U.S. Department of Education
2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 13NJ2

	Charter	Title 1	Magnet	Choice
School Type (Public Schools):	☐	☑	☐	☐

Name of Principal: Mr. Ronald F. Shields

Official School Name: Harrison High School

School Mailing Address: 800 Hamilton Street
Harrison, NJ 07029-1405

County: Hudson State School Code Number*: 17-2060-050

Telephone: (973) 482-5050 E-mail: rshields@harrison.k12.nj.us

Fax: (973) 412-8729 Web site/URL: http://www.harrison.k12.nj.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. James P. Doran Ed.D. Superintendent e-mail: jdoran@harrison.k12.nj.us

District Name: Harrison Public Schools District Phone: (973) 482-5050

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. James A. Fife

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

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

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*
The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.

6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.

7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.

8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district
   - 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
   - 1 High schools
   - 0 K-12 schools
   - 4 Total schools in district

2. District per-pupil expenditure: 17455

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Urban or large central city

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 18

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	84	89	173
10	81	64	145
11	87	87	174
12	89	70	159
Total in Applying School:			651

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 %	American Indian or Alaska Native
4 %	Asian
2 %	Black or African American
66 %	Hispanic or Latino
0 %	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
28 %	White
0 %	Two or more races
100 %	Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 8%

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

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	32
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	19
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	51
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	651
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.08
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	8

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 6%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 42

Number of non-English languages represented: 4

Specify non-English languages:

Mandarin, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 81%

Total number of students who qualify: 527

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 12%

Total number of students served: 80

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

1	Autism	1	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	2	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	63	Specific Learning Disability
6	Emotional Disturbance	1	Speech or Language Impairment
0	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
2	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
4	Multiple Disabilities	0	Developmentally Delayed

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

	Full-Time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	3	0
Classroom teachers	44	0
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	7	0
Paraprofessionals	3	0
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	9	11
Total number	66	11

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 15:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	94%	93%	94%
High school graduation rate	93%	92%	100%	100%	100%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size:	161
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	39%
Enrolled in a community college	43%
Enrolled in vocational training	9%
Found employment	7%
Military service	2%
Other	0%
Total	**100**%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☉ No

○ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

To create and sustain a safe, orderly, rigorous and challenging learning environment in order to realize the full potential, the best performance and the highest expectations for all students and staff is the mission statement of Harrison High School's students, staff and administration. It is supported by additional yearly objectives that aim at maximizing our graduation rate and our daily attendance rate while minimizing our suspension rate, our dropout rate, occurrences of violence and vandalism, and acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Known as the "Blue Tide," Harrison High School has always been a multi-cultural, diverse academic institution supported by a community characterized by its hard work, blue-collar ethics and trust. Traditionally known as the "hive of industry," Harrison has undergone a tremendous metamorphosis in its recent history. New construction initiatives capped off with the opening of the Red Bull Arena in Harrison have and will completely change the flavor of our town forever. One of the most important projects was the construction of the new Harrison High School on a sixteen acre tract and dedicated on May 10, 2008.

Whereas brick and mortar alone are not considered milestones, the wonderful opportunities provided to our staff and students with the completion of the new building are just that. Every teacher has been provided with their own classroom, every science room is equipped with its own lab capabilities while the physical education and athletics program are graced with brand new facilities adjacent to our school. Computers in every room and technology labs second to none are imbedded as standard features. The new building has become the canvas and stage upon which our fine and performing arts department has taken aim.

In addition, the daily schedule at Harrison High School underwent a complete change as well. The forty-six minute period, seven periods per day structure was replaced with an alternating block schedule that allowed for eighty-four minute periods with four classes being offered on our "A" day and another four classes being offered on our "B" day. Not only did this schedule bring additional order and safety to our building but, our standardized test scores in language arts and mathematics have reflected increases each year since its adoption. The longer class period enables each instructor to delve deeper into the lesson's objective and allows students to maximize their "time on task."

At the same time, our school adopted our Grade-A-Day program. Basically, it formalizes each teacher's check for student understanding of their lesson at the conclusion of each class. Results gained from each assessment have allowed instructors to evaluate their students' learning and the strength and validity of their evaluation immediately. As a result, teachers can more effectively plan tomorrow's lesson based on evidenced gained in the previous class. This program also immediately identifies those students who are having difficulty with the material at the earliest stage. This has afforded our staff the opportunity to remedy those deficiencies and take action immediately. To the students, our Grade-A-Day program presents the message that every class is important. It also allows students the opportunity to be graded on a portfolio of daily performance rather than on a handful of tests. Again, evidence of this program's worth can be found in the steady incremental rise in standardized test scores since its inception.

What makes Harrison High School a Blue Ribbon institution? It's what we do each day. It's our attention to detail as found in our yearly analysis of standardized test scores throughout our grade levels. It's found in our scheduling process which has allowed every partially proficient student to engage in a mathematics and/or a language arts class everyday. It's our close connections with our students that afford us the opportunity to become "family." It's our expectations that all of our students can succeed when faced with the rigors of standardized tests, graduation requirements and college acceptance. It's exhibited in our highly qualified staff that have adopted writing programs across the curriculum and have embedded

open-ended questions as part of their daily assessment routine. And, above all, it is the pride we take each day in the performance of our students with the knowledge that they reflect the efforts of our staff and administrators. The learning process that we have established at Harrison High School is Blue Ribbon, and we will continue to monitor and adjust that process with each new educational challenge that we face.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

A.) Harrison High School has raised the percentage of students passing the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment (NJ HSPA) consistently over the past five years. In general, the student scores were as follows: in Mathematics, the percentage of passing scores grew and moved from 50.4% (2007-08) to 66.2% (2008-09) to 62.9% (2009-10) to 68.1% (2010-11) to 75.1% (2011-12), and in Language Arts Literacy, the percentage grew from 62.6% (2007-08) to 76.6% (2008-09) to 78.6% (2009-10) to 84.4% (2010-11) to 88.3% (2011-12). Economically disadvantaged students scored as follows: in Mathematics, the percentage of passing scores grew and moved from 45.3% (2007-08) to 66.7% (2008-09) to 60.0% (2009-10) to 64.0% (2010-11) to 74.8% (2011-12), and in Language Arts Literacy, the percentage grew from 60.0% (2007-08) to 68.8% (2008-09) to 75.9% (2009-10) to 83.2% (2010-11) to 87.2% (2011-12). The African-American and Asian student populations were too small in number to be statistically significant. Caucasian students scored as follows: in Mathematics, the percentage of passing scores grew and moved from 58.7% (2007-08) to 67.3% (2008-09) to 68.5% (2009-10) to 77.2% (2010-11) to 77.6% (2011-12), and in Language Arts Literacy, the percentage grew from 78.3% (2007-08) to 82.6% (2008-09) to 85.7% (2009-10) to 84.2% (2010-11) to 96.1% (2011-12). Hispanic students scored as follows: in Mathematics, the percentage of passing scores grew and moved from 43.0% (2007-08) to 64.1% (2008-09) to 57.7% (2009-10) to 61.5% (2010-11) to 72.7% (2011-12), and in Language Arts Literacy, the percentage grew from 53.5% (2007-08) to 72.9% (2008-09) to 73.8% (2009-10) to 83.4% (2010-11) to 84.6% (2011-12). While Harrison High School is proud of the growth in student achievement demonstrated by the state department of education test scores, the school has been, is and always will be dedicated to having all its students achieve proficiency on these tests.

B.) Each year Harrison High School set as its goal to raise test scores by 10%. This goal was not always achieved, but it was a strong enough catalyst that helped focus staff and students on concrete objectives. Many concrete techniques were implemented and systemic changes were made, but no one envisioned the skyrocketing results the school achieved some years and the overall steady progression it had in others. As Harrison High School continued to make steady progress on its state mandated tests, these test scores encouraged staff and students to continue to do better, which it has done. Since Harrison High School did not have significant losses over the five year period in its test scores, no comment can be made. The following paragraphs describe factors that contributed to gains.

In 2007, Harrison High School moved to a newly built state-of-the-art facility. It allowed the school not only to have the space to begin anew but also the opportunity to capitalize on advanced technology and methodologies to advance the integrity of the learning process and bolster test scores. The school began by shifting to a block schedule that it still employs, which allowed both staff and students more time on task. Professional development has been provided more frequently with more focus on using the entire block productively with emphasis on improving mathematics and language art skills. Students who did not score proficient on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) eighth grade proficiency test in mathematics and language arts literacy were placed in double period classes every day, as opposed to every other day under the regular block scheduling, which focused on helping the student master mathematics and/or language arts literacy. Each year NJ ASK and NJ HSPA test scores have been reviewed by administrators and teachers to determine strengths and weaknesses in delivery of instruction and key areas of the test. Lesson plans are required daily as well as a “grade A day” from every teacher. After school tutoring has been offered to any student at the school, and it is strongly encouraged of those students who are in the double period class every day.

Over the past five years, Harrison High School has not only concentrated on bolstering test scores but also on broadening learning opportunities. While it may be empirically impossible to demonstrate the connection of the school’s offering more electives, particularly in the arts and music, to improving test

scores, these offerings have made learning more enjoyable, self-expressive and relevant to mathematics and language arts literacy. Students and staff know and feel that the school is not just teaching to the test, as important as it might be. Students are afforded just as many opportunities to explore their creative side as they are their rational side. The balance between the two at Harrison High School has made for a solid foundation for students to take the state mandated tests and more importantly to transition to whatever life-long learning goals a student has planned.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Harrison High School uses assessment data to analyze and improve student and school performance. Data is collected, analyzed and used diagnostically on a consistent basis to improve student learning and teaching by the Superintendent, Curricula Coordinator, Principal, Assistant Principals, Counselors, Department Facilitators and Teachers. Through the analysis of achievement data, new strategies and action steps are created for both short and long term improvement.

The process begins with the school's counselors and principal reviewing the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) state test scores of those eighth grade students enrolling in Harrison High School. Eighth grade students who have not scored proficient on the NJ ASK state test are placed in a "Connections" class or classes, depending on what subjects in which they did not score proficient. "Connections" classes are double period blocks that meet every day to help students pass state tests and prepare them for the next level of instruction in a math or language arts. Through early identification students are placed in courses that are academically appropriate, allowing for differentiated instruction and greater student success. The same process and placement holds true for those students not scoring proficient on the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment (NJ HSPA), allowing them another opportunity to score proficient on the NJ HSPA and graduate without having to take an alternative assessment.

Department facilitators hold periodic meetings with the Principal, Assistant Principals and teachers to analyze data from the state NJ ASK and NJ HSPA state tests, quarterly in-house examinations and teacher designed benchmark assessments. The Principal and Assistant Principal use information from these meetings to guide department facilitators to bring about the changes desired by students, parents and teachers. Also, the Principal and Assistant Principal observe classrooms looking for ways to improve instructional delivery as well as ways of motivating staff and students to pass NJ HSPA.

Teams of teachers spend time throughout the year compiling review materials based on student data. Areas of weakness are identified for each student, and every effort is made to tailor lessons to specific student needs. Teachers then plan additional classroom strategies to address specific weaknesses in skill areas. Teachers regularly analyze benchmark assessment results to identify areas of weakness in a student, in the class, instruction and curriculum. In addition, based on students' instructional needs, after school tutoring is offered throughout the year, including prior to the state test administration, to make sure that every student has had every opportunity to become proficient on the state test and advance.

Harrison High School's use of Power School and Schoolnet enables parents, teachers and administrators to communicate about each student's progress. Teachers not only post on Power School a "Grade-A-Day" for every student, every day but also attendance, lateness and cycle / semester results are also posted. Parents can access this information at anytime from anywhere convenient to them. The Principal makes sure that all administrators, counselors, department facilitators and teachers are trained in Power School and School Net, the main data reporting system for the Harrison Public School District. Power School and Schoolnet can produce information of all system data that can be manipulated to produce specific reports for students matching specific criteria. The use of these have contributed to the efficiencies of Harrison High School

Lastly, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Harrison School District provides professional development based on in-house benchmarks as well as statewide test results. Trainings have included

curricula improvement, use of Power School, use of Schoolnet, benchmark development, and quality evaluation methods.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The beneficiary of many of our successful strategies has been our district's middle school. First and foremost, they have adapted our alternate day block schedule for all classes from Grade 6 through Grade 8. All classes are now eighty-four minutes in length and provide their teaching staff with the opportunity to maximize their students' "time on task." This schedule mimics the high school and has allowed for a much smoother transition to the ninth grade. A strict uniform policy is also shared. Additionally, the middle school has doubled the instructional time for all partially proficient students in mathematics, reading and writing. This has been accomplished through a thorough analysis of the preceding year's NJASK scores. Instruction in these classes is daily and specific and reflects exactly the high school program. Washington Middle School has followed our lead in developing writing across the curriculum program as well and has incorporated the use of open-ended questions into all cycle tests and assessments. The district curriculum is currently being revised and all course benchmarks are in the process of being upgraded. Information gained from such assessments will be critical as we move towards a more rigorous graduation test. Schoolnet is being introduced to help analyze the myriad of data. Most importantly, the middle school has joined with the high school in developing an Eighth Grade Academy. Once selected into the program, grade 8 students are allowed to take two classes at the high school which would enable them to select additional Honors, Advanced Placement and College credit during their junior and senior years. Finally, the role of the high school department facilitator duties have been expanded to include all grades levels in Washington Middle School. As a result, instruction, assessment and planning are now seamless as all staff members are supervised by a single individual. In this vein, the middle school's standardized test scores have improved, and students come to the high school better prepared and equipped for learning. The positive relationship that the high school has forged with middle school over the last five years is a contributing factor to the high school being considered for Blue Ribbon status.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Engaging Families and Community: Harrison High School is the host of the School Based Youth Service Program (SBYSP), which has provided services for our families since 2000. The SBYSP is integrated into the school community and has been able to provide students and their families with supportive counseling within Harrison High School. The services are free and confidential; therefore student's families have direct access to services. The SBYSP's policy is reflective of the school administration; therefore, we operate with an open door and flexible policy. Parents are aware of the program and are able to drop in to meet with counselors during the school day. Staff is also available to meet with parents in the early morning or evening, which allows families access to the services.

The SBYSP staff conducts outreach to all of our incoming 9th grade students and their families. Incoming students and their families are hosted to a family open house, in which they are given information on making a successful transition to high school. The SBYSP also conducts a summer transition program for the students and their families. In addition, the SBYSP facilitates parent workshops on various topics, including parenting skills, communication skills, internet safety, and the college application process. Families have also participated in events, such as the "Harrison Multicultural Family Evening", which paid tribute to our school community's diversity. It was a well-attended event, with approximately 1000 individuals in attendance.

Furthermore, students and families are eligible to attend family outings, including Broadway shows and dinner cruises. Lastly, students and their families are eligible to receive free and confidential counseling services by the SBYSP. The SBYSP staff are tri-lingual and highly trained professionals, which allow for families to participate in services without reservation.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Harrison High School curriculum is based upon a triangulation of three key principles that influence student success. It is designed based upon the New Jersey Department of Education and the Common Core Standards using a backwards design that assures rigorous coverage and alignment of skills. However, consideration of the students' demographics and diverse needs also plays an integral element in designing curricula in order to maximize academic performance. Additionally, data analysis is essential to determine how effective the delivery of curricula has been and provides information to redress the areas of weakness. Harrison believes that curriculum is a compilation of living documents that must be continually revised to effectively meet the needs of all students.

Even though the New Jersey Department of Education mandates that the students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 120 credits in nine specific disciplines to fulfill graduation requirements, Harrison High School mandates they complete 130 credits. With this in mind, the Harrison High School's curricula have been designed so that each course has been tailored to meet the wide-range of student needs and each curriculum includes accommodations for special education students and recommendations for differentiation. For example, English students follow a 4 year program consisting of English I and II which are both genre based studies of World Literature, English III which is a study of American Literature and English IV which is a study of British Literature. However, the students who have been identified as having difficulties with the reading and writing skills that are essential to college and career success are able to take English I and II Connections courses which are designed to cover the designated curriculum with targeted instruction to address each student's areas of need in 84 minute blocks which meet daily. Moreover, Integrated Language Arts is taught in conjunction with English 3 and is designed to focus on preparations for the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), for grade eleven students who have been identified as needing intensive, focused reading and writing interventions. Similarly, English language learners have specially designed ESL courses to develop listening comprehension and foster the emergence of oral language. These courses incorporate the basic fundamentals of English grammar into reading, writing and language exercises from a culturally proficient standpoint. Conversely, the students who are accelerated learners have Honors English classes designed to develop their advanced skills to higher level of proficiency in each grade level with the choice of taking English 4 Honors or AP Literature and Composition as seniors.

Likewise, the mathematics curriculum is structured for the diverse learners with a progression of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II with Connections and Honors classes. Algebra I also has an ESL course. Eleventh Graders who need targeted instruction to prepare for the HSPA have the opportunity to take Integrated Math in addition to their regular math class. Students can also go beyond the core math courses and take Discrete Mathematics, Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, AP Calculus or AP statistics.

The science department offers honors and academic levels of Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, with the option of taking electives in Anatomy and Physiology, Astronomy and Geology, Zoology and Botany. The social studies department offers World History, US History I and II in academic and honors levels as well as Advanced Placement History, Economics, Introduction to Law, Political Science and Social Development. The world language department offers Spanish and French I, II, and III, with special designated courses for Spanish native speakers and Spanish heritage.

The fine and performing arts curricula include Art I, Ceramics, Computer Graphics, Studio Art, Band, Chorus, Introduction to Music and Film studies; financial and entrepreneurial literacy curricula encompasses Financial Literacy, Careers, and Math Transitions; the technological literacy, and 21st century life and careers curricula contains Business Graphics, Hardware Software, Networking

Programming, and Web Design; as well as a physical education curricula that is 4 years of comprehensive Health, Safety and Physical Education.

The goal of Harrison High School's Curriculum is to provide our diverse student population with the skills that will enable them to become college and career ready. In essence, the students' needs drive the curricula and each year curricula is evaluated and revised based upon the most recent high stakes and benchmark testing. Thus, Harrison High School's curriculum is not stagnant but is a vital, living document that is designed to improve not only content but instructional practices so that every student that graduates possesses the tools that they need to be productive in life.

2. Reading/English:

The English Department, working in conjunction with the administration, has implemented a data-driven curriculum. For example, NJASK scores are reviewed as part of the scheduling process for incoming freshmen. Students in most need of language arts remediation are placed in our English I Connections course and receive eighty-four minutes of language arts daily. Based on performance during freshmen year, students are either placed in college prep English II in year two or receive further remediation in the English II Connections course, which also allows for eighty-four minutes of instruction daily. Those students who have achieved proficiency on the NJASK are placed in college prep English I as part of their regular block schedule and meet for eighty-four minutes every other day. Students who have scored the highest on the NJASK are placed in the Honors program. Additionally, HSPA test scores are reviewed, as well as our students' scored writing tasks, which are received from the State of New Jersey, enabling the language arts teachers to find learning gaps in order to inform instruction.

Furthermore, the curriculum calls for writing and reading across the subject areas. Courses complete required monthly writing tasks and open-ended literary response questions, which call for effective use of literature, both narrative and informational text, to support answers. Teachers employ the New Jersey Holistic scoring rubrics for grading, teaching students what effective writing and literary responses look like, and identifying learning gaps to inform instruction. Our "Connections" courses have enabled language arts teachers to provide effective intervention through identifying learning gaps and proving the support necessary for students to grow. On the other hand, our honors courses are more rigorous with expanded depth and breadth and opportunities for increased independence. As our language arts honors students reach their senior year, they move into AP. Last year a record number of Harrison students passed the AP Literature and Composition exam and we expect even better results this year. Likewise, the number of students achieving advanced proficiency on the HSPA has increased for the past two years.

This year the department has made great efforts to realign curriculum to the Common Core State Standards and look for gaps in instruction. We have implemented more engaging "Literature Circles" as part of our reading instruction to foster more independence. Additionally, we are working to incorporate "Writer's Workshop" to streamline our efforts and create consistency in our writing instruction.

3. Mathematics:

The Mathematics Department at Harrison High School offers a comprehensive curriculum designed with three goals in mind. First, it accommodates the academic ability of each student and keeps individuals engaged by providing homogenous groups with unique levels of rigor. Remedial students have a double blocked schedule, meaning the duration of their classes is twice as long as those in a customary block schedule. The structure promotes student achievement by providing additional instruction. Equally important, honor students are given the opportunity to take accelerated classes allowing them to enroll in Advanced Placement courses for college credit during their senior year. Advanced Placement courses are vital for improving the learning of students who perform above grade level; they require self-discipline as well as create friendly competition that encourages individuals to outperform their peers. Second, the curriculum sparks excitement in students by exposing them to the many branches of mathematics through diversified electives. Not only will such exposure result in an appreciation for the application of

mathematics in students' everyday lives, but also in their choice of career. Third, upon the completion of the core course curriculum, students will have the skills necessary to pursue further education. It provides students with a concrete foundation that will ensure their success in a more challenging educational environment.

In addition, the curriculum is coupled with differentiated instructional methods that accommodate every individual's learning style. The faculty utilizes numerous technological tools, such as computers, graphics tablets, and televisions combined with various pedagogical processes to meet the needs of each student. Available computer programs, including SMART Board Tools, TI Tools, and Power Point presentations, enhance instructional activities for teachers. On the other hand, students benefit from dynamic laptop programs, together with Geometer's Sketchpad, Fathom 2, and graphing calculators. By incorporating technology into the classroom, teachers are able to complete cognitive lessons efficiently and students can expedite problem solving. Furthermore, cooperative learning is implemented to increase the confidence of students. When individuals are paired, they brainstorm problems, gaining a sense of assurance in their methods. Moreover, open-ended problem solving is routinely incorporated in daily lessons encouraging students to explore creative as well as constructive thinking by demonstrating solutions algebraically, geometrically, or numerically. Overall, the instructional methods utilized by the Mathematics Department promote critical thinking whether students are learning pure mathematical strategies or must apply their knowledge to solve problems. The scope and sequence of the rigorous curriculum along with the instructional techniques are designed to foster students' distinctive learning abilities, resulting in improvement in their mathematical skills.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The Science Department at Harrison High School offers a comprehensive curriculum designed to create and promote a safe, orderly, rigorous and thought-provoking learning environment. Current curriculum is intended to promote the full potential, the best performance and the highest expectations for all students. Within each science class, current curriculum accommodates the academic ability of each student and keeps individuals engaged through heterogeneous groups with unique levels of rigor. In addition, the curriculum is coupled with differentiated instructional methods that accommodate every individual's learning style. Numerous technological tools such as computers and interactive labs and are used to engage students learning. In order to provide students with a firm grounding in science content and skills, as well as in the applications and technology of science, various field trips are taken throughout the school year in order to inspire students' excitement in the field of science, along with providing them exposure to practical life experiences in the scientific field.

Upon completion of the core science curriculum, students will have the proficiency necessary to pursue further education. The current curriculum provides students with a concrete foundation that will ensure their success in a more challenging educational environment. This is achieved not only through the core curriculum, classroom hands on experiments and interactive labs, but furthermore through writing prompts, open-ended responses, benchmark and common assessments which additionally aide in the support of student's mathematics and English standardized test scores. The structure of block scheduling not only aides students exposure to core content materials, but it also allows for students to have additional hands on experiences in the science classroom. Equally important, block scheduling allows honor students the opportunity to take accelerated classes allowing them to advance their studies. Overall, the instructional techniques developed by the Science Department encourage critical thinking whether student are learning pure scientific theories, or applying their prior knowledge to solve problems and validate experiments. The scope and sequence of the curriculum along with the instructional techniques are designed to foster students' individual learning abilities, resulting in improvement in their problem solving and reasoning skills.

5. Instructional Methods:

Harrison High School's instructional methodologies are designed to maintain the integrity and the rigor of the NJDOE and Common Core Standards, but as educational professionals we realize that all students do not learn in the same way, nor do they learn at the same time. With this in mind, each curriculum has a sequence of instruction and a suggested pacing guide, but the teachers know that the pacing can be adjusted to accommodate the needs of their respective students. Teachers are required to assess the students daily and use the data from the assessments to determine who mastered the skills delineated in the curriculum and who did not. The students who have not garnered the necessary skills are re-taught the material and reassessed. The learners who are ready to move forward do so, and differentiation is utilized. Suggestions for differentiation are developed and embedded in the curriculum of all disciplines, as well as instructional methodologies which promulgate collaborative learning, discovery approach, guided practice, multi-media presentations, computer laboratory activities, lecture with discussion, multi-media presentations, role-playing and interactive games, independent study, student/teacher consultation, peer review, and group presentations.

The needs of our student subgroups are also taken into consideration. For example, a special education Algebra I class was struggling with the established units of study. The algebra resources were based upon Carnegie Learning texts and computer generated lessons. The sequence of the lessons was reconfigured so that the students could learn the necessary prerequisite algebra skills so that they could move forward successfully. Since the lessons were inquiry based and computer generated, the teacher was able to differentiate instruction for the various ability levels and accommodate their disabilities.

Overall our instructional model is based upon the inquiry methods where essential questions are used so students learn to ask and answer questions which lead them to understanding. Our instructional model is predicated on higher order thinking, engagement activities which illustrate to the students how what they are learning is relevant to their own lives. We also promote project-based learning so that the students understand the real world application of the 21st century skills that they learn in the classroom.

6. Professional Development:

Harrison School District provides the staff with 20 hours of comprehensive professional development that aligns with the academic standards and supports student achievement and school improvement. The teachers have been organized in Professional Learning Communities by content area and courses so they have the opportunity to vertically and horizontally articulate regarding alignment to the Common Core and NJDOE Standard so that there is seamless instruction between grade levels. During our PD workshops the teachers have been able to conduct a gap analysis of our curriculum to ensure that all of the standards are covered in each course. Additionally, through PD in PLCs we have constructed a scope and sequence of the curriculum in each discipline, and we have utilized these documents to revise the curriculum and create common benchmarks. The teachers utilized the benchmarks as another source of data to improve instruction.

From creating benchmarks, follow-up professional development ensued on how to create a comprehensive item analysis so that teachers learn to use data that give them specific information about each student's performance. Using the data, they learned to construct a learning plan for each of the students who have not mastered the content material. The information also affords the teacher the opportunity to re-teach the skills in which the students are weak and to differentiate instruction.

Since Harrison School District is intent on improving instruction, leadership teams have been established in each school. Harrison High School has a five member leadership team whose members serve as data coaches for their peers, as members of the professional development team, and as members of the school improvement team. Their function is to work closely with their colleagues to determine their PD needs, assist with analyzing data, and to coach them in instructional practices that possess higher order thinking, engagement activities, authentic applications and twenty-first century skills.

7. School Leadership:

Philosophically, the high school principal believes it is important to establish positive relationships with colleagues, staff and students in order to build a positive school culture that inspires others to realize their true potential. A strong belief in the power of shared leadership is the hallmark of building capacity amongst all constituents at Harrison High School and the efficacy of this leadership style is evidence in the success of the students.

Moreover, the principal of Harrison High School, with the help of two assistant principals, believes in leading by example. Collectively, they actively demonstrate leadership skills so students, parents and staff gain an understanding of the importance of the school's mission to maintain an orderly school where students can learn in a challenging educational environment. The principal posts yearly school goals prominently at the main entrance of the school, and all stakeholders are reminded daily that it is everyone's responsibilities to work toward these goals. The principal requires daily lesson plans from each teacher and the teachers must submit a “Grade a Day”, each day, for every student. These instructional goals are also promulgated by 4 content area facilitators who work collaboratively with the school and district administration. They confer regularly with the superintendent, the director of curriculum, the school's leadership teams, and professional learning communities to determine the needs of the school and provide professional development and support. Collectively they work to upholds policies that govern all aspects of district operations.

The organizational structure of Harrison High School is framed largely by a district-level administration that communicates clear values, provides high levels of support for the school, establishes very high standards, and allocates both a large amount of decision-making freedom to the principal and his administrative team along with a high degree of accountability. The district level director of curriculum and instruction supports staff in curricula revisions that reflect the Common Core and NJ standards, promotes the use of data driven instruction, and authentic learning that initiates higher order thinking, active student engagement and 21st Century skills.

Overall, the administration of the Harrison School District has worked diligently to inculcate the high school staff and students with a deep sense of pride and commitment to their school community. This sense of pride has garnered a respect for the importance of leaning. Ultimately, Harrison High School's school improvement is grounded in the belief that all students can succeed if they are nurtured in a caring environment where everyone focuses on student achievement.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 11 Test: HSPA

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: New Jersey Department of Education

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	75	68	63	66	50
Advanced	17	8	8	9	10
Number of students tested	173	161	170	156	142
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	1	3	2	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	1	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	75	64	60	68	45
Advanced	16	7	6	5	8
Number of students tested	134	126	117	95	98
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	3	5	1	2	2
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced	73	62	58	64	43
Advanced	9	3	6	5	6
Number of students tested	111	97	105	94	87
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	33	8	10	0	5
Advanced	5	8	0	0	0
Number of students tested	21	13	21	15	19
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced	33	Masked	25	27	16
Advanced	7	Masked	0	0	0
Number of students tested	15	9	16	11	19
6. Asian					
Proficient/Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	7	2	8	8	6

NOTES:
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.

13NJ2

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 11 Test: HSPA

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: New Jersey Department of Education

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	88	85	79	77	63
Advanced	10	8	4	3	0
Number of students tested	173	161	170	156	142
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	2	2	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	87	83	76	69	60
Advanced	8	8	4	3	0
Number of students tested	134	126	117	95	98
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	3	5	1	2	2
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced	85	83	74	73	54
Advanced	6	6	4	3	0
Number of students tested	111	97	105	94	87
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	70	15	36	27	21
Advanced	4	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	23	13	22	15	19
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced	40	Masked	19	9	5
Advanced	0	Masked	0	0	0
Number of students tested	15	9	16	11	19
6. Asian					
Proficient/Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	7	2	8	8	6

NOTES:
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.

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