

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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

Name of Principal: Mr. Thomas Schmidt

Official School Name: Sherman Elementary School

School Mailing Address:  
127 Park Street  
P.O. Box 950  
Sherman, NY 14781-0950

County: Chautauqua State School Code Number\*: 062601040000

Telephone: (716) 761-6122 Fax: (716) 761-6119

Web site/URL: www.sherman.wnyric.org E-mail: tschmidt@sherman.wnyric.org

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 all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Mr. Thomas Schmidt

District Name: Sherman CSD Tel: (716) 761-6122

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Ms. Colleen Meeder

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. The school has some configuration that includes 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 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 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals 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 the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- |          |                     |
|----------|---------------------|
| 1        | Elementary schools  |
| 0        | Middle schools      |
| 1        | Junior high schools |
| 1        | High schools        |
| 0        | Other               |
| <b>3</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>        |
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 13352

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 17330

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city  
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
 Suburban  
 Small city or town in a rural area  
 Rural
4. 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
- If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	8	20	28	<b>7</b>			0
<b>K</b>	20	19	39	<b>8</b>			0
<b>1</b>	18	13	31	<b>9</b>			0
<b>2</b>	21	22	43	<b>10</b>			0
<b>3</b>	12	17	29	<b>11</b>			0
<b>4</b>	21	21	42	<b>12</b>			0
<b>5</b>	9	22	31	<b>Other</b>			0
<b>6</b>	19	13	32				
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							<b>275</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
0 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
1 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
98 % 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 past year: 10 %

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	13
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	15
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	28
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	275
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.102
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	10.182

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 1 %

Total number limited English proficient 2

Number of languages represented: 1

Specify languages:

Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 57 %

Total number students who qualify: 156

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-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

Total Number of Students Served: 29

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>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</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:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>27</u>	<u>1</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 21 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	95%	98%	99%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	5%	0%	0%	5%

Please provide all explanations below.

We have had 2 elementary teachers retire in the last 5 years. The percentage reflects a small staff number.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u>	%
Found employment	<u>0</u>	%
Military service	<u>0</u>	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u>	%
Unknown	<u>0</u>	%
<b>Total</b>	<u><b>100</b></u>	<b>%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Sherman Elementary School is a unique and special school. It is a particularly small, rural school with only two sections per grade level. Student numbers range from 30 to 45 students per grade level. Along with the elementary school, this single school building houses our junior/senior high school. Students and teachers alike form relationships that continue through their academic careers. Veteran teachers have often had the privilege of celebrating Kindergarten Moving-Up Day and twelve years later joining the same students at their high school commencement. Remembering each and every one as a small child and observing that child grow into young adulthood is a special treat indeed!

Sherman Elementary has excelled in its reading program. In the past five years it has expanded classroom libraries to include greater numbers of quality nonfiction books. Each and every classroom can boast a library of over 1,500 titles. Leveled books, National Geographic's Windows on Literacy series, Elements of Reading (fluency and comprehension) titles, Shutterbug books, Pair-it books and trade books, tapes and CDs for listening centers are among the choices available. Manipulatives such as Reading Rods and Versa-tiles have added to the center-based curriculum in grades Kindergarten through third. Leap Pads and Leap Mats also add new technology to this curriculum in the primary grades. At Sherman Elementary we feel that we have a top-notch, scientifically-based reading program.

Our school community has garnered some noteworthy accolades recently. Business First Magazine listed Sherman Central School District as the number 1 over achieving school district in Western New York State. This recognition was out of a total of 97 school districts. In U.S News and World Report (Nov. 2007 and again in 2008) Sherman was a bronze award winner. Sherman was one of 1,086 schools to be named one of America's Best High Schools out of 18,790 schools in the country. This award was based on how students performed on state tests, adjusted for student circumstances. Finally, Business Week rated Sherman, New York, 24th in their November 2007 article entitled "Great Places to Raise Kids – For Less". The Magazine listed the top fifty communities based on: safety, community and education. These criteria included: test scores, cost of living, recreational and cultural activities, number of schools and risk of crime.

Sherman Central School is located right in the heart of the small village of Sherman. The township is in a rural, mostly farming region of Western New York State. An extensive Amish (Pennsylvania Dutch) population is also located within the district. Amish children typically attend Sherman Elementary in Kindergarten and, to varying degrees, choose to continue through first and second grade. This provides an interesting, early lesson in diversity for elementary students. Sherman is a close-knit community where families know each other by name and there is that small town feeling of neighbor helping neighbor. The school, local churches and business communities often work together to provide assistance to those in need, including raising money for victims of serious illnesses, helping in the rebuilding of a home recently lost in a fire and countless other examples of community action. The local Amish still hold old fashioned barn raisings, which are a testament to the power of what a community can accomplish through cooperation. It is also noteworthy to mention that the Sherman School employees donate annually to The United Way campaign, and were just honored with their "Campaign Achievement Award" (January 2009). Sherman is justifiably a community that cares.

In summary, the mission of Sherman Elementary is to graduate students who: believe in their own worth, respect others, are equipped with skills to access, acquire and utilize information to succeed, are lifelong learners able to contribute to an ever changing world. We accomplish this mission with an effective, outstanding faculty who present a challenging, relevant and comprehensive curriculum in a safe and nurturing environment that is conducive to learning. A core set of beliefs held by teachers, support staff, administration and the school board are:

- Education is a shared responsibility

- Learning is a continuing, life-long process
- Every individual deserves an appropriate, safe and positive learning environment
- Every individual deserves to be treated with respect
- Every individual deserves a positive sense of belonging, importance and value
- Every individual is important and has a purpose
- All learning does not take place in the classroom

The school's motto of "Expanding Hearts, Minds and Dreams" takes shape on a daily basis here at Sherman Elementary and its meaning is personified by the students attending this outstanding school!

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

For the past three years, Sherman Elementary School has used New York State (NYS) Program tests, standardized test published by CTB-McGraw Hill for English Language Arts (ELA) assessments and for Mathematics assessments to monitor student performance levels in grades three through sixth. Prior to 2005-2006 NYS did not offer their testing program for grades other than fourth. For this reason, only fourth grade has data available for the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 school years.

New York State's assessment system is broken down into four performance categories labeled "level 1 – level 4". Level 3 equates to proficient. Level 4 equates to advanced. Level 3 and 4 each are considered by NYS to be "meeting the standards".

NYS Student Performance Levels:

Level 1: Not Meeting Learning Standards

Level 2: Partially Meeting Learning Standards

Level 3: Meeting Learning Standards: Student performance demonstrates an understanding of content area knowledge and skills expected at this grade level.

Level 4: Meeting Learning Standards with Distinction: Student performance demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject knowledge and skills expected at this grade level.

While the primary focus of the test is to provide a reliable and accurate measure of each student's performance against learning standards, the test is also an effective means to evaluate the school's curriculum, approach to teaching, and the learning environment.

Surveys of NYS ELA tests for the past three years indicate a positive trend in scores for grades 4, 5 and 6. Grade 3 results for this time period were the most stable, ranging from: 90% in 2005-2006, (state average 69%), 82% in 2006-2007 (state average 67%) and 83% in 2007-2008 a slight decrease of 7%, yet scores maintained a level 15% above the state average. Grade 4 test results are observable for the full five-year period and demonstrate a consistent trend, advancing each year, from 47% in 2003-2004 to 85% proficient plus advanced in 2007-2008 for a total increase of 38% over the five-year period. Grade 5 scores advance in the category of Percent Proficient plus Percent advanced from 68% to 84% a three-year gain of 16%. Grade 6 scores show improvement from 54% to 79% a three-year gain of 25%.

NYS Testing Program scores for Mathematics demonstrate overall gains as well. Each grade level three through sixth scored lowest the initial year of the test and illustrated gains in subsequent years. Grade 3 Mathematics scores increased each year of the testing; rising from 81% proficient plus advanced in 2005-2006 to 92% in 2007-2008 a three year gain of 11%. Grade 4 scores, again for the full five-year period, rose from a low of 72% in 2003-2004 to 94% in 2007-2008, a four-year increase of 22% and a level that was 10% above the state average for the 2006 and 2007 years. Grade 5 scores were: 74% in 2005-2006 (state average 68%), 93% in 2006-2007 (state average 76%) and 81% in 2007-2008. Grade 6 results developed from 68% in 2005-2006 to 95% in 2007-2008 a three-year gain of 27% and levels 8% and 21% above the state average for 2006 and 2007.

Given the small size of Sherman Elementary School's student body the only subgroup that can be delineated would be, Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals. With only a portion of our already slim numbers being considered, disparities among these test scores are easily skewed, with the performance of only one or two students greatly affecting the data. With this consideration there are no notable disparities among subgroup test scores.

Allowing for variances due to the characteristics of individual classrooms, tests and student bodies, Sherman Elementary School is proud to state the test data indicates consistent and continued growth across the subject areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Information on the New York State testing program may be found at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/>

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

Assessment data provides valuable insight to implementation and activation of instructional programs, academic intervention, and professional development. Sherman Central School has managed and interpreted standardized testing results to engage students more deeply in their learning and provide constant growth and development.

DIBELS assessments equip K-3 teachers with structure and goals for the measure of reading achievement. Progress monitoring meetings with the reading teacher and classroom teacher give insight into students' ability levels and a clear understanding of strategies needed to meet the needs of individual students. At one time Sherman was a Reading First school and received funds that allowed us to purchase the book I've DIBEL'd Now What? by Dr. Susan L. Hall. This book offers guidance, instructional strategies, and activities for the teachers on how to interpret the data to group and teach students who have similar instructional needs.

A data coordinator for Sherman Central School isolates the specific Performance Indicators of NYS English Language Arts and Math where students need to demonstrate benchmark levels. Past state tests in grades 3-6 are examined to identify testing trends, narrow the focus for intervention, and inform instruction. All grade levels implement and remedy weaknesses identified through effective data inspection.

Academic Intervention targets the specific population of students identified by data investigations. All teachers use this time efficiently to enable a population of students falling below benchmark standards. The New York State Coach Jumpstart program was implemented for Academic Intervention. This comprehensive practice reinforces students' understanding of mandated fields of study.

Professional development on differentiated instruction presents different routes to success. The combination of grade level discussions and the book The Teacher's Toolbox for Differentiating Instruction by Linda Tilton as a resource, offers strategies and techniques to enhance the existing curriculum. Through the use of professional development, academic intervention, and instructional programs, the teachers are able to use assessment data to improve teaching and student performance.

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

Sherman Elementary School communicates student performance, including assessment data to parents, students, and the community in many ways throughout the year. In order to keep parents informed of their child's performance, teachers use several forms of ongoing communication. Formal and informal meetings allow Sherman Elementary teachers to have personal, face-to-face contact with parents about their child's performance and assessment results through parent-teacher conferences and their "Open Door" policy. Parent-teacher conferences span two days and offer day and evening meeting times to better accommodate parents' schedules. In addition, Sherman's "Open Door" policy encourages parents to speak to teachers and administrators at any time a concern arises. Along with handwritten correspondence, teachers also use technology, such as email and the school's website, as other forms of communication with parents. Weekly newsletters are sent throughout the school year by each K-6 teacher in the elementary to keep the lines of communication open between school and home. To ensure that students, parents, and the community are actively informed regarding assessments, Sherman Elementary also hosts an annual Fall Open House. Not only does this serve as an opportunity for parents to meet with teachers and administration to discuss their

child, but it also affords the school the opportunity to provide parents and the community with information surrounding state assessments and what is happening at the school. During these sessions, attendees are given information about the results of state testing along with explanations regarding the meaning and use of the data. In addition, parents receive parent booklets that detail these topics. The Sherman Elementary School's testing coordinator also sends out a notice, The Parent Report, to inform parents of their child's performance and results on the various state assessments as scores become available from the state.

Students are kept abreast of their performance and assessment results through contact and conferences with their teachers and in some cases, the elementary school counselor. "Academic Intervention Services" are provided to students in need of additional help in the core subject areas. These services provide another opportunity for teachers to communicate with students regarding their performance and test results.

Sherman Elementary makes a concerted effort to inform the community of student performance along with assessment data. Through the use of the local newspapers and a bi-monthly district-wide newsletter, Pawprints, the community receives year-round information on these topics.

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

Sherman Central School District is quite unique since it has only one elementary school. Regardless, Sherman is very open to sharing its successes with other school districts. Specifically in Sherman's primary grades, assessment data revealed great success with its Reading First program thanks to the dedication and hard work of the teachers, staff, and administration. As a result, the New York State Education Department acknowledged this accomplishment and invited Sherman to present at the 2006 New York State Reading First Institute to share with other educators the elements that made its reading program so successful. Additionally, some Western New York area schools have asked to visit Sherman in order to experience the reading program in action. Several schools have made site visits to observe scientifically based reading research practices being used in Sherman's classrooms and to meet with the teachers to learn new strategies they can employ in their own classrooms. Sherman Elementary continues to be open to sharing its successes in grades K-6, and the administration has organized inservice days with other schools in the area in order to do so. In the event Sherman Elementary School is awarded Blue Ribbon School status, the administration has an ongoing commitment to share Sherman's successes, and it will continue to offer such opportunities to other schools.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

Working towards Sherman Central School's Mission of graduating students who:

- Believe in their own worth
- Respect others
- Are equipped with skills to access, acquire and utilize information to succeed
- Are lifelong learners able to contribute to an ever-changing world

Our academic programs are scaffolded to allow students to grow at a pace that allows students to learn as fast as they can or as slow as they must. Our core curriculum: reading (Houghton Mifflin) and language arts, math, social studies and science (McMillan McGraw-Hill) is sustained by excellent, research-based materials. The core curriculum is supported by supplemental materials such as Elements of Reading: vocabulary (Steck Vaughn), Quick Reads (Pearson Learning Group), Step Up To Writing, handwriting (Zaner-Bloser), Newspapers in Education, National Geographic's Young Explorer, Scholastic News, Weekly Reader, multiple copy books, National Geographic books and Pair-it Books, as well as an Informational Media Center and classrooms stocked with trade books. Daily vocabulary, daily syntax, daily math and character education are other supplements to our regular texts. Our Reading Specialist incorporates materials from Foundations (Wilson Language Basics), Early Success and Soar to Success (Houghton Mifflin), Read Naturally, Orton Gillingham and numerous other resources to aid students that need further differentiated instruction or extra practice. Our Writing Specialist works throughout the elementary grades to deliver instruction. She conducts editing practice, integrates books into writing lessons and helps students express their written ideas in various formats so they are able to write to describe, inform or persuade. She also engages children in rich literary discussions and assists teachers in developing writing across the curriculum. We have pull-out/push-in math help for students needing help to catch up or address deficient math skills.

Incorporated in the core curriculum and reaching beyond, Sherman students are taught lifelong skills. Sixth grade students receive a semester of home and career skills education focusing on: career planning, process skills and relationship skills. The final project culminates all learning areas: personal development, self-responsibility, decision-making, management, consumer skills, leadership, relating to others, safety, skill development and career exploration. Sixth graders also receive a semester of health education. Computer instruction for the elementary grades is scaffolded from learning to use a mouse, program use, internet safety, history of computers and internet, internet use and keyboarding, through email. Our physical education classes also teach lifelong skills. Teachers focus on increasing activity levels, sportsmanship, accountability, and ability skills so children learn how to work and play together in a respectful and cooperative way.

Art classes for all grades allow students a kinesthetic approach for learning and reinforcing core curriculum concepts and skills. Students are afforded the opportunity for artistic appreciation through exposure to the work and lives of famous artists, building geometric forms, grids, clay land formations, and their own imitation Egyptian cartouche. Students in the music program experience a wide variety of music from all over the globe in order to become educated and independent consumers of music in their futures. Connections with other subject areas are made to increase understanding and create lasting relationships.

We have experienced, well qualified teachers who work together collaboratively and are flexible and open to new ideas without discarding those ideas that have been proven to work. A history of professional development in the area of differentiated instruction facilitated the staff becoming proficient keeping content, while changing the delivery, to assure maximizing student achievement. Fifth and sixth grade levels are

departmentalized, allowing students to benefit from the strengths of a pool of teachers. Kindergarten through fourth grades are more self-contained, allowing teachers to create deeper bonds with the younger students.

Our school motto is “Expanding Hearts, Minds and Dreams.” We believe children learn in different styles and ways; to this end, we teach to the whole child. We address the auditory, visual and kinesthetic modalities. We address diverse learning styles. Teachers at Sherman Elementary use various teaching styles and tools to support these needs. In each classroom there are hands-on experiences and projects. Centers are a part of each instructional day. Children engage in discussions, manipulatives, games, practice at desks and on computers. We have benchmarks in place and are continually reviewing and revising for each group of students to see where they are and how best to aid them in attaining these standards. As a school, we set high expectations, and, as teachers, we use effective instructional strategies to help students meet those expectations.

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

In order to update our reading program, Sherman Central School purchased the 2003 Houghton Mifflin reading series, *The Nation's Choice*, in 2004 for our grades K-3. A key component that was missing from our outdated reading series was phonemic awareness. After careful review of several reading series, a team of teachers chose *The Nation's Choice* because the series was based on scientifically based reading research, incorporated all five areas of reading, and integrated well with our curriculum. Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF) scores on the DIBELS tests showed significant gains after implementation of the new series. Students scores on PSF continue to be excellent. Eighty to one hundred percent of our students reach benchmark on PSF.

The Houghton Mifflin series, *The Nation's Choice* is formulated on scientifically based reading research. Two weaknesses in the series are vocabulary and comprehension. To address this, *Elements of Reading Vocabulary (K-3)* and *Quickreads (Grades 2 and 3)* were added as supplements to the curriculum. Each of the classes (K-3) utilizes a reading block of at least 90 minutes per day. The five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension are taught as appropriate for each grade level. Monthly progress monitoring meetings help the teachers to individualize instruction. The Waterford Early Reading Lab benefits all Kindergarten students and remedial students grades 1, 2 and 3 on a daily basis. Data demonstrates this tiered approach to reading, combined with Title I services, works effectively.

The fourth grades updated their reading series in 2007-08 to Houghton Mifflin. Fifth and sixth grades updated their reading series in 2008. With the reading program solidly in place, SCS has added a writing teacher/elementary librarian. Grades K-3 students have one extra period of writing per week. Grades 4-6 attend two periods per week, concentrating on writing tasks. *Step Up to Writing*, another researched based program is a key element of the writing program.

#### **2b. (Secondary Schools) English:**

This question is for secondary schools only

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

Sherman Elementary School's mission is to mold students into life long learners that are able to contribute in an ever-changing world. Sherman's elementary science curriculum focuses on preparing our students with the skills and knowledge they will need, not only to be successful as they continue on into high school, but also into their college years and/or careers as adults.

We as educators agree that science is not confined to a textbook or the classroom in the real world. Throughout the year, our elementary classes attend science related fieldtrips and conduct many outdoor activities. Samples of these excursions include: visits to Niagara Falls to study hydroelectricity, guided tours of the Buffalo Museum of Science and lessons at Long Point State Park regarding environmental conservation. Sherman Central School has developed a parcel of land into a nature center. Many of our elementary classes utilize this resource to provide real life experiences pertaining to biology and earth science.

Sherman's teachers attend workshops every year that keep them abreast of the most effective ways to teach science to our children. Recently, our 5th and 6th grades incorporated a science program sponsored by NASA into their curriculum. In this program, students use technology and NASA data in all aspects of learning. Technological tools in this program include using a smartboard to view 3D "fly-throughs" of volcanoes, glaciers, and the sea floor based on authentic NASA data. It also allows the students to access real-time earthquake, volcano, tsunami, and weather data.

Our teachers believe in the hands-on, inquiry-based model for learning science. To support this ideology, Sherman participates in the New York Elementary Science Program. This program ships a variety of science kits to our school for each grade level. These kits provide our teachers with manipulatives that are used to support their science content by utilizing hands-on activities.

Sherman Elementary School is dedicated to remaining on the forefront of the newest discoveries and technology in the field of science. This commitment to excellence will ensure that our students are well prepared as they proceed on to a higher education and beyond.

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

Differentiated Instruction (DI) at Sherman Elementary School encompasses a wide delivery of instructional methods in our efforts to contribute to student learning and achievement. Recognizing the importance of teaching that varies in its content and process, the school board and central administration had our entire faculty spend a full in-service day (March, 31st, 2008) learning about DI with Linda Tilton, a national speaker and author on the subject. The school district purchased ten copies of her book The Teacher's Toolbox for Differentiating Instruction, which are kept in the school library and provide excellent examples and resource ideas for teachers to incorporate into their lessons on a daily basis. Monthly follow up training with all teachers in grades one through four, provided by a local BOCES consultant, has helped to infuse DI throughout the curriculum at these grade levels.

The specific instructional methods a teacher may choose are often based on student readiness in a particular content area. In reading, for example, students in grades K-3 are screened using the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment. Based on the results, instruction is tailored to meet the student's needs. Teachers may use flexible grouping for students who are at or above grade level, while other students work in homogeneous groups where the teacher can closely monitor their progress. At other times the teacher may choose to place students in heterogeneous groups where above average students are working with their peers who are below benchmark levels. Other DI methods being used include; surveying student interests on topics they find stimulating that can be incorporated into the curriculum. Students often take more ownership of their learning, and are more motivated when they have a voice in the content and topic of choice. Our science program uses DI in the use of BOCES science kits where students work in small groups to complete a multi-step project. Groups who are "getting it" will often help out other ones who need it. Teachers here at SCS are also using tiered assignments, where students have assignments modified to better meet their needs. These adjustments in the product produced still meet the teacher's expectations and are examples of but a few of the ways teachers at Sherman Elementary use DI to accommodate individual students learning styles.

## **5. Professional Development:**

The professional development program has been an on-going process. In the English Language Arts area teachers have been trained in scientifically based reading research and Step Up To Writing. All primary teachers have received training provided by the Reading First staff. Turnkey trainers have also provided the staff with Step Up To Writing instruction that is used in all classrooms and by the writing teacher for all K-6 students. The goal has been to provide all teachers with the skills to be able to address the different learning styles of all our students. This includes those with disabilities, special learning needs, and those who are gifted and talented.

Staff development has also included the use of a BOCES staff development instructor to work with our teachers to analyze student data and then using that data to align instruction with the New York State Standards in both English Language Arts and Math. Teachers use the information from program assessments to make instructional decisions and modify instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students.

A mentoring program for new teachers is provided to help new teachers align curriculum to the Standards. Through this program teachers are also provided with a variety of scientifically based classroom management strategies and programs. The Harry Wong series on classroom management is used with all the teaching staff to help them build the necessary skills. This has enabled students to become more engaged in their own learning, resulting in increased on-task time and fewer behavioral problems. Another strong point of the mentoring program is that the teachers are provided with strategies to help eliminate the achievement gap that separates low income and minority students from other students.

Most recently, our teachers have been provided instructional strategies based on brain research as it applies to learning. This has given our teachers additional ways to carry out the curricula and programs tied to the standards.

Finally, the Sherman District has made a commitment to provide the staff with opportunities for personal wellness and team building activities. We believe that our teachers need to be taken care of so that they can project a positive attitude in the classroom as well as in their homes and community.

## **6. School Leadership:**

Sherman Central School is a small, rural district where all prekindergarten through 12th grade students are in one building. The elementary principal is also the superintendent who works closely with the only other administrator in the district, the middle/high school principal.

The principal understands the needs of the elementary children. He was a former first and second grade teacher and he knows what students need to do to be successful. As an elementary administrator for over 15 years he understands what a teacher must do to have a classroom where learning takes place and the needs of each individual child are met. The belief in the school is that each child is an individual and each one has his own special needs and style. Teachers are encouraged to work with every student to meet those needs.

As a school, we know that each teacher has the ability to create students that can accomplish whatever they put their mind to do. The principal expects the teachers to treat the children as if they were their own. By treating them with dignity, the children will in turn treat others the same. When children have a positive attitude about themselves, then they will be able to learn in an atmosphere of trust and love.

Teachers are encouraged by the principal to teach the basics; math, reading, writing, science, history, but they are also challenged to look at how the curriculum can be enhanced. By going outside the box, children are challenged to go beyond what they normally thought they could accomplish.

The importance of the mentoring program, character education program and curriculum work give the teachers necessary skills to be better educators and the children the chance to be better learners. In this tight economy these programs continue to be funded along with the maintenance of appropriate staffing levels.

The most important thing the principal believes is that we are here for the children first and foremost. He challenges the staff to not take for granted what they produce, but to take responsibility for it. As teachers, he wants them to be risk takers, not just “another” teacher. When this happens they become extraordinary teachers teaching extraordinary students.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: New York State Math

Edition/Publication Year: NYS Grade 3 Publisher: CTB-McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	93	91	81		
Percent at Level 4	29	26	38		
Number of students tested	41	34	32		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	89	95	75		
Percent at Level 4	22	24	31		
Number of students tested	18	21	31		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

New York State did not give the Math Assessment until the 2005-06 school year.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: New York State ELA

Edition/Publication Year: NYS Grade 3

Publisher: CTB-McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	83	82	90		
Percent at Level 4	20	24	20		
Number of students tested	41	34	30		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent at Level 3 & 4	72	76	75		
Percent at Level 4	6	14	19		
Number of students tested	18	21	16		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

New York State did not test Grade 3 until the 2005-06 school year.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: New York State Math

Edition/Publication Year: NYS Grade 4

Publisher: CTB-McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	94	90	88	92	72
Percent at Level 4	36	28	15	38	26
Number of students tested	33	29	40	37	43
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
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	90	79	86	97	67
Percent at Level 4	30	29	9	41	17
Number of students tested	20	14	22	29	30
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: New York State ELA

Edition/Publication Year: NYS Grade 4

Publisher: CTB-McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Feb	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	85	76	62	60	47
Percent at Level 4	13	14	8	11	7
Number of students tested	32	29	39	37	43
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
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	80	71	55	62	37
Percent at Level 4	5	7	5	14	3
Number of students tested	20	14	22	29	30
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: New York State Math

Edition/Publication Year: NYS Grade 5

Publisher: CTB-McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	81	93	74		
Percent at Level 4	10	12	9		
Number of students tested	31	42	34		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	90	88	50		
Percent at Level 4	0	12	6		
Number of students tested	10	17	16		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

New York State did not give the Math Assessment until the 2005-06 school year.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: New York State ELA

Edition/Publication Year: NYS Grade 5

Publisher: CTB-McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	84	83	68		
Percent at Level 4	7	5	21		
Number of students tested	30	41	34		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	70	65	69		
Percent at Level 4	0	6	13		
Number of students tested	10	17	16		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

New York State did not test Grade 5 ELA until the 2005-06 school year.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: New York State Math

Edition/Publication Year: NYS Grade 6

Publisher: CTB-McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	95	87	68		
Percent at Level 4	40	23	16		
Number of students tested	43	31	37		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent at Level 3 & 4	94	77	60		
Percent at Level 4	25	15	8		
Number of students tested	16	13	25		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

New York State did not give the Math Assessment until the 2005-06 school year.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6 Test: New York State ELA

Edition/Publication Year: NYS Grade 6

Publisher: CTB-McGraw Hill

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	79	61	54		
Percent at Level 4	2	10	3		
Number of students tested	44	31	39		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent at Levels 3 & 4	75	46	44		
Percent at Level 4	8	0	0		
Number of students tested	16	13	27		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

New York State did not test Grade 6 ELA until the 2005-06 school year.

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