.82, which we attribute to the effectiveness and alignment of our regular and remedial reading programs.
- Mean NCE scores on the DRPs increase dramatically from 2nd to 4th grade for those same students suggesting that our English/language arts program is developmentally appropriate and highly effective.
- 22% more of our 4th graders scored on levels 3 and 4 of the ELA-4 test in January, 2000 than in the previous year!

H6. What was the school's record for the past five years in the following areas that may serve as quantitative indicators of school climate and engagement?

	99-2000	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	95%	95%	96%
Teacher attendance	98%	97%	96%	97%	98%
Teacher turnover rate	3%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

H7. Which awards received by your school, staff, or students are most indicative of school success?

Six of our teachers have been voted Teacher of the Year within the last 10 years.

Many of our teachers our nominated Teacher of the Year.

Our school psychologist received his doctorate and has made several presentations at state and national conferences.

Several of our teachers receive Perfect Attendance Awards.

Two of our teachers have been trained to be Reading Recovery Teachers.

Three teachers last school year received their Masters Degree.

Several of our teachers teach courses at local colleges including Cazenovia College and Cortland College.