

U.S. Department of Education
2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 13AL2

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

Name of Principal: Dr. Evelyn Nettles Ed.D.

Official School Name: Ramsay Alternative High School

School Mailing Address: 1800 13th Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35205-5574

County: Jefferson State School Code Number*: 0720

Telephone: (205) 231-7000 E-mail: enettles@bhm.k12.al.us

Fax: (205) 231-7076 Web site/URL: bhm.k12.al.us/ramsay

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. Craig Witherspoon Ed.D. Superintendent e-mail:
cwitherspoon@bhm.k12.al.us

District Name: Birmingham City Schools District Phone: (205) 231-4600

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: Mrs. April Williams

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 30 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
11 Middle/Junior high schools
7 High schools
0 K-12 schools
48 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 9367

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: 1
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	70	121	191
10	67	113	180
11	37	86	123
12	65	146	211
Total in Applying School:			705

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
98 % Black or African American
0 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
0 % White
2 % 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: 0%
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 <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	1
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	1
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	2
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	705
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.00
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	0

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%
Total number of ELL students in the school: 0
Number of non-English languages represented: 0
Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 61%

Total number of students who qualify: 430

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: 0%

Total number of students served: 7

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

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

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

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>44</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>62</u>	<u>0</u>

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:

16:1

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%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	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:	<u>199</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>84%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>11%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>2%</u>
Other	<u>3%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

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

Ramsay High School has overlooked Birmingham's Five Points South from the foothills of Red Mountain for 83 years and is currently home to just over 700 students with 99% total minority enrollment. Birmingham's Southside is one of the most culturally diverse areas of the city in part due to its location near the University of Alabama Birmingham and the medical district. U.S. News ranked Ramsay as the sixth Best High School in Alabama and awarded them three silver medals. Despite having 59% of the students being economically disadvantaged, 76% of them participate in advanced placement courses.

Ramsay's namesake, Erskine B. Ramsay (1864-1953) was an Alabama mining engineer, inventor, industrialist, and philanthropist. He had particular concern for the educational opportunities for African American children for which he received threats from racist organizations.

Dedicated in the fall of 1930 and accredited in 1932 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Erskine Ramsay Technical High School honored the 20-year board president. From the beginning, the high school placed emphasis on academic rigor, the classics, and humanities. Within three years of its opening, Ramsay had the highest percentage of graduates enter college in the district.

In 1955, the Birmingham News published a strangely prophetic editorial entitled "Editor Suggests Making Ramsay a School for Brightest Students":

Editor Gray suggests that Ramsay High acquire a reputation of high scholarship in "more or less fundamental subjects and ambitious students from all over the city would be flocking to it."

In 1967, "Technical" was dropped from the school's official name, and in 1976 Ramsay became an alternative school whose goal was to establish racial balance and academic rigor. Students applied to the school for acceptance; however, it was not until 1979 that Ramsay became a "school for brightest student" serving students from throughout Birmingham. Not being a traditional neighborhood school, students from across the city may make application electronically and are selected based upon their standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, and an entrance exam.

In the fall of 2008, Volkert and Associates, Inc. broke ground on the \$3 million competition gymnasium and state-of-the-art science wing. The plans included renovations to the auditorium and existing gymnasium, a new lunchroom, a fine arts wing, a competition gymnasium, a counseling center, and an R.O.T.C. center.

Ramsay's mission is to prepare students to succeed at the post-secondary level by providing an enriched educational program. With a 100% graduation rate and 89% college entrance rate, Ramsay became part of the A+ College Ready initiative to increase minority participation in Advanced Placement courses in 2009. At that time, all core courses became AP or Pre-AP. The number of AP courses increased from three to nine including AP English Language and Composition, AP English Literature and Composition, AP U.S. History, AP Government, AP Calculus, AP Statistics, AP Biology, AP Chemistry, and AP Studio Art. Students are also extended the opportunity to take online courses through ACCESS distance learning and dual enrollment at a local junior college where juniors and seniors may earn college credit while still in high school.

In July of 2011, Ramsay became an International Baccalaureate candidate school endeavoring to produce creative, critical and reflective thinkers. Beginning fall of 2013, students will be offered both AP and/or IB courses. The ultimate goal is to empower students with the knowledge and skills to be well-rounded, global minded, responsible citizens and life-long learners.

In addition to academics, Ramsay also offers several extracurricular activities including an award winning fine arts department featuring Spanish I and II, French I and II, dance, choral music, visual arts, drama, orchestra, concert, symphonic, jazz, and marching bands. Maintaining the tradition of being the “blue pride of the Southside of Birmingham”, Ramsay has a thriving athletic program offering boys’ and girls’ basketball, boys’ and girls’ soccer, track and field, softball, baseball, volleyball and returning to Ramsay in 2012 after more than 30 years, a varsity football program. The basketball program boasts two boys’ and four girls’ state championships in less than 10 years.

Ramsay has been making steady progress towards excellence graduating thousands of young men and women who have enriched the business, industrial, educational, medical, cultural and athletic lives of not only Birmingham, but also the nation. The faculty and staff, including five National Board Certified teachers, consist of dedicated, motivated, and highly qualified educators, who embrace the challenge of educating promising young scholars.

“Ramsay High School has and continues to shape the lives of individuals who are making an impact worldwide.” (*Birmingham City Schools’ superintendent, Dr. Craig Witherspoon*)

“The students of Ramsay High School continue to excel academically in making Ramsay one of the best high schools in the nation.” (*Birmingham Mayor, William A. Bell*)

Ramsay High School students enter to learn and grow and leave prepared to embrace an ever changing global society.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Ramsay High School consistently performs at or above the proficiency level on the state mandated Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE). In order to graduate with a high school diploma, students must pass the AHSGE in the areas of Reading, Language, Mathematics, Biology, and Social Studies. Adequate yearly progress is based upon Reading and Mathematics scores of 11th grade students, though students begin taking portions of the exam (biology and math) as early as 9th grade depending upon the courses they have taken. Students sit for all portions of the exam for the first time during the spring of their 10th grade year.

Ramsay High School students have consistently met or exceeded state expectations of scoring in Level III in both reading and mathematics. The reading scores have been high for the past five years. In 2008, 98.6% of students met or exceeded expectations. In 2009, the percentage rose to 100%. In 2010, 99.36% of Ramsay's students met or exceeded expectations. In 2011, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 99.5 percent, and in 2012 100% of students met or exceeded expectations.

The mathematics department has also experienced huge successes in meeting or exceeding state expectations as evidenced by 100% of students meeting or exceeding expectations in 2009, 2011, and 2012. In 2008 and 2010 99.36% of students met or exceeded expectations.

The data tables show that our student performance is stable. This is contributed to a focus on college readiness standards by core departments. The expectation has been that if we strive beyond the state standards and focus more on college readiness, student success would be inevitable. There is no significant difference in the achievement of all students and any of the racial or economic subgroups among our students.

The faculty of Ramsay High School does not solely utilize AHSGE results to determine student success. Advanced Placement is also a fundamental indicator of student success. Because of student participation and performance on various Advanced Placement (AP) exams, Ramsay High School was ranked #630 in the nation and #6 in the state by US News and World Reports. Our student body is composed of 98% minorities, primarily African American. One percent is Hispanic and one percent Caucasian. Fifty-nine percent of the student body is classified as economically disadvantaged. Despite the perceived challenges of having minorities, especially economically disadvantaged minorities enroll in Advanced Placement courses, Ramsay High School has a 76% AP participation rate and a 38% passing rate, which translates to 38% of students receiving college credit before graduation. The faculty also utilizes information from the PLAN and ACT to help determine student success. It is our goal to have all students scoring above benchmark in all core areas. Progress is being made in this area as well.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The faculty of Ramsay High School uses assessment data to drive instruction in many ways. The students have proven for years to be at or above proficiency as gaged by the state examination. The 1% of students that must retake the examination during their senior year receives remediation before retaking the examination based on the objectives they missed, and a 100% passage rate is achieved by all students before graduation. Though the school accountability is determined by AHSGE data, the faculty uses other standardized data to drive instruction.

The state has just adopted a model to have all students take the Explore in grade 8, the PLAN in grade 10, and the ACT in grade 11. Though this plan is in the implementation phase for the state, the faculty of Ramsay has begun to look at these tests striving to have 100% of students achieve college readiness. Teachers utilize the results of the PLAN, ACT, and PSAT to drive instruction. The tenth grade students

have taken the PLAN for the past 3 years. Between the 2011 and 2012 school years, PLAN composite scores rose from 16.9 to 18.3, which is just above the national average of 17.2. As we look forward to the 2013-2014 school year, the staff will collect Explore test data on incoming students. Students who score below benchmark in reading or mathematics will be placed in electives to support their area(s) of weakness.

The national average for African American students on the ACT is 17. The average score for Ramsay students (which is 98% African American) is 19.8. Therefore, when compared with students of the same ethnicity our students score marginally higher. Though this data demonstrates progress, it leaves room for more growth. The faculty is striving for all students to score at or above the benchmarks set for college readiness which will have them scoring above the national average for all subtests in comparison to all students. The faculty analyses results of the PLAN by department. The student responses are reviewed to help teachers determine strengths and weaknesses. These determinations form a plan of action for current and future students. The teachers' Professional Learning Plans are developed according to the strengths and weaknesses of their students which enable the administration to play a significant part in the growth of students as well as faculty members.

The ACT data reveals strengths and weaknesses that is used for planning and driving instruction. In mathematics, teachers administer departmental benchmark exams based on common core objectives in order to gauge student comprehension. Teachers use the results to observe patterns and gaps that may exist and adjust methodology accordingly. This includes re-teaching, remediation, and intervention for students who perform poorly. Students that have mastered the material are given more challenging lessons and materials. The English department has set a goal of having student's average score in English and reading fall between 24 and 27. To achieve this goal, the department is focusing on the standards where most students demonstrated weakness and focusing on providing strengthened content in those targeted areas. Systematic progress is determined with the use of formative and summative assessments focusing on all strands of language arts.

The AP program begins in grade 11. All sophomores are administered the PSAT. These results populate the AP potential list while this process contributes to the success of the AP program. Student success is also measured by monitoring student grades. Conferences are held with the student, parent, teacher, and counselor for students with unsatisfactory progress. Study habits are discussed and a plan is put in place to help struggling students master application based learning. The staff realizes that the students and parents must understand the importance and implications of assessments. Students are educated in large group training sessions on the purpose and interpretation of all exams by the guidance staff. Parents are educated in grade level "parent night" meetings. Scores are used as a concrete connection to students' acquisition of knowledge and their future plans.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Ramsay faculty demonstrates, through varied endeavors, our philosophy of collaboration and shared leadership. Our Professional Learning Communities extend beyond the local and district community. Area colleges and universities constantly seek the staff as mentors for aspiring teachers. The principal also conducts workshops regularly to a variety of audiences. For example, she recently helped all assistant principals in the district understand and implement the Response to Intervention Program, a curriculum designed to assist struggling students. Our principal also led a state wide in-service on The Retention of Urban School Teachers. The instructional leader at Ramsay also works with aspiring administrators in the state.

One of the guidance counselors is an ambassador of the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, and she recently shared best practices on Guiding Students to the Next Level. Through participation on several state college advisory boards, both counselors share strategies on facilitating the college application process.

The English department staff is very active in sharing lessons learned within and outside of the district. One of the instructors recently presented to teachers in the district with faculty from an area University on utilizing technology and reading/ annotating strategies. She also presented to teachers in the district on the use of dialectical journals. Another member of the English department presented to teachers in the district on Primary Documents and the Civil Rights movement in the English classroom. Another English department member presents regularly to AP Language teachers across the state on reading strategies, Socratic seminars, and AP scoring criteria, whereas, members of the mathematics department are sought out to share their success strategies too. One teacher works with the middle school teachers of the district on transitioning math standards from middle school to high school and recruiting Pre-AP and AP students. Another math instructor systematically presents to teachers from across the state on LTF (Laying the Foundation for Math Rigor). This teacher leads workshops on Laying the Foundation on scaffold mathematical topics. This faculty member also presents to AP Calculus teachers across the state on the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

The faculty and staff of Ramsay High School make every effort to engage families and the community. In order to achieve academic and personal goals, the staff works to provide transparency with parents. Considering the population of our students, it is important for parents to be informed about the educational process. This includes everything from standardized tests, to what classes are important, to how to apply for college. Grade level meetings are held with parents of students to address concerns for that grade. For example, freshmen parent topics range from understanding grading policy, graduation requirements, and volunteer opportunities. By the time students have matriculated to the 12th grade, topics may include information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and letting go.

Families are engaged through celebrations of achievements ranging from ice cream parties to awards programs. Every opportunity is taken to recognize student achievement in and out of school through website postings, announcements, and student performances. Open House is held so that the parents and community members may come in and meet the faculty, tour the facilities, and become aware of the programs offered in our school. Volunteers are recruited during this event. Parents are also encouraged to utilize the student information system to monitor student grades. This provides an updated look at student progress between progress reports and grade reports.

The community is invited in at every available opportunity. The students are exposed to the community through a mentoring program called Sisters Empowering, Encouraging, and Directing Sisters (S.E.E.D.S.) In this program, 9th and 10th grade female students who are not performing up to their potential and have very few opportunities for cultivation are targeted and introduced to speakers on career choices and preparedness, college admission, and decision making.

The student body as a whole has the opportunity to meet people in the careers in which they demonstrate interest at various times. Speakers from the community inform students of the academic relationship to the requirements of success in their field. Students apply for various shadowing programs as well. Others from the community come in to inform students of various student based programs. We have a strong relationship with many colleges and universities. They come in systematically to discuss programs such as dual enrollment, early college, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs, and other activities they provide.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The curriculum of Ramsay High School (RHS) is based on National, State, and Local standards. We follow the Common Core State Standards for implementing a rigorous academic and relevant learning environment with a focus on skills that will prepare our students for college or a career. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education. RHS recognizes the importance of attaining content and skills as a means to success in the world. RHS expects our students to be knowledgeable in all subject areas, skillful critical thinkers, excellent writers, community leaders, global minded, responsible citizens and lifelong learners. Students are required to complete 4 years of English/Language Arts; Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. 1 year in Physical Education, and a semester of Health Education. 1 year of Business Technical Applications, and 2 additional credits of Career Technical Education. 1 year of Fine Arts and 2.5 Electives of their choice. Students who are seeking the Advanced Diploma are also required 2 years of the same Foreign Language.

The English/Language Arts Department offers a curriculum designed to progressively develop reading comprehension, language, writing, and speaking, from grades 9 – 12. They are exposed to a variety of informational texts to gain insight, and broaden their perspective. RHS students are required to read certain books throughout the school year and during the summer. RHS students must be excellent writers, by logically being able to argue, state substantive claims through sound reasoning and evidence, as well as develop superior research skills to support their perspective. RHS students are taught how to gain, evaluate and present ideas in small or large group classroom environments.

The Mathematics Department offers a curriculum designed to improve and increase application of mathematical ways of thinking and reasoning. There is emphasis on mathematical modeling, analysis, and data comparisons. The department prepares students to think critically and independently through problems, equations, formulas, and statistics as they are applied to everyday real world situations and experiences. RHS students are taught in small group, whole group and individually to identify methods and skills, use formulas, equations, and estimate statistical data.

The Science Department offers a curriculum that is student centered with emphasis on inquiry based learning practices and techniques designed to promote and enhance technical skill and knowledge.

The Social Studies Department offers a curriculum that is comprehensive and content specific. Lessons are designed to broaden and foster an appreciation of a global society through learning about the past, present and future.

The Career Technical Education Department (CTE) offers a program of study that involves a multiyear sequence of courses that integrates core academic knowledge with technical and occupational knowledge to provide students with a pathway to postsecondary education and careers.

The mission of RHS Army JROTC is “to motivate young people to be better citizens,” as well as teach the value of citizenship, leadership, service to community, personal responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment while instilling a sense of self-esteem, teamwork, and self-discipline.

The Advanced Placement Program at RHS is designed to offer a college level curriculum and examinations to high school students for college credit. We offer AP courses in all core subject areas, and we have the largest student population in the school district successfully passing AP Exams. All students are enrolled in Pre AP in 9th and 10th grade in order to prepare them for AP courses in 11th and 12th grade.

2. Reading/English:

The English department takes a collaborative approach to planning and implementing lesson plans and units. The department offers Pre-Advanced Placement for grades nine and ten, Advanced Placement Language/ Composition for grade 11, Advanced Placement Literature and Composition, creative writing, critical thinking, and journalism for grade 12.

The department's curriculum primarily follows the Alabama State Department of Education's College and Career Ready Standards. Multiple best practices programs are utilized to infuse academic rigor into the daily teaching of the curriculum. Effective programs such as Laying the Foundation (LTF), Performance Series/Global Scholar, and ACT/Quality Core have proven to be successful measures that have positively impacted teaching and learning. These programs allow the department to align its curriculum and assessments with key essential knowledge and skills students need to be college and/or career ready.

Technology is deemed as an effective tool for teaching critical reading and writing skills. Teachers use Edmodo.com, Schoolrack.com, Promethean Planet, Myskillstutor.com, and Criterion Writing program to enhance literacy skills. Students have extended opportunities to create and present multi-media presentations including power point and Prezi presentations.

The English Department believes that the students should enter ninth grade English ready to learn and grow and depart as seniors ready to embrace an ever-changing, diverse, and global world. To adequately prepare the Ramsay students for universal learning, the teachers strive to instruct students to: employ healthy study habits (time management, organization, academic integrity), develop college-bound vocabulary, write in a variety of modes and contexts, read critically, and master grammar skills.

The English department places high priority on critical reading skills through student centered instructional strategies, students engage in varied inquiry based activities such as Socratic seminar, web quest, and Brainstorm. Reading skills are enhanced through independent learning strategies (i.e. graphic organizers, annotation, word walls, journals, double entry journals, & learning logs). Progress monitoring strategies are also utilized to improve reading skills: quick write, think a loud, gallery walk, entrance/exit slips, graphic organizers and Cloze reading.

Collaboration is of high priority teachers meet and plan routinely to devise the sequence of instruction, organize instructional units and construct applicable assessments. The English department engages in professional learning communities in an effort to focus on common planning and common assessments. The teachers use common assessments to assist students with academic progress monitoring. Common assessments are shared for both formative and summative assessments.. The department's mutual summative assessments include nine weeks exam, presentations, group projects, structured essays, and district required assessments.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics curriculum of Ramsay High School is designed to prepare students to succeed at the post-secondary level by providing an enriched educational program. In order to improve student achievement, our curriculum is aligned with the National Common Core Standards in conjunction with Alabama Career and College Ready Standards and College Board standards for AP classes. All students must take four years of mathematics; which include PreAP Algebra I, PreAP Geometry, PreAP Algebra II with Trigonometry, PreAP PreCalculus, AP Calculus and AP Statistics. The PreAP classes are designed to introduce our students to a rigorous curriculum that will allow them to comfortably enter any AP class. The AP classes are designed and taught on a level equivalent to college courses. The mathematics department at Ramsay High School believes that a comprehensive, high quality mathematics education

enables students to increase their mathematical literacy by understanding principles and further enhancing mathematical fluency that is essential for an ever changing society.

The mathematics teachers at Ramsay High School use several teaching methods which include lecture and discussion, as well as student-centered collaborative activities. Because technology has evolved, several teachers use online resources provided by the textbook, forum boards, and blogs to assign work, teach lessons, or answer questions on current and previous lessons outside of the classroom. We believe that the best way to reach our students is to meet them in a place where they feel comfortable with communicating with us. Approximately 40% of our students are active users in some type of technology based educational forum outside of the classroom.

The teachers at Ramsay High School desire all our students to succeed and dedicate hours of time and effort to each students success. Tutoring and study sessions are offered daily before and after school and at least once a month on weekends for students who lack a proper foundation in mathematics or are having trouble with a current concept being taught in class. We are working to increase our student's success on the mathematics portion of the ACT and increase our percentage of students who score a 3 or better on the AP Calculus exam by offering tutoring sessions that target specific problem areas of students.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The Fine Arts Department of Ramsay High School is comprised of a team of highly qualified teachers who are committed to achieving excellence in their fields of expertise. Classes are offered in the following areas: Choral music (concert choir, school choir, and music technology), Instrumental music, (symphonic, marching, concert and jazz, contemporary, and modern dance), Art (visual, fundamental, AP Studio Art), and a developing theatre and drama club.

Three of the six instructors have received International Baccalaureate Diploma Program training. All are working towards Middle Year Program training.

Across the years, the Ramsay High School Fine Arts Department has maintained an award-winning performance record. The Ramsay Choral Music Department has a solid record of superior rating at All-City Festival for over 20 years. The Ramsay band has consistently improved as it has won "Best in Class AA", AAA, and excellence in All- City Festival. The band was this year's first "Fox 6 Band of the Week" and 2nd place "Festival recipient, in the Thomas E. Lyle Battle of the Bands held at Stillman College. The dance department and its instructor have received national recognition. They were featured on CNN, NBC and other local broadcasts and performances. Visual Art students have participated in National Art Portfolio Day and other local art exhibitions and competitions. They are also participants in National Art Honor Society, active in art therapy, and many other worth-while service related efforts. They are scholarship recipients, and are active in art therapy for parents and students with Sickle Cell Disease.

Foreign language instructors are fluent in their specific language and are dedicated to motivating students to achieve command of the assigned oratorical skills. To achieve this goal, foreign language teachers see that students are involved in thought-provoking, interesting, standard-based activities which are geared towards every level of development.

Teachers participate regularly in professional development activities designed to assist with all learning levels while consistently improving the skills of each student. Students actually engage in incorporating current technology and techniques in everyday learning activities. It is the goal of the Ramsay High School Fine Arts Department to provide a program which enhances the cultural and intellectual growth of all students through the fine and performing arts. It is our desire to release well-exposed students into today's competitive and progressive society.

5. Instructional Methods:

The core of the academic program is instruction, which is the “how” of the education process; the goal is to ensure that effective learning is taking place within our classrooms. Instructional methods are strongly emphasized throughout each department’s curriculum. Students are the recipients of solid, sound, researched based practices that promote learning. The rigorous curriculum is presented by our teachers through direct instruction, differentiated instruction and student inquiry promoted by critical thinking in a collaborative, exploratory environment. Teachers are required to submit electronic lesson plans weekly that describe instructional strategies and the integration of technology.

The uniqueness of our student population presents teachers with the challenge of planning for higher order thinking skills to increase academic achievement. Student engagement leads instructional strategies, and allows for an enhanced understanding of concepts that are taught by the teachers. A large majority of our students are identified as gifted, so the use of differentiated instruction within the classroom is frequently incorporated. Emphasis is placed on small group instruction centered on student use of problem solving skills and critical thinking. Technology is widespread in our school with the implementation of “bring your own technology” policy. Students are using smartphones, electronic readers, tablets, I-pads, and laptops to access the web for research, communication with teachers, and posting of assignments. Each classroom is equipped with a Promethean Board that is used to enhance subject area lessons and the use of technology in the classroom. Teachers also use a number of web based resources, such as Google docs, edmodo.com, blogs, and Wikis to create online lessons for students.

Our teachers use formative assessment data to identify student’s weaknesses and create teachable moments to address those identified weaknesses during the class period through various groupings. These strategies are developed during professional development activities to strengthen teachers’ confidence in implementation. If students are struggling with a particular standard a student intervention plan must be submitted to the administration at the end of the unit to identify specific ways the student needs will be address for improvement. The intervention plan outlines additional resources, assignments, tutoring and responsibilities are denoted for both the teacher and the student. No student is simply allowed to receive a failing grade without intervention. This philosophy supports academic success and higher student achievement for all students. The expectation is that our students succeed because they are provided with challenging instruction promoting their achievement.

6. Professional Development:

In our school district professional development at the school level is first aligned to the district goal and then to individual school needs. Each school develops a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) which includes academic goals for students and the necessary professional development needed for faculty and staff to accomplish the goals. The most recent sources of data from academic assessments (AHSGE and ACT) are used to identify the areas of strengths and weakness in the academic program. The leadership team is responsible for utilizing the data results while developing the plan which will drive professional development. For the past two years, the majority of professional development at the school level has been focused on the training of teachers for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and (MYP) Middle Years Programs.

Professional development at the school level is focused on Common Core Standards or Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) as we refer in our state. Professional Development is conducted every Wednesday for an hour and a half to develop our skills using Common Core, working in groups or subject/grade level areas. Effort is made to align these standards to a curriculum matrix that supports both the Advance Placement curriculum, MYP, and the IB programs. Weekly team meeting dialogue, articles, training sessions, and blogs further enhance the implementation of the CCRS into the instructional program.

The principal organized a professional learning center which serves as the official meeting room for collaboration and job embedded professional development. The vision is to create a continuous learning center for technology training, cross disciplinary planning and professional reading materials. The schedule includes common planning/lunch for the purpose of team meetings, collaboration and peer

visitations. Our district uses the “train the trainer model” in most of its professional development endeavors. Department heads meet monthly with curriculum resource coordinators to gather information and keep alignment of curriculum across the district. At the school level the department meetings are then mirrored to the expectations of the district. The needs of each school vary and this strategy allows for adaptation to meet the needs of the students being served.

Ramsay is also a member of the Alabama Best Practices Center. Representatives from the Math and English department, along with the principal, meet with educators across our state to work in groups on student achievement, assessment, differentiated instructional strategies, and technological advancements to further align with the Common Core.

7. School Leadership:

The foundation of leadership for the current administration has academic achievement as our top priority. Every aspect of the academic program is aligned to high expectations and high academic achievement. The philosophy of the administration is a vision of shared or distributed leadership from the servant leader mindset. We believe that in order to establish sustainable long range academic achievement every member of the leadership team is important. The school leadership matrix is comprised of leaders representing each department. Team leaders meet almost weekly with the administration to discuss curriculum issues and concerns related to improving observed practices.

The principal’s role includes supporting programs through acquiring resources, demonstrating effective professional practices, ensuring all policies and procedures are efficiently managed and organizing opportunities for professional development. The principal is the key to ensuring there is a focus on quality instructional strategies and best practices. As instructional leader, every aspect of the leadership decisions are aimed at the impact it will have on the quality of instruction. The assistant principals are responsible for a variety of daily roles from curriculum to facility management. Because we have very few disciplinary referrals, an enormous amount of time can be focused on the delivery of the instructional program. It is our goal to systematically look at ways to enhance the quality of instruction in each individual classroom. Shared servant leadership is executed daily by the principal, assistant principals and leadership team. Creating an environment that consistently ensures that policies, procedures and programs are handled efficiently is critical to the academic success of our students.

All faculty and staff are informed of these practices at the onset of the school year and directly from the principal. It is the personal philosophy of the school’s principal to create effective communication patterns. Team leaders are encouraged to solicit ideas from department members. Teachers are most comfortable sharing honest opinions and openly expressing rationale for a decision in small group settings. Each team member returns to the leadership meeting with these ideas and concerns for a more inclusive view of the faculty. This practice is used for bell schedule changes, book distribution, new website theme, faculty calendar, activity schedule, etc. The ultimate goal is to make sure all decisions improve student achievement or do not impact instructional time.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 11 Test: Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Edition/Publication Year: 2010-2011 Publisher: Alabama State Department Of Education

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level III and Level IV	99	98	96	98	96
Level IV	10	9	14	28	30
Number of students tested	220	202	169	126	147
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level III and Level IV	99	98	98	99	99
Level IV	10	7	14	32	23
Number of students tested	112	94	68	53	44
2. African American Students					
Level III and Level IV	100	100	98	99	98
Level IV	11	10	15	27	31
Number of students tested	216	200	168	123	145
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III and Level IV	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	0
Level IV	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	0
Number of students tested	1	1		1	
4. Special Education Students					
Level III and Level IV	Masked	0	0	Masked	0
Level IV	Masked	0	0	Masked	0
Number of students tested	2			1	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level III and Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
6. White					
Level III and Level IV	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level IV	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	1	1	1	2
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 11 Test: Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Edition/Publication Year: 2010-2011 Publisher: Alabama State Department of Education

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level III and Level IV	99	98	98	98	98
Level IV	20	13	16	18	27
Number of students tested	220	202	169	126	147
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level III and Level IV	98	99	98	98	99
Level IV	20	9	20	23	19
Number of students tested	112	94	68	53	44
2. African American Students					
Level III and Level IV	99	98	99	99	99
Level IV	20	13	16	17	27
Number of students tested	216	200	168	123	145
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III and Level IV	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	0
Level IV	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	0
Number of students tested	1	1		1	
4. Special Education Students					
Level III and Level IV	Masked	0	0	Masked	0
Level IV	Masked	0	0	Masked	0
Number of students tested	2			1	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level III and Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
6. White					
Level III and Level IV	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level IV	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	1	1	1	2
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

13AL2