

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12PA14

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 2011-2012 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 foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
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

12PA14

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 (per district designation): 3 Middle/Junior high schools
2 High schools
0 K-12 schools
9 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 11939

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	316	284	600
1	0	0	0		8	289	281	570
2	0	0	0		9	0	0	0
3	0	0	0		10	0	0	0
4	0	0	0		11	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								1170

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
2 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
95 % 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 2010-2011 school year: 3%

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, 2010 until the end of the school year.	21
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	15
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	36
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	1170
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.03
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 1%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 1

Number of non-English languages represented: 1

Specify non-English languages:

Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13%

Total number of students who qualify: 147

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

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 16%

Total number of students served: 183

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>17</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>24</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>115</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>20</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>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>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>50</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>50</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>24</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>132</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: 23:1

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

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

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

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other	_____ %
Total	_____ 0%

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

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

During the 2011-2012 school year, Seneca Valley Middle School celebrates sixteen years of middle school excellence. The evolution of this former junior high into a middle school began in the mid-1990's. The freshman class was transferred to another building in August 1994 and for the next two years, administrators and faculty planned and implemented the change to a middle school philosophy for the entire population of seventh and eighth graders in the Seneca Valley School District. This transformation occurred after a process of visiting and observing exemplary middle schools, discussions, focused in-service training, and honest input from all staff members. A steering committee of administrators and staff members met monthly to focus upon the philosophy of middle schools and to organize a unique framework for the birth of Seneca Valley Middle School. A pilot team of random seventh graders and seven teachers executed the middle school core team model during the 1995-1996 school year. After evaluating the successes of the pilot team, SVMS opened its doors in August 1996, with nine academic core teams in place. Each academic team included teachers of science, math, English, and social studies for full year courses as well as reading and health teachers for semester courses. A special education teacher and a guidance counselor were also members of each team. By utilizing teachers certified in specific subjects on the secondary level, SVMS maintained its priority of academic excellence. Included in our new middle school were encore teams, an exploratory program, and an original advisory program. Although many courses, clubs, and extra-curricular activities remained the same, the addition of more opportunities for students further enhanced the middle school concept at SVMS. Since then, Seneca Valley Middle School has been acknowledged as a 2006 Don Eichhorn Award recipient by the National Middle School Association in the state of Pennsylvania and was recognized nationally as a 2011 School to Watch. We are extremely proud that we have sustained a model of excellence, improvement, and eagerly welcome the next step of affirmation of what we practice and provide students every day. Therefore, we believe we are worthy of Blue Ribbon status.

The past 16 years at Seneca Valley Middle School have been full of growth and accomplishments. The faculty and the student population have grown to include a tenth core team and a major building addition onto the original building. This addition gave us the opportunity to pod our teams to further enhance the sense of team community. With a student population of 1,200 young adolescents, over 100 staff members provide a variety of options to assist all learners and their diverse needs. Some initiatives include the after-school tutoring program, weekly DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) program, FOCUS on Study class, interdisciplinary units, exploratory options including cyber acceleration and remediation, the Olweus Anti-Bullying program with supporting Connections activities, Principal's Advisory Council and RtII (Response to Intervention and Instruction) process. Parents and community members are also valuable resources to the building. This school/ parent connection is established through various outlets, such as regular meetings with the Seneca Valley Involved Parents group, presentations to staff and students by community speakers, and our School Resource Officer who is stationed on campus. The building leadership has placed a strong emphasis on technology, which has opened new opportunities for all students. Beyond placing Smart Boards and computers in every room, great care has been taken to align our curriculum to ensure the development of 21st century skills. A prime example is the inception of our Seneca Valley Cyber and Arts program. The program provides even more opportunity to expand our course offerings. The flexibility we can now provide only enhances our strong program.

As Seneca Valley Middle School evolves, the program aim remains constant: to provide students with a balanced and comprehensive education in a safe environment. Proof of this is in our attainment of Adequate Yearly Progress for over ten years straight. The mission statement states: "Through a learning partnership with family and community, Seneca Valley Middle School will provide young adolescents with a positive, integrated, educational experience in a nurturing environment, developing responsible, life-long learners," supporting our motto "Where Teams make a Difference!" Educational excellence and high achievement are constant focal points for the SVMS students and staff. We wholeheartedly believe in our mission.

1. Assessment Results:

A.

General Pennsylvania System of School Assessment information:

The Pennsylvania state assessment performance targets (proficient and advanced) for the last five years are as follows:

2006-2007 Mathematics 45% Reading 54%
2007-2008 Mathematics 56% Reading 63%
2008-2009 Mathematics 56% Reading 63%
2009-2010 Mathematics 56% Reading 63%
2010-2011 Mathematics 67% Reading 72%

- 7th grade students are assessed each spring in: Math and Reading
- 8th grade students are assessed each spring in: Math, Reading, Writing and Science
- Performance levels for 7th and 8th grades include: Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic
- A student receiving a score that is Advanced or Proficient constitutes an acceptable level of performance

As documented in part VI, Seneca Valley Middle School has not only met the above targets over the past five years, but has attained increased scores far exceeding state averages in both math and reading. While some gains may be regarded as small and some losses minute, one very strong conclusion is that SVMS has increased PSSA test scores consistently since 2006/2007. Over the past five years, a few trends have developed in our test score data. For example, math scores have increased around 8.75% and reading has increased approximately 7%. These trends become more evident by examining sub groups. Significant gains have been made by the free and reduced lunch student population including approximately 12.44% gains in math. Additionally, in reading, approximately 75% of the students in this category continue to receive proficient and advanced scores. Our math PSSA scores reflect an increase of 8.75% proficient and advanced over the past 5 years. Even more impressive is the percentage of students who moved from the proficient level to the advanced level. These gains have reached more than 14.08%. Reading scores have improved nearly 7% from a baseline of 88%. Most recently, approximately 95% of SVMS students scored proficient or advanced on the PSSA in 2010, and roughly 69% of those students scored in the advanced category. Furthermore, the data indicates an average of 75% of free and reduced lunch students perform at proficient or advanced over a 5 year span.

B.

Assessing and monitoring the success of instructional strategies and methods used to engage our students require a variety of procedures. Along with the more traditional tools of test and quizzes, we make frequent use of projects addressing real-world concerns.

SVMS is very cognizant of monitoring levels of student success with many different programs. We use results from the PSSA, NWEA, and individual snapshots, a data/RTII (Response to Intervention and Instruction) monitoring form completed on every student at the beginning of the year, to chart progress and reflect upon all programs in weekly team meetings. By reviewing student data, staff members can decide how to implement new strategies and evaluate existing programs.

Over the last five years, SVMS has undertaken many initiatives to increase PSSA scores. Professional development days and curriculum meetings have been used to look at curriculum and student data to determine areas needing improvement. For example, a few years ago the district decided to look at the math curriculum compared with test scores to determine avenues for improvement. After this analysis, a plan of implementation evolved. All eighth graders now take either Geometry or Algebra, and struggling math students take Algebra TE (technology enhanced). The Algebra TE class provides alternative approaches and has an extra period three times a week called AIM (Additional Instruction in Math). During AIM, teachers work one-on-one with students targeting their weaknesses in math.

In our quest to continue increasing test scores, administration instituted a RTII committee to scrutinize data to identify students who may be at risk. The committee created a form that each team of teachers completes about every child on their team of students at the beginning of the school year. This form looks at scores on the PSSA and NWEA, students' grades from the previous year, and student absences. This process provides teachers with the information to identify and offer assistance to those students who are at risk.

Looking at progress through a lens that deals specifically with reading language arts offers some very valuable insight. First, test scores have increased 7% over the past five years from a baseline of 88% advanced and proficient. Also, students scoring advanced have also increased approximately 7%. These gains can be attributed to several approaches the English and Reading departments have taken to ensure growth. In addition to some common practices such as reading and writing across the curriculum and DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), the departments have developed several other approaches to ensuring student gain. First, ACE reader responses are an approach to assist students as they analyze what is being read and provide valid evidence for drawing conclusions. Another successful approach that both departments undertook was the rearrangement of their curriculum. This approach focused on placing similar concepts in "chunks" and delivering material in a deeper manner within the chunks. The theory is that students remember what fits together. Common assessments are another approach the departments have taken to ensure student gain. One very effective common assessment is our research project. This project is an interdisciplinary approach to research where students are exposed to the exact same research materials, which allows for great continuity between grades as well as between subject areas.

2. Using Assessment Results:

SVMS uses assessment data to improve student and school performance. We use results from the PSSA, NWEA, and individual snapshots to chart progress and reflect upon programs. By reviewing student data through the use of a data warehousing system called Performance Tracker, the staff can decide how to implement new strategies and evaluate existing programs.

In our ongoing efforts to help students become academically successful, students in the FOCUS (support study hall for regular education students) and AIM (Additional Instruction in Math) classrooms receive academic support beyond the regular classroom to strengthen their study and math skills as well as test-taking strategies and homework reinforcement. In addition, our middle school offers a free after-school tutoring service, monitored by middle school teachers and staffed by honor students from the intermediate and senior high schools in our district. Homeroom time on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays is set aside for informal support and tutoring for those students who need additional help in understanding and reinforcing classroom material as deemed necessary by their classroom performance and assessment scores. Through the use of homeroom tutoring time, core team clustering, AIM, and Focus on Study, students are provided the time they may need to reinforce the skills with which they are struggling.

Similarly, IEP students receive support through the learning strategies classes (seventh grade) and the support study halls (eighth grade). According to data accumulated through assessments, learning support students are considered for placement in additional reading instruction, which is implemented by special education teachers for improved comprehension, fluency, and word recognition.

Additionally, guidance counselors meet daily with each team of teachers to assess students' needs and coordinate school–family conferences. During these daily meetings and parent-teacher conferences, RtII (Response to Intervention and Instruction) is utilized. RtII is designed to bring together information about the child's strengths and needs as identified through their standardized and classroom assessment scores. A plan is developed implementing evidence-based instructional approaches that support the child's success. The key components are a tiered approach to supports and services, early intervention prior to formal identification, screening, assessments, progress monitoring, the use of standard protocol interventions, collaborative problem-solving, and planning for the child with the parents.

A goal of our building is to provide faculty with the opportunity to apply assessment data while making decisions related to instruction. Faculty members are trained in the use of Performance Tracker, a system that allows data to be disaggregated and used to guide instruction. Staff members begin compiling student data before students arrive in the fall. Once the data snapshots are completed by each student's team, those students who meet established criteria are assigned an advocate who identifies the child's abilities within a nurturing system and in collaboration with the teaching team and parents/guardians who help support that child's needs. Through documentation of the child's successes, the advocate guides instructional approaches that support continued success. Furthermore, the assessment data found in Performance Tracker helps our teachers determine which instructional techniques and strategies most effectively promote students to mastery level. As we continue to self-evaluate and reflect, each team discusses "Best Practices" in our daily team meetings, where, again, we strive to improve our efforts to deliver meaningful, accurate, and developmentally appropriate content to our students. Regular evaluation of PSSA and NWEA data is also part of the "Best Practice" process.

As well as sharing the assessment data throughout our organization, SVMS and Seneca Valley School District impart knowledge of student achievement to the many stakeholders throughout the community. The widely distributed magazine, *In Seneca Valley*, provides a platform for communicating district data to business and residential members of the community who are not directly connected at present with the school. A well maintained website and a sophisticated "Alert Now" system further ensure that information is made available. Lastly, in an attempt to provide venues in which this data can be discussed, administrators at all levels hold meetings with involved community members.

Assessing and monitoring the success of the instructional strategies and methods used to engage our students require a variety of procedures. Along with the more traditional tools of tests and quizzes, we make frequent use of projects addressing real-world concerns, many of which are displayed throughout the building during the school year; also used are performance-based assessments. Benchmark assessments such as the NWEA provide crucial data for individual snapshots that drive modifications to instruction and curriculum pacing. Students are consistently encouraged and expected to self-evaluate, reflect, and set goals for improvement across the disciplines at SVMS.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Seneca Valley Middle School creates an environment where both teachers and students are provided with support that fosters a community of teaching and learning in which successful strategies are learned, shared and implemented across the curriculum. Administrators, teachers and staff are continuously offered diverse opportunities to enhance work-related skills at different levels. Teachers and administration not only work diligently to maintain a high quality of excellence within our middle school building, we also look for means to share our best practice with other schools throughout the district and state, as well as other professional associations.

SVMS creates a personalized environment that supports the intellectual, ethical, and social development of those involved in the educational process. Our school's motto is "Seneca Valley Middle School... Where Teams Make a Difference." The truth of this motto is revealed every day during the team planning period when teachers address the academic practices and procedures in their curriculum and classroom. We have welcomed visitors from other districts into our middle school in an attempt to exchange successful strategies based upon the middle school philosophy. In addition, we encourage our

own community and school board members to visit our schools regularly and be a part of the educational process.

The district administration and teachers meet regularly to conduct horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment. We hold strong to the belief that in order for our students to be successful in the classroom, teachers and administrators alike must be cognizant of the curriculum to ensure that all standards are being covered at appropriate times and the common core alignment is taking place.

SVMS, volunteered to host the Western Region PMSA Conference in 2010. As a member school of PMSA and AMLE, the teachers were eager to share their content knowledge in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment. Session topics included those directly related to peer observations, lesson study, performance assessments, interdisciplinary material, common assessments, common rubrics, peer editing, high expectations, pre-testing or re-testing, and much more. The event brought districts together from Western Pennsylvania to share successful strategies for middle level education. The entire staff participates annually in this conference when it is hosted by other districts.

SVMS is constantly seeking innovative and affordable ways to share successful strategies with other schools in the district, state and/or professional associations. We are committed to finding and utilizing the resources available at these levels to further advance our educational practices.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

In support of the District and building mission statements, Seneca Valley Middle School works in partnership with parents and the community to encourage and support student success. SVMS staff members develop alliances with families to enhance and support the well-being of the children. Parents are involved in all aspects of our school and are more than just volunteers or fund-raisers. The parents who participate through SVIP (Seneca Valley Involved Parents) help us create a culture of pride by displaying student work in hallways, and serve as guest speakers for a team Career Day. SVIP members, along with community members, share their expertise with students by informing them of their daily work routine and the preparation and education required to obtain their particular position in the job force. Administrators, teachers and guidance counselors make sure parents are informed, included, and involved as partners in their child's education. SVMS offers parent education activities such as parent orientation night for incoming students, Open House and the Athletic Department parent orientation. Teams communicate with parents when there are concerns, but also send positive notes home to honor Students of the Week and other student successes. Parents can keep track of their child's homework through team websites and monitor their child's grade through our web-based electronic grading system, Classroll.com. Students use a planner, provided by SVMS, which is another means of teacher-family communication to allow parents to share in the academic progress of their child. Progress reports are made available through a parent portal at the midterm of every 9-week grading period, and report cards with teacher comments are sent home at the end of each quarter. When deemed necessary by the teacher or parent, parent-team meetings are scheduled to address concerns. It is common practice to schedule these meetings during the day when all involved teachers, counselors, support staff, and the student can attend.

Our mission to encourage parents and community members to take part in the education of our students is also evident through our Diversity Committee. This group communicates awareness of the multicultural range of our student body through public discussion forums, and speakers who are willing to share their ethnic heritage to educate our students. The faculty, administration, and guidance counselors at SVMS encourage parent and community involvement in order to help us achieve student success.

1. Curriculum:

Seneca Valley Middle School's core curriculum addresses learning standards as teachers regularly assess, evaluate, and meaningfully revise our daily efforts to share content-area curriculum with our students. The SVMS curriculum is developmentally appropriate and rigorous in providing students with skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century. For example, in our English and reading classes, the school's core curriculum addresses the learning standards through the analysis of text, reading strategies, research and writing. Students explore various types of texts including novels, short stories, poetry, drama and non-fiction works while developing their ability to write and speak effectively. The math curriculum reflects the increasingly rigorous competencies that students are expected to acquire and apply concepts learned at their grade levels. Students take Pre-Algebra in seventh grade and Algebra I in eighth grade, but for students who excel in mathematics, Honors Algebra I and Honors Geometry are offered in respective grades. The school's learning standards are addressed in the Science Department by utilizing various modules such as STC: Organisms-From Macro to Micro, Foss: Populations and Ecosystems, and SEPUP: Issues and Physical Science. Each of these modules utilizes inquiry investigations and real world experiences while engaging students in hands-on learning activities to develop deep understanding of concepts as well as essential problem solving skills. In seventh grade social studies classes, students study civilizations that have contributed to our modern world. The Civics and Economics core curriculum, taught during eighth grade, provides students opportunities to investigate the structure of the United States' political system and principles of contemporary economics. Within our school's visual and performing arts classes in seventh and eighth grade, theater, acting, use of props and lighting are a focus. Art Concepts challenges students in principles and creativity, while the curricular objective of chorus is to encourage independent part singing and music reading abilities along with ensemble performances. We utilize the curriculum in physical education classes to implement instruction by developing concrete goals for students to achieve. Activities are broken down into various concepts, which can be transferred between units. Within the curriculum we utilize the 3 domains; psychomotor (physical performance), cognitive (rules, regulations, body mechanics and game strategies), and affective (social interactions, teamwork, sportsmanship). SVMS health classes compliment the work achieved in PE through the study of human health as it pertains to the maturing and developing young adolescent. Technology education is engrained in all curriculums to promote higher level thinking and problem solving skills while students experience technological methods through hands on activities. The world language curriculum engages students in conversation both within and beyond the school setting. Students are given the resources and strategies to connect language learning with other disciplines and make comparisons of the language studied and their own. The unique curriculum of Family and Consumer Sciences teaches students life-long skills such as kitchen and food safety, child care, sewing, self-esteem building and personal finance.

The curriculum at SVMS is both socially significant and relevant to the personal and career interests of young adolescents. Teachers design interdisciplinary units in order to reinforce concepts and real-world problems. Students explore topics and interests in order to develop their identity, learn about their strengths, discover their own competencies, and plan for their futures. Examples of such opportunities include: expert speakers, team designed interdisciplinary units, on-site grade level exploratory fieldtrips, and school wide research units. In addition, our guidance counselors work with students each year to plan a course of study that meets their needs and interests, with options to accelerate and explore interests. SVMS provides young adolescents with a positive, integrated educational experience while developing responsible, lifelong learners.

2. Reading/English:

The English language arts curriculum at SVMS is addressed within two classes. As a year-long course, English classes explore literature while refining students' ability to write and speak effectively. Grammar,

vocabulary, and usage skills are taught through the analysis of literature and the expansion of the writing process. Critical reading, viewing, and thinking skills are also emphasized. Our semester long reading course is designed to help the reader think critically, and encourage a questioning attitude. The reading process allows students to recognize and use patterns of organizing material as a means of learning and remembering information. Teachers use varied instructional methods and assessments to address skills taught within these classes. For example, during lessons, students may be grouped homogeneously and given different types of material to read, such as informational articles that are related, but on varied reading levels based on ability levels. Assessments are often selected by students and may be chosen amongst differentiated products to demonstrate levels of learning.

To improve the reading skills of those who read below grade level, students choose novels to read independently so levels are differentiated based on interests and individual reading skills. Students can choose a novel so they are not at frustration level while reading for pleasure and content. To strengthen reading skills, teachers may give before, during, and after strategies that will increase comprehension when reading independently. Struggling students are taught vocabulary strategies for breaking down words to assist in finding meaning (e.g. words parts, affixes, and roots). In addition, students may be provided with word banks or reduced choices on tests/assignments or chunking of long-term assignments to break down larger pieces of information for understanding. Teachers may work one-on-one, or in small groups, with students having difficulty reading grade level material or comprehending grade level content.

Students reading above grade level choose novels that are appropriate for their ability. With upper level texts, students are not only exposed to higher level concepts, but also vocabulary in a higher range, therefore increasing word recognition and usage. Although all students are expected to use critical thinking skills and higher level reasoning, for students reading above grade level teachers offer varied reading response tasks to take them above and beyond. Students reading at higher levels may also be asked to analyze a text further than a student reading at or below grade level.

3. Mathematics:

SVMS integrates all of the academic standards at the seventh and eighth grade levels. Created by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, these standards specify what students need to know and how they will apply such knowledge. Competencies are mastered through a variety of teaching and learning methods. Through differentiating instruction, students have the opportunity to see material in a non-traditional learning environment, which better fits individual learner needs. This may include student-centered teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, inquiry based learning, learning centers, and activities reflecting real-life situations. Lessons utilize SMART boards, document cameras, laptops, remote response systems, and graphing calculators. SVMS students are not just learning mathematics; they are active participants in their education.

The majority of the students in the SVMS take Pre-Algebra course in seventh grade and Algebra I course in eighth grade. However, many students will take an alternate path to success, depending on their ability level. Through constant progress monitoring using results obtained from tests such as PSSA or NWEA, the academic needs of each student are evaluated and addressed. This ensures that each student is enrolled in a class suited to fit their needs.

For students who are found to excel in mathematics, Honors Algebra I is offered in seventh grade and Honors Geometry is offered in eighth grade. Students in these courses have been identified as having outstanding intellectual ability, and their development requires special services or activities not ordinarily provided in the regular math class. Their participation in Honors classes will continue through their high school years.

There are also programs in place for students who may be performing below grade level. In seventh and eighth grades, students may opt to take the Pre-Algebra TE (Technology-enhanced) or Algebra I TE course. Students enrolled in these courses are also enrolled in AIM (Additional Instruction in

Mathematics), and meet an additional three periods per week. These courses integrate computer programs to enhance the learning experience for the student struggling in math.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Seneca Valley Middle School science is dynamic and interactive. Students work independently and cooperatively to study science concepts inside and outside of the classroom. Seventh and eighth grade science classes use a hands-on inquiry-centered curriculum. Our curriculum emphasizes having students learn science through hypothesizing, observing, experimenting, keeping journals, problem solving and working in teams. Students investigate the science behind current societal and environmental issues and learn to make decisions supported by the best available evidence. Based on State and National Science Education Standards, lessons are created to actively engage all students.

Our mission, to develop responsible, life-long learners through a partnership with the community, is cultivated through the many opportunities science students have at SVMS. Science teachers bring the outside world into their classrooms by utilizing local police to demonstrate the use of radar guns and having university art professors relate chemistry to creating art. Furthermore, students work to keep our school environmentally green by running a paper recycling program in partnership with Tri-County Recycling and students are encouraged to become active in our Environmental Club. Outside of the classroom, students take trips to explore Lutherlyn's Environmental Science Center and tour the local sewage treatment plant. Local companies also support and become involved in our annual Stream Day Activities where the students spend the day outdoors running tests on the stream that flows through our campus. They conduct culminating outdoor activities allowing them to apply the concepts previously learned in the classroom. Additionally, teachers link students to competitions at the local and national level. SVMS had the national winner last year in the "Do You Want to be a Chemist?" competition. Moreover, our teachers provide a connective bridge for both girls and boys to the local universities for workshops and classes to enhance their learning experience.

5. Instructional Methods:

SVMS is a middle school that prides itself on academic excellence for all students. Our focus on providing differentiated instruction, support, and opportunities for all levels of students can be seen in numerous aspects of our school. Within every class, teachers incorporate methods that make instruction more accessible to the variety of learners we serve. By basing lesson plans on a standards-aligned curriculum and applying instructional strategies, teachers expect high achievement from all students. Technological tools are integrated throughout our instructional program to provide students access and interaction with course material. Across subject areas, students interact with each other and the subject matter via interactive technology such as SchoolWires, Moodle, Blogger, Glogster, Cognitive Tutor, SMART boards, and teacher created web-based activities. SENTEO systems facilitate classroom reviews and allow teachers to quickly assess the need for advancement or re-teaching. iPods are available to supplement reading assignments with audio books, and iPads provide opportunities for teachers to select appropriate applications for students with special needs.

Our teaming structure provides ample opportunities to supplement regular instruction to support struggling learners and ensure their progress. By implementing the RtII process, teachers are able to pinpoint individual students' needs and strengths. Each interdisciplinary team provides FOCUS, an interactive study hall to teach academic skills and provide assistance; AIM, an additional instructional period in mathematics in which the teacher's instruction is also supported by the use of Cognitive Tutor, an online math skill-building program; and Learning Strategies, a class that individualizes to meet the needs of learning support students. Based on the needs of their students, teams can also arrange supports including organizational groups, homework clubs, and mentoring.

The needs of advanced students are met in a variety of ways, notably through advanced-level classes and opportunities for enrichment. Gifted Support teachers consult with interdisciplinary teams to identify

enrichment activities for high ability students; for example, upon identifying a need for more complex work in science, the science curriculum is periodically compacted to allow advanced students to pursue related topics in more depth. High-ability students also design an individual, year-long project based on interests and academic strengths. Additional individualized opportunities include MathCounts, You Be the Chemist, English Festival at Duquesne University, Shakespeare Monologue Competition, Touchstones discussion program, Academic Games, and Girls Going Places. At SVMS, academic excellence is supported by strong curriculum, exceptional teaching methods, and the numerous opportunities for enrichment and remediation.

6. Professional Development:

SVMS's professional development program is aligned with academic standards and tailored to support student learning. On professional development days, teachers work within their departments to develop curricular goals, which are designed to improve how standards are addressed within instruction, curriculum, and assessment. For example, most departments have now developed common assessments to evaluate student achievement uniformly across the teams within our middle school.

Many aspects of our professional development program are designed to improve student learning. Beyond administrative observations and daily walkthroughs, teachers conduct peer observations both inside and outside their departments. Both the teacher and observer then meet to reflect on pedagogy through a systematic critique. Observers can apply what they learned to improve their own lessons and teaching methods. After hearing Dr. William Daggett speak at a district professional development day, our school developed a "lesson study" evaluation tool to improve the rigor and relevance of our lessons. This tool is utilized with every teacher during post-observation meetings. Furthermore, once a month, team teachers read, discuss, and write a reflection about a "best practice" described in a recent education article. Teachers also have the opportunity to earn Act 48 credit by attending technology classes after school that focus on using SMART Technology, Schoolwires, or Moodle.

Other areas of our professional development program allow teachers to collaborate with and learn from others both inside and outside of our school district. Teachers have participated in PAMLE and AMLE programs at the regional, state, and national level as learners, facilitators, and board members. Our school collaborates with local universities such as Slippery Rock, Duquesne, Robert Morris, Carlow, LaRoche, and Geneva, who provide training for cooperating teachers who are mentoring student teachers. Furthermore, our district has a three-year new teacher induction program in which veteran teachers and district administration provide professional development in areas such as technology, differentiated instruction and cooperative learning.

Students are more likely to achieve at higher levels if they can learn in a safe and secure environment, and multiple aspects of our professional development program serve this goal. Our Olweus Committee meets regularly to evaluate data from our anti-bullying program. Administrators use monthly faculty meetings to communicate building goals and safety procedures. In the next month, our district will provide a Cyber Safety program for students during the school day, and another program for parents in the evening.

7. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy for Seneca Valley Middle School is reflective of the motto "Where teams make a difference". The administrative team is comprised of the building principal, assistant principal and dean of students. Through collaborative efforts, the middle school continues to model team work, goal setting and continuous reflective improvement built upon a strong foundation of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Seneca Valley Middle School operates on a teaming principle. Each group of stakeholders provides elements to strengthen and maintain the community of learners. Working in collaboration, all of these

groups of individuals constitute the overall structure of the middle school philosophy. The Instructional Cabinet, comprised of leaders of each department, creates goals each year for their respective groups. The meetings surrounding the development of these goals focus on three specific areas of improvement: curriculum, instruction and assessment. A mid-year and final goal review is conducted each school year reflecting on progress and future direction. This process is conducted both administratively and with each department.

The continued success enjoyed by Seneca Valley Middle School is the result of continuous reflective improvement practices. As the teaming process is pervasive throughout the school, multiple groups meet periodically to assess and provide insight to the school. Team leader meetings are held periodically throughout the year, the Principal Advisory Council (PAC), made of up of a cross section of students and the SVIP (Seneca Valley Involved Parent) group meet on a monthly basis. Each of these groups provides the building administration the opportunity to evaluate and address the overall culture and needs of the building. Visibility and accessibility are crucial elements in the overall culture of the building. Administration needs to be connected throughout all levels and seen as part of the team. The principal models this philosophy by developing a team concept in the office and then participating in all levels of teaming that occur throughout the school community.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: Pennsylvania Systems of School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2011 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	95	90	92	89	88
Advanced	77	70	70	64	58
Number of students tested	542	571	543	570	552
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	5	10	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	2	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	89	78	80	69	77
Advanced	63	47	55	41	35
Number of students tested	75	68	74	86	74
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced		93			
Advanced		64			
Number of students tested	4	14	9	6	4
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested		2	7	8	8
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	88	77	74	68	67
Advanced	71	46	45	38	34
Number of students tested	101	117	114	118	104
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Proficient/Advanced	100	100	100	100	
Advanced	87	83	73	85	
Number of students tested	15	12	11	13	7
NOTES:					

12PA14

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2011 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	94	87	87	89	86
Advanced	62	53	59	56	59
Number of students tested	531	571	543	570	552
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	5	10	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	2	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	94	69	69	70	64
Advanced	40	29	41	30	30
Number of students tested	70	68	74	86	74
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced		93			
Advanced		36			
Number of students tested	4	14	9	6	4
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested		2	7	8	8
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	90	63	61	68	61
Advanced	52	32	33	32	25
Number of students tested	90	117	114	118	104
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Proficient/Advanced	93	100	82	85	
Advanced	73	67	45	54	
Number of students tested	15	12	11	13	7
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8 Test: Pennsylvania Systems of School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2011 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	91	88	86	83	81
Advanced	57	62	62	53	47
Number of students tested	550	531	551	569	568
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	8	10	4	7	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	2	1	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	81	74	71	64	62
Advanced	34	43	34	29	31
Number of students tested	53	65	76	80	61
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	87				
Advanced	33				
Number of students tested	15	7	6	6	8
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	7	8	9	3
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	86	67	68	59	55
Advanced	51	34	37	22	18
Number of students tested	86	104	112	102	97
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Proficient/Advanced	91	90			90
Advanced	73	70			50
Number of students tested	11	10	9	7	10
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8 Test: Pennsylvania Systems of School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2006 - 2011 Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	96	93	95	93	90
Advanced	76	72	77	74	64
Number of students tested	544	530	549	570	568
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	8	10	4	7	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	2	1	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	89	83	81	84	77
Advanced	62	49	52	51	36
Number of students tested	55	65	75	80	61
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	93				
Advanced	60				
Number of students tested	15	7	5	6	8
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	7	8	9	3
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	95	75	78	77	67
Advanced	72	42	53	40	26
Number of students tested	78	103	112	102	97
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian or Pacific Islander					
Proficient/Advanced	100	80			100
Advanced	82	70			60
Number of students tested	11	10	9	7	10
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	92	89	88	86	84
Advanced	66	66	65	58	52
Number of students tested	1092	1102	1094	1139	1120
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	13	15	14	10	7
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	85	76	75	66	70
Advanced	50	45	44	35	33
Number of students tested	128	133	150	166	135
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	89	85	73	67	75
Advanced	36	52	39	50	42
Number of students tested	19	21	15	12	12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced			86	88	100
Advanced			60	41	45
Number of students tested	1	9	15	17	11
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	87	72	71	63	61
Advanced	61	40	41	30	26
Number of students tested	187	221	226	220	201
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Proficient/Advanced	96	95	100	100	94
Advanced	81	77	75	80	58
Number of students tested	26	22	20	20	17
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	95	89	91	91	88
Advanced	69	62	68	65	61
Number of students tested	1075	1101	1092	1140	1120
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	13	15	14	10	7
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	91	75	75	76	69
Advanced	49	38	46	40	32
Number of students tested	125	133	149	166	135
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	94	90	71	83	66
Advanced	57	43	35	33	50
Number of students tested	19	21	14	12	12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced			87	82	91
Advanced			53	46	64
Number of students tested	2	9	15	17	11
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	92	68	69	72	63
Advanced	61	36	42	35	25
Number of students tested	168	220	226	220	201
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Proficient/Advanced	95	90	90	90	88
Advanced	76	68	69	59	64
Number of students tested	26	22	20	20	17
NOTES:					

12PA14