

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2010 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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Type of School: (Check all that apply)     Charter  Title I  Magnet  Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. Judy Logsdon

Official School Name: Sesser-Valier Elementary School

School Mailing Address:  
4626 State Hwy 154  
Sesser, IL 62884-2277

County: Franklin    State School Code Number\*: 210281960262001

Telephone: (618) 625-5105    Fax: (618) 625-3040

Web site/URL: http://www.s-v.frnkln.k12.il.us/    E-mail: jlogsdon@sv196.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.

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

Name of Superintendent\*: Mr. Jason Henry

District Name: Sesser-Valier CUSD 196    Tel: (618) 625-5105

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

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Christopher Gore

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)

*\*Private 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, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (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, 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

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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 2009-2010 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 Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
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: (per district designation)
- |          |                                     |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
|          | 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
|          | 1 Middle/Junior high schools        |
|          | 1 High schools                      |
|          | K-12 schools                        |
| <b>3</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>                        |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 7909

**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. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position 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
PreK	4	1	5	6			0
K	21	29	50	7			0
1	34	21	55	8			0
2	21	32	53	9			0
3	20	27	47	10			0
4	26	35	61	11			0
5	27	36	63	12			0
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							334

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
1 % Asian  
0 % Black or African American  
0 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
96 % White  
3 % 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: 15 %

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.	28
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	24
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	52
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	342
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.152
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	15.205

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 50 %

Total number students who qualify: 168

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: 36

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>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>12</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>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>18</u>	<u>1</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>36</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 18 :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%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	95%	96%	96%	95%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	10%	16%	12%	29%	13%
Student dropout rate	%	%	%	%	%

Please provide all explanations below.

During the 2007 - 2008 school year, the 2005 - 2006 school year, and the 2004 - 2005 school year, the teacher turnover rate was over 12%. This is due to several teacher retirements.

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

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

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

## PART III - SUMMARY

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The mission of Sesser-Valier Community Unit School District #196 is to provide students the opportunities to develop the academic, social, physical, and technological skills necessary to learn and become life long learners.

School mission statements are a necessary, but ultimately dry, attempt to express the heart of a school system. A genuine sense of community and a family atmosphere are the qualities that ignite our students to achieve. Our school is located in rural southern Illinois. The district serves a total student population of 755 students in a K-12 public school facility. There are approximately 350 elementary students in the K-5 wing of the complex. Franklin County was once a thriving coal mining region and has faced many social and economic hurdles as a direct result of the 4<sup>th</sup> highest unemployment rate (11%) in the state. Economic instability in the past five years has been the leading factor in an alarming mobility rate of 15%. The current unemployment rate and the economy contribute to approximately 50% of our families qualifying for free or reduced lunches. Dedication on the part of the parents, support staff, teachers, and administrators has taken our district from just another southern Illinois school struggling to stay off of a “watch list,” to an exemplary educational program among schools in our state.

Attendance is relevant to the educational process as there is a direct link between good attendance and good performance. Our students want to come to school, since many of our students desire routine, hot meals, and a community atmosphere. The students’ attendance rate for 2009 was a pleasing 96%. Teacher-generated incentive programs are used to encourage attendance, and each elementary child is involved in personal goal setting and data collection for attendance records.

Just as a structural foundation must be sturdy to stand against the elements, a child’s educational foundation must also be strong to weather everyday challenges. One layer of the foundation includes teaching students to care for themselves and others. In essence, we start by teaching our students to be good citizens. There is a growing social need to address more than academics at the elementary level. Responsibility, honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and respect are the characteristics that we blend with our curriculum to help our students achieve excellence. These social aspects are taught by participating in service opportunities that benefit our community. This community outreach makes families more receptive to participation in Parent/Teacher conferences, Family Reading Nights, Parent Teacher Organization meetings, and other school-sponsored activities. Involvement in these activities creates opportunities for parents to become involved in the individual educational plan for their child.

Once a child arrives at our school, he immediately knows he is part of a community that not only cares about him and others but also ensures academic success. It is at this point in his education that, despite the economic dark cloud that hangs over our community, the Sesser-Valier students continue to rise to the challenge and shine by having met or exceeded Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards in math and reading for the last five years.

Without personal and real-life application, a school’s mission statement is only a collection of words on a page. Sesser-Valier Community Unit School District #196 has challenged its staff, community, and students to be active learners and more involved citizens. We say with a sense of pride in our community, “We are worthy to be recognized as a Blue Ribbon School!”

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

Sesser-Valier Elementary School administers the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in March of each school year. This standardized achievement test measures an individual student's performance in reading and math, as well as writing and science with regard to the Illinois Learning Standards. Test results are reported to educators, parents, and the general public to give evidence of student and school performance. Performance is categorized into four levels: "Exceeds Standards," "Meets Standards," "Below Standards," and "Academic Warning." This information can be accessed at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net).

Since 2004, Sesser-Valier Elementary School has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading and math. Prior to 2004, data indicated a widening gap between the performance of low income students and that of their peers. This information prompted school staff to reevaluate current practices.

Before speaking to the specific data for Sesser-Valier Elementary School, it should be noted that our population is unique. Our school is composed of 96% white/caucasian students and 4% non-white students.

ISAT reading assessment data reveals a change in pattern beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, which can be attributed to a restructuring of our teaching methods and concentrated implementation of best practices. Our third grade reading scores indicated that 70% of the students met or exceeded standards in 2005-2006. This number jumped to 89% in 2006-2007. Even more impressive was the 22% increase we saw with our low income student subgroup during the same time frame.

The percentage of students in fourth grade who met or exceeded state standards for reading has consistently increased each year since 2005-2006, rising from 59% to 83% in 2008-2009. Similarly, during this same time period, low income students' percentage for reading began at 46% and rose to 74%.

Similarly, the fifth grade students have shown an increase in the number who have met or exceeded state standards in reading from 61% in 2006-2007 to 93% in 2008-2009, with the low income subgroup moving from 33% to 92%.

We attribute these remarkable gains to the increased knowledge of faculty and successful implementation of individualized instruction. Looking at the five-year range of reading test scores, it is apparent that the gains of third and fourth grade span a wider time frame. The most significant gains are shown in the most recent years in fifth grade, which we attribute to incorporating more individualized instruction for these students in the past three years.

Unlike our reading scores, our math ISAT scores have been consistently high throughout the past five years, with the most noteworthy gains being made by the fourth grade low income subgroup from 2005-2006 at 63% to the current score of 95% meeting or exceeding the standard. While our ISAT math scores are currently in the mid-90th percentile for third, fourth, and fifth grades, we continue to strive to individualize instruction and attain the goal of 100% of the students meeting or exceeding the standard.

### 2. Using Assessment Results:

Sesser-Valier Elementary School uses assessment data collected throughout the school year to determine skill and concept mastery along with content knowledge acquisition and to guide and support classroom academic instruction. No single assessment tool can provide the necessary information to teach all students. Sesser-

Valier's staff administers and utilizes results from AIMSweb, STAR (reading assessment), Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), Think Link Predictive Assessment Benchmark Tests, and curriculum based teacher assessments.

The assessment results are then reviewed by grade-level teacher teams to determine the areas of need and support. After a student's need has been determined, individual teachers modify instruction and closely monitor the student's progress. Additionally, the results are used to identify curriculum weaknesses and the need, if any, for curriculum modification to benefit all students.

Beginning in 2007, the school started using AIMSWeb benchmarking to assess students, focusing on the five research-based areas of reading. The fall benchmarking allows teachers to identify those students who are struggling and immediately begin to provide additional support and interventions. The interventions employed are research-based and implemented by knowledgeable faculty and staff. Student performance is then documented with progress monitoring which provides a clear picture of the student's growth and accomplishments.

Starting with the current school year, all students are responsible for maintaining a data binder to record and graph personal data such as AR (Accelerated Reader) tests, math skill performance, homework completion, attendance, and behavior. Information is also included about benchmarking and progress monitoring results. These binders allow the students to take ownership of their performance and provide a tangible reminder of their accomplishments and successes.

In addition to ISAT, second through fifth grade students are given the Think Link Assessment three times a year. This assessment is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards and allows teachers to see both class-wide and individual needs so instruction can be modified to ensure success.

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

Sesser-Valier Elementary School understands that knowledge and its application are keys to success in all areas. We find it essential to communicate to both parents and students the data and information which help form the individual educational program for each child. We share this information with students and parents in a variety of ways.

During the 2008 – 2009 school year, which is quite similar to previous years, our school had a parent involvement rate of 98%. This was accomplished in several ways. At the beginning of each year, parents are encouraged to attend evening parent meetings to learn about their child's new grade level, how information will be communicated throughout the year, and the expectations for each child for the year ahead.

Another way parents are updated on their child's progress is through letters sent home three times a year after benchmark testing. These letters inform parents of their child's testing level. If needed, subsequent letters and/or phone contact is made with parents to share ideas and keep them informed.

Parent/Teacher Conferences provide an opportunity for parents to meet and discuss their child's education. During these conferences, information is shared about each child's progress in all subject areas. Teachers dialogue with parents concerning data and the best course of action for their child's education.

Since knowledge is the key to success, we feel the students at Sesser-Valier Elementary School must be informed of and participate in setting goals for each grade level and for individual progress. Along with being

informed of their goals and results, the students use that data to graph their information so they can visually see their academic and social improvements, strengths, and weaknesses.

In order to keep the community as a whole informed on data and progress of our school, the school principal disseminates bi-weekly newsletters. The superintendent and other faculty also communicate pertinent information on the district website. Additionally, we send home progress reports at mid-quarter and report cards at the end of each quarter. Again, we believe communicating information is one of the keys to success at our school.

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

Prior to 2005, Sesser-Valier Elementary School administered the ISAT for grades three through five and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) for grades kindergarten through eight. In the spring of 2005, the Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy (ISEL) was given to kindergarten students, and kindergarten through eighth grade took the ITBS. In the 2006-2007 school year, the ITBS assessment was discontinued, and the ISEL was given to kindergarten through second grade students and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) was administered to third grade students. Since the beginning of the 2007-2008 year, AIMSWeb benchmark assessment has been given to all kindergarten through third grade students. Fourth grade benchmarking was added the following year, and fifth grade has been included this school year.

During the latter part of 2006, the district provided opportunities for faculty to attend various reading instruction professional development activities. Upon gaining knowledge in the area of reading, the school decided to begin modifying its reading instruction and methods. Since 2007-2008, Sesser-Valier Elementary School has focused on providing reading instruction using best practices such as explicit and systematic word analysis instruction including phonemic awareness, teacher collaboration, increased emphasis on providing opportunities for sustained reading at each student's reading level, explicit instruction and application of reading comprehension strategies and skills, and small group differentiated instruction.

In addition to these changes, in October of 2006, the school organized a Response to Intervention (RtI) team and participated in Illinois ASPIRE (Alliance for School-based Problem-solving & Intervention Resources in Education) trainings. Since the 2007-2008 school year, the school has been designated as a demonstration site for ASPIRE. During last year, as many as 10 area schools visited our building to observe our RtI program and collaborated with our faculty to provide knowledge and support while developing their RtI programs. Also, members from our RtI team have made presentations to all Illinois South ASPIRE members during training sessions. Our staff has even been asked by a neighboring county and special education cooperative to provide professional development regarding Response to Intervention.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

High standards and expectations for all students are the cornerstone of Sesser-Valier Elementary School. To ensure that these high standards and expectations are met, the core curriculum areas are directly aligned with Illinois Learning Standards. The faculty utilizes teaching methods that are based on research of best practices and differentiates instruction to ensure each student receives the education he needs and deserves.

Over the past five years, the school's reading and language arts instruction has changed and continues to evolve as the faculty becomes increasingly aware of escalating needs in the area of reading. Daily instruction includes direct instruction in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, spelling, reading strategies, and comprehension. These same areas are also taught using small group instruction, partners and one-on-one tutoring. Through authentic reading experiences, students expand their skills in written expression, listening, oral expression, and responding. Our school has made a concentrated effort to provide time throughout the school day for self-selected reading which has proved to be very beneficial to all of our students, not just those who struggle in reading. In order to reach those students who learn in nontraditional ways, the teachers have incorporated music to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, rhyme, and word play.

Mathematics instruction focuses on the development of mathematical skills and concepts, problem-solving skills, and reasoning skills. Everyday math skills in the areas of sorting, classifying, counting, computation, measurement, and data analysis are taught in whole group, small group, pairs, and individual settings. Many concepts and skills are reinforced and practiced using a hands-on approach with manipulatives. Additionally, a high emphasis is placed on mastery of math facts and automaticity.

Science instruction encompasses life science, earth science, and physical science while including critical thinking. Students learn the scientific process and the skills needed to be life-long information seekers first-hand. They also conduct experiments, create models and diagrams, and write extended responses to real-life situations. In order to integrate reading instruction with science, non-fiction reading materials such as trade books, poetry, magazines, and internet articles are used to create real-life science experiences.

Key ideas and concepts related to society are taught through the social studies curriculum. We strive to include the concepts of community, government, and the history of the United States. These concepts are reinforced by field trips to multiple entities such as the post office, the bank, the fire department, the police department, and even to our state capital to explore our state and its famous leaders. Our school holds monthly community meetings to support the character education program and to foster a sense of community at the school, local, state, national, and global levels. These meetings facilitate participation in service projects such as collecting food for the food pantry, donating to disaster relief funds, and meeting various needs of local families. Our school has also donated to the following programs: Pat's Kids Christmas Gift Program, the Arthritis Foundation, St. Jude's Hospital, etc.

All students receive weekly music instruction that focuses on reading musical notations, instrument knowledge, rhythm, and the history of music. Twice each year, the students prepare and perform a music program for both students and parents. Class instruction provides students with exposure to classic and current musical performances. Additionally, the music instructor team-teaches in the kindergarten classrooms on a daily basis to provide exposure to various generational styles of music as it relates to past and present cultures.

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

(This question is for elementary schools only)

During the 2006-2007 school year, many of the faculty at Sesser-Valier Elementary realized that the school's reading curriculum was not meeting students' individual needs. It seemed that children were falling further and further behind each year. They were missing out on a firm reading foundation and, because of that, could not develop from that point. Through subsequent testing, this suspicion was confirmed and a transformation of the school's reading curriculum and teaching practices began.

The school faculty decided to pursue a more thorough reading curriculum which focused on the five most important research-based areas of reading which are as follows: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. By focusing our instruction on these five concepts, we have streamlined the essential skills taught to ensure each child receives the necessary foundation of reading skills from which to grow.

The practices we use in each of these five areas are research based which is critical in maintaining the integrity of what is being taught. For all areas of reading instruction, the school embraced explicit and systematic teaching methods. Because each of the five essential reading skills is taught thoroughly, those skills are easily transferred into other subject areas such as science and social studies. This, in turn, makes learning in content areas easier and more enjoyable for the students.

When children are tested for reading skills or a teacher notices a critical deficit, then that particular student is given individualized instruction. Since children come to school with so many different needs and skill levels, giving individualized instruction when needed is essential in ensuring each student receives what he needs to form a strong reading foundation. Struggling students and others are monitored regularly to make sure they are progressing adequately.

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

While reading/language arts, writing, math, science and social studies are critical to the educational foundation of each student at Sesser-Valier Elementary School, we realize that technology education is also an essential component to creating an environment which fosters what we believe is important to the future of each student. If the mission of the school is to create life-long learners who have the academic, social, and physical skills, the students must, in this day and age, be able to utilize technology to help themselves become proficient in all areas.

Sesser-Valier has made technology a priority. This has not always been an easy task due to increasing financial constraints of the local economy. Because the school understands that our students must possess technological literacy, we have used every available method to secure the equipment and infrastructure necessary to create an environment which supplies essential technology.

Two computer labs are at the disposal of students and teachers. Also, each classroom in our elementary is equipped with a Smart Board, and most classrooms contain student computers. The library houses additional technological equipment which can be checked out whenever needed. Since technology is so readily available at our school, it is much easier to integrate into all curriculum areas. Students and teachers alike can present multi-media presentations and use educational software, the internet and interactive programs to gather information, create products, and present material. Some student examples include weather observation spreadsheets, Power Point presentations of original stories, and historical research projects. Ways in which teachers use this technology include fast-paced, repetitious skill practice, virtual field trips, and Power Point lesson presentations.

Since technology is utilized in each subject as an integral part of the curriculum, the students realize that having technology skills is essential in gathering information, creating products, and presenting material in a variety of areas and settings. Being a life-long learner is important to our students, and harnessing the various features of technology is one important key to understanding how to be a life-long learner.

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

The teachers at Sesser-Valier Elementary School make a collaborative effort to meet the needs of all students. One challenge that our teachers have striven to meet is addressing the needs of our low income students. By establishing a strong foundation of basics with this population, Sesser-Valier Elementary School has been able to significantly reduce the gap between the achievement of these students and that of their grade-level peers. Similarly, the use of differentiated instruction provides a challenging environment for those students who arrive at school with a more solid background of academic readiness.

Three times each year the students' reading skills are tested using AIMSWeb. This benchmarking data, along with teacher input, is used to place students into three tier groups, based on testing results. These groups are fluid – constantly being modified as the students' needs change.

In the classroom, lessons are presented in a variety of methods in order to appeal to the varying learning styles of students. By incorporating lessons that include musical, artistic, and kinesthetic aspects, each student has the opportunity to learn content material in a way that is comfortable to him. In addition, Sesser-Valier teachers allow their students multiple opportunities to show their mastery of content material. For example, students are given a level of choice when completing projects, such as book choice, or which aspect of the subject matter they would like to present to their peers.

The use of questioning during daily instruction is another way our teachers can vary instruction to meet the needs of all learners. By incorporating a variety of questions from basic recall to more in-depth critical thinking, all students are challenged at their level and kept engaged in discussions.

Differentiated instruction is also found in our use of technology. Students routinely use computer programs that are arranged in a multi-level format. This allows all of the students the opportunity to take part in technology-driven lessons at their own instructional level.

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

Over the past several years, the climate of our professional development has changed immensely. In the past, the professional development activities provided for the teachers lacked continuity. This aided in creating a curriculum which also lacked continuity and that fact manifested itself in student performance and test scores. Because student assessment data indicated a need for a change in the school's curriculum, especially in the content area of reading, our faculty stepped up to the challenge, and professional development was streamlined to meet the school's needs.

Several steps were taken to ensure teachers began receiving the training needed. To guarantee professional development was meeting the district's needs, weak curriculum areas were targeted, and the curriculum was streamlined to make certain all state standards were being appropriately covered. From there, time was given to connect the curriculum from grade to grade to provide continuity of learning. By focusing our time and attention on weaknesses, our students began receiving all necessary information in every area.

Professional development activities selected then began focusing on the area with which we had the most concerns, but that we were sure also held great promise for our students. Since test scores showed that the students at Sesser-Valier Elementary School needed a better reading curriculum, attention was focused on that area. Presentations to the entire district provided continuity in reading instruction. Then, K-5 professional

development activities centered on creating and implementing a balanced literary reading curriculum. When that was mastered, the focus was narrowed down to ways to provide differentiated instruction to meet the varying needs of individual students.

This systematic approach to streamlining the school's curriculum through useful professional development has proven successful for Sesser-Valier Elementary School. We have seen the extremely positive results in the attitude of our students toward reading and other content areas as well. It is also evident in student performance and ever-increasing test scores.

## **6. School Leadership:**

The Sesser-Valier school district emphasizes, with the support of and at the direction of the building principal, a team approach in its leadership, with everyone working together for the benefit of the students. The district has striven to give teachers the opportunities and resources needed to perform their jobs effectively. A variety of professional development opportunities is provided, both in district and out of district, to equip teachers with best practices for instruction.

One role of the school's principal is to review the school's testing data to identify areas in which improvement is necessary. In 2006-2007, it became evident that we were in need of revisions to our reading program. This began a series of changes which have proven to be very beneficial to our district and its students.

In 2006, a team of grade level representatives, along with other educators in the school, was assembled to create "vertical articulation" between the grade levels and organize a plan to improve instruction. In turn, these informal grade level leaders reported back to their colleagues to help them implement the new strategies learned. At this point, it became apparent that it was essential for the teachers to have a common planning time in order to work collaboratively and maintain consistency among classrooms. Therefore, the schedules were rearranged to meet this need. Not only did this provide consistency among the classrooms, it also fostered creativity among the teachers to make the curriculum more interesting and thorough. This "horizontal articulation" and the approach of supporting one another and working toward a common goal has made the changes we have undergone more effective and has become the cornerstone in our school's success.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

Edition/Publication Year: 1999 - 2009 Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	92	98	93	91	89
% Exceeds	54	63	62	32	32
Number of students tested	64	62	62	56	47
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	90	96	90	88	82
% Exceeds	52	59	55	15	32
Number of students tested	32	27	31	26	22
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds			69		
% Exceeds			31		
Number of students tested			13		
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

Edition/Publication Year: 1999 - 2009 Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	81	87	89	70	72
% Exceeds	44	29	38	14	17
Number of students tested	64	62	62	56	47
Percent of total students tested	100	100	98	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	2	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	71	85	84	62	59
% Exceeds	32	26	26	8	0
Number of students tested	32	27	31	26	22
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds			54		
% Exceeds			23		
Number of students tested			13		
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

Edition/Publication Year: 1999 - 2009 Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	97	85	90	78	
% Exceeds	47	30	22	17	
Number of students tested	59	61	59	46	
Percent of total students tested	98	98	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	2	0	0	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	95	84	93	63	
% Exceeds	47	24	10	13	
Number of students tested	19	25	30	24	
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds		36	85		
% Exceeds		18	8		
Number of students tested		11	13		
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Grade 4 students were not tested in Reading and Math on the 2005 ISAT.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

Edition/Publication Year: 1999 - 2009 Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	83	83	63	59	
% Exceeds	34	30	14	20	
Number of students tested	59	61	59	46	
Percent of total students tested	98	98	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	2	0	0	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	74	68	47	46	
% Exceeds	26	20	7	4	
Number of students tested	19	25	30	24	
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds		55	23		
% Exceeds		27	0		
Number of students tested		11	13		
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Students in Grade 4 were not tested in Reading and Math for the 2005 ISAT.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

Edition/Publication Year: 1999 - 2009 Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	93	92	89	95	90
% Exceeds	18	15	22	7	17
Number of students tested	61	61	46	59	60
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	88	87	79	97	83
% Exceeds	15	10	13	0	21
Number of students tested	26	32	24	32	29
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds		69		93	
% Exceeds		8		0	
Number of students tested		13		14	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

Edition/Publication Year: 1999 - 2009 Publisher: Pearson/ISBE

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	93	74	61	54	67
% Exceeds	37	28	9	9	8
Number of students tested	61	61	46	59	60
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	92	59	33	50	66
% Exceeds	27	9	0	3	7
Number of students tested	26	32	24	32	29
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds		31		8	
% Exceeds		8		0	
Number of students tested		13		13	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes: