

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
3 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
12 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 11862

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: 3
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	97	94	191
7	139	141	280
8	117	94	211
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			682

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
4 % Asian
3 % Black or African American
8 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
83 % White
2 % Two or more races
100 % Total

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

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 3%

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

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	11
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	9
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	20
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	741
(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: 5

Number of non-English languages represented: 3

Specify non-English languages:

Hebrew, French, Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10%
 Total number of students who qualify: 70

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

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 12%
 Total number of students served: 81

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>8</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>1</u> Deafness	<u>17</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>38</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>45</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>32</u>	<u>1</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>80</u>	<u>6</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:

34:1

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

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: _____

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? 2007

PART III - SUMMARY

The mission of Sandburg Middle School is to encourage students to become confident, independent, responsible, and respectful learners by reinforcing and supporting their academic and co-curricular growth in conjunction with parents and the community.

Sandburg Middle School is located in Elmhurst, Illinois and is a part of Community Unit School District 205. The school serves a community that has high expectations and that is continuously involved. The community and Sandburg are interconnected; parents and teachers work together to make sure all children experience educational success. Sandburg is proud to be nominated for the National Blue Ribbon Award as it is a reflection of our dedication to academic excellence shown through years of our students meeting and exceeding state standards.

Sandburg Middle School has many traditions that enrich the educational experiences of its students. Outdoor Education is one of our most anticipated and valued traditions. It is frequently recognized by parents and students as one of the most memorable experiences of their middle school years. During this experience, students learn to rely on each other through team-building and community-enriching activities. After conquering challenging obstacles, students leave Outdoor Education feeling proud of Sandburg, themselves, as well as their peers. Another important Sandburg tradition is Walk and Roll to School Day. On this day, students are encouraged to walk, bike, or skateboard to school in an effort to get students up and active. Students who make the healthy choice of walking or 'rolling' to school are publicly recognized at lunch that day.

Sandburg Middle School has a variety of strengths and accomplishments including consistent communication with parents. In order to keep parents involved, teachers send information about classroom events and activities to the Sandburg Principal throughout the week. On Monday, the principal sends out a parent newsletter called the Monday Message. Through the Monday Message, parents stay up to date about important classroom and school functions so they can be active in the educational lives of their children. The school website is also updated regularly to keep parents and students informed of upcoming events and activities.

Another one of Sandburg's strengths is serving the community. During the winter months, students, teachers, and community members place donated hats, gloves, and scarves on "The Giving Tree" set up in the school hallway. Once the tree is full, the winter gear is donated to a local organization helping families in need. Staff members also donate gift cards to assist local families during the holiday season. Another way that Sandburg students, staff, and families serve the community is through the student-faculty basketball game. Proceeds from the game are donated to local charities.

Sandburg is worthy of National Blue Ribbon status due to its commitment to high academic standards and its dedication to the whole child. Academically, students are held to the highest standards as indicated by student performance. The Sandburg staff members recognize that in order to teach middle school students, they have to help them develop not only academically but also socially and emotionally. One way that Sandburg supports social-emotional development through participation in Mix It Up Day. National Mix It Up Day occurs during lunch periods, and the goal is to break down social barriers. Students are assigned to a lunch table with a random mix of students. To help facilitate conversation, students are provided with a list of fun facts about each of their teachers. They have to talk to each other to determine which of the 'facts' are true and which are false. By the end of the lunch period, students begin to feel more comfortable with their tablemates and respect builds. This allows students to make a connection with peers they would not otherwise encounter. Another way that Sandburg helps students to develop socially and emotionally is through the student organization Circle of Friends. Circle of Friends is a club in which students in the general education population meet weekly with students who have

significant special needs. Together, the students play games, make crafts, and complete learning activities. These students also accompany their peers on trips into the community. Students learn to gain respect for people from a variety of backgrounds with a range of abilities and interests.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

High performing schools use multiple measures to determine academic growth of students. True assessment is an ongoing process that drives instruction during each and every lesson and assists teachers to tailor lessons to meet the needs of the students. One measure of student achievement is the Illinois Standards Achievement Test or ISAT. The Illinois State Board of Education uses the ISAT to measure individual student achievement relative to the Illinois learning standards. The ISAT is the instrument used in Illinois to measure the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) of public elementary and middle schools under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation.

The ISAT test was re-written by Harcourt for the April of 2006 testing following the Illinois Assessment frameworks. The ISAT mathematics and reading tests are administered to all public students in the third through eighth grades. Students also take a science test in fourth and seventh grades. The tests used elements of Stanford Achievement Test (norm referenced questions), multiple choice questions and extended response questions based upon the Illinois Learning Standards. The format of the test and the fact that multiple grade levels are taking these tests will enable schools to be able to develop longitudinal testing data for each cohort of students. Student test results are categorized in one of four categories: “Exceeds State Standards,” “Meets State Standards,” “Below State Standards,” and “Academic Warning.” The acceptable standards for students at Sandburg are to place in the “Meets State Standards” or “Exceeds State Standards.”

Grade/Subject	% Meets/Exceeds	% Meets/ Exceeds	Change
	07-08	11-12	07-08 to 11-12
6 th Grade Reading	98/54	98/58	+0/+4
6 th Grade Math	94/37	97/60	+3/+27
7 th Grade Reading	93/35	96/47	+3/+12
7 th Grade Math	93/45	96/64	+3/+19
8 th Grade Reading	95/18	99/23	+4/+5
8 th Grade Math	94/49	97/71	+3/+22

In 2011-2012, the most current ISAT results, 96% or more of Sandburg Middle School students met or exceeded state standards in reading and math. Sandburg Middle School received the Academic Excellence Award from the Illinois State Board of Education, as a result of these high scores. Academic Excellence criteria require that 90% of the students meet or exceed standards on state tests. Since 2007, Sandburg Middle School has surpassed the state average of meeting and exceeding by an average of 18%-20% each year in reading and 10%-12% in math.

Over the past five years at Sandburg Middle School, student performance has stayed consistent with the percentage of students meeting and exceeding state standards. While this number has stayed constant, the number of students that exceed state standards continues to grow across all grade levels in both reading and math.

The school and district goal to establish a model of continuous growth and self-improvement for the school, staff, and students alike is reflected in this growth. This growth also supports the multiple school and district initiatives implemented over this period of time to support student learning.

Over the past five years, the staff at Sandburg Middle School has provided leadership to the district development of Power Standards, curricular alignment to the Common Core Standards, and the

development of common assessments to both assess student learning and guide instruction. Through Response to Intervention (RTI) initiatives, targeted research-based interventions have been employed to support those students challenged to meet the standards. Differentiated instructional methods have been utilized at all levels of the curriculum to both reach all learners at their level and to challenge them to grow and develop further.

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) examination has been used the past five years to additionally assess student growth and achievement, providing multiple data points for focus and discussion. Utilizing a Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model, staff members at Sandburg Middle School review the data to assess student learning, using individual strand data to target areas within the curriculum requiring greater emphasis and support in reading and math.

Additionally, all students within the school district participate in the ACT examination series that assesses the student's readiness for college and careers. The series of assessments include: EXPLORE, tested both in 8th grade and Freshman year; the PLAN test sophomore year; and the ACT test junior year. Results from the 8th grade EXPLORE test are used both to assist with high school course selection, to determine if students are on target, and by the district and staff to evaluate the current educational program. The multiple data points are collectively evaluated as we strive to best meet the needs of our students.

2. Using Assessment Results:

At Sandburg, all three grade levels utilize assessment data to analyze and improve student performance integrated within our school schedule. We have spent the last three years implementing the Response to Intervention model for the middle school. First, we began with training the staff on the process and procedures of using school-wide data for student improvement. We utilized our School Learning Team (SLT) to become informed of the process and upcoming training times. The SLT consists of all the department chairs and team leaders as well as administration. Our internal coaches (psychologist and reading specialist) as well as our SASED external RTI coach provided the school trainings to each grade level. These individual trainings gave teachers more time to integrate the information into their teaching practice as well as team meetings.

We hold Benchmark Data Meetings during the fall, winter, and spring where teachers review assessment data after the whole school assessments from the NWEA MAP. Using information from the NWEA MAP and the district trajectory expectations of 80% or more of high school seniors achieving an ACT score of 24 or higher, we create graphs and groups of students who exceeded, met or fell below district targets. Graphs are developed not only for the overall scores but for each of the sub-stands of the MAP in order to examine skill development. The graphs provide teachers visual representation of their grade level's performance as a whole in the areas of reading and math. These graphs are shared throughout the grade level team meetings. Teachers examine student performance and needs comparing to the district standard. Administration, special education, general education teachers and building specialists attend these meetings to discuss skill needs for all students.

During our Benchmark Data Meeting discussions, the grade level teams created Instructional Planning Forms (IPF) in the areas of Reading and Math denoting time spent teaching specific skills as well as methods of instruction used across the curriculum in all core subjects. The grade level teams review their IPFs three times a year to add or modify instructional methodology based on data from assessment and curriculum changes. Teachers reflect on tier one instruction and how well that instruction and curriculum is meeting the needs of students. Each grade level team creates goals for the school year to improve student performance.

Changes to curriculum and instruction needed to meet those goals are noted on the IPF to be reviewed at future data meetings. These grade level goals help drive instructional changes for all groups of students including advanced instruction. Goals are evaluated throughout the year to determine if progress is being made or if instruction needs to be adjusted.

At our Benchmark Data Meetings, we also identify students needing interventions to help them meet grade level objectives. Once students are placed in interventions, they are progress monitored regularly to determine whether the students are making growth in the areas of need. Interim Data Meetings are scheduled to review this data and determine whether the intervention is meeting the needs of the students. The teams of teachers are presented with the data collected in the intervention and share data from classroom performance. The team uses that data to determine whether students have made enough progress to meet grade level standards and exit the intervention, whether the students are making progress but need to continue in the intervention to reach grade level standards, whether students are not making progress and instruction in the intervention needs to be changed for all students, or whether one or small number of students are not making progress and the team needs to do more in-depth problem analysis for that student.

If the intervention is working for most students but one or a small number of students are not benefiting from that instruction, the student is referred to individual problem solving (IPS). The individual problem solving process involves the teaching team as well as building specialists as pertinent to the issue. Specialists such as speech-language pathologist, reading specialist, social worker or psychologist support the team to develop a more personalized plan to support student skill development. Data specific to the hypothesized concern is gathered and a plan is developed. Parents are notified of the IPS process. The plan is reviewed after four to six weeks for progress and further problem solving as necessary.

Using data has become a very important part of how we make decisions to drive students' instruction, from the whole grade level to an individual student. It has become a regular part of our practice to review and reflect on data to improve instruction. Using data has allowed us to be more responsive to students' needs and improve overall student learning.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Sandburg is a part of a dynamic unit district that is dedicated to the idea of promoting excellence for all students. The principals and staff have diligently worked to share ideas, successes, and resources. In addition, a great deal of time has been spent on both vertical and horizontal articulation. Middle school teachers have met with various high school and elementary departments to collaborate, design, and align curriculum. In order to meet these challenges, the three middle schools have worked together on Institute Days, and late arrival days to strategically create power standards and common assessments that best meet the needs of our students. Our district has provided substantial professional development training to help staff meet these goals. This opportunity for growth gives us continuity of program, forums to share and expand ideas, and to search for areas for improvement.

Through these collaborative efforts, we have implemented our Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Three times a year, students are reviewed at benchmark and interim data meetings to determine long or short term placement for remedial support. A few of the programs we have in place are Just Words, reading strategies and after school study assistance programs.

Many of our staff members participate in professional organizations outside of the building. Some of these include the Illinois Principals Association, National Middle School Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and National Council of Teachers of English, Universal Tier I PBIS training, and Professional Leadership Training. Participation in events sponsored by these organizations affords staff the opportunity to network and share ideas. Several of our staff members have also worked to achieve National Board Certification while others are pursuing higher level degrees. Members of our staff have served as presenters at local, state and national conferences. Our staff actively participates in a cooperative arrangement with Elmhurst College mentoring prospective teachers working towards their middle school endorsements.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Our families and community are essential partners of Sandburg Middle School. Working together, we provide the best educational supports for all of our student learners. Through both formal and informal structures, opportunities for engagement and involvement are actively sought and encouraged by our partners for the benefit of our students.

Sandburg Middle School has an active Parent-Teacher Association, with a membership representing over 500 families. Monthly meetings provide opportunities for open dialogue regarding programs and events at Sandburg. Our PTA provides valuable support and funding to students and teachers through events such as Honor Roll Breakfast, Science Olympiad, Reflections, All School Dance, Outdoor Education, Teacher Appreciation Events, 8th grade activity day and much more. Additionally, the principal hosts a “Parents and Pastries” event on a quarterly basis, allowing for parents to engage in smaller, more personalized conversations with our administration.

The Elmhurst District 205 Educational Foundation provides support for curricular enrichment, field trips, and technology to support curricular programs and co-curricular clubs and activities. Our school has been the recipient of numerous foundation grants that have significantly enriched student’s learning experiences, particularly in regards to exposure to technology. The Educational Foundation has been instrumental in purchasing new technologies, such as Smart Boards and iPads, to increase student engagement in the classroom. Additionally, the Foundation provides ongoing support for after-school programs targeted for challenged learners.

Families receive weekly electronic communications from the school that highlight upcoming events and include a targeted message from the principal which focuses on upcoming programs, assessments, and current educational issues. The “Monday Message,” composed by our principal, also provides a public forum for celebrating student and teacher successes. Our school, departmental, and individual staff member web pages offer a wealth of resources for families, including testing strategies and practice exams, access to web-based textbooks, study guides, and other links to support the subject curriculum.

Through formal events, such as regularly scheduled Open House, Parent-Teacher Conferences, 6th Grade Walk Through, Evening with the Arts, and 5th Grade Parent Night, our staff invites frequent contact with families to address the needs of our students. Informally, we encourage family and community participation through a number of social or charitable events such as McTeacher Night, PTA Dance Class, Kelly Miller Circus, and an annual 8th Grade Activity Day. It is this ongoing relationship and partnership that truly makes Sandburg stand apart and is the foundation of our community of learners.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Curriculum: The curriculum at Sandburg Middle School goes well beyond the traditional “core curriculum” to provide our students with a diverse and rich academic experience. All students participate in the core subjects of English/Language Arts (double block period), Math, Physical Education/Health, Science, Social Studies, Unified Arts (a rotation of Art, Computer Literacy, Family and Consumer Science, General Music, Guidance, Industrial Technology), and World Language (French or Spanish). In addition, students may elect to further their study in music education through courses in Band, Orchestra, and/or Choir.

An ongoing cycle of curricular review and enhancement has allowed our staff to focus on alignment to the Common Core and college- and career-readiness standards. Common assessments within departments are aligned to these standards and to district-developed Power Standards. With the emphasis on the whole student, we are able to prepare our learners for the future world of high school and post-secondary opportunities.

Music Education: Band, Choir, and Orchestra: Students may extend and enhance their standard curricula by performing in one or two of these performing ensembles. Approximately half of our students elect to participate in these early-hour music ensembles. In addition, the instrumental program provides students with a weekly class period that focuses on individual and small group technique. The band, choir, and orchestra ensembles teach music fundamentals, technique, and performance.

Physical Education/Health: The heart of our Physical Education and Health program is a comprehensive fitness and wellness program that seeks to foster life-long health and fitness in all of our students. Daily activities always include elements of fitness and body core strength development. Students are assessed quarterly on their individual fitness levels and provided strategies and supports to help foster a healthy lifestyle. While other states have sacrificed physical education for core curriculum, Illinois and District 205 understand that physical activity is directly linked to mental acuity.

Science: Over the course of three years, our students are provided with a comprehensive program of study in science. Sixth grade students have hands-on experiences in astronomy, earth’s structure, and ecology. In seventh grade, areas of study include an introduction to chemistry, forces and energy, and the diversity of life. The eighth grade curriculum includes cells and heredity, earth’s surface, and weather and atmosphere. STEM initiatives have recently been infused within the curricular areas at all grade levels.

Social Studies: The goal of social studies at Sandburg Middle School is to help students become informed, responsible, and contributing citizens in a diverse, global society, while becoming contributing members of a democratic society through citizen participation. In the social studies curriculum, this is achieved through not only teaching students the larger picture of historical content, but to think critically and utilize research skills to make connections, draw inferences, and truly understand periods of history. Additionally, students are taught geographic skills, interpreting graphs and charts, analyzing primary and secondary historical sources, understanding cause-and-effect relationships, differentiating fact from opinion, and constructing arguments using historical evidence. In social studies classes, writing across the curriculum is supported by having students use historical evidence and data to support an argument or point-of-view.

World Languages: Students are able to select either French or Spanish as their language of study during their three years (6-8) at Sandburg Middle School. Over the course of these three years, students are exposed to the content equivalent to a first-year language class. Taking extra time to introduce students to language learning allows us to include cultural components and strengthen students’ communication

skills, which provides a strong foundation for future language classes. World language teachers emphasize speaking in the target language, utilizing engaging and researched-based instructional methods, conversation and dialogue experiences.

2. Reading/English:

At Sandburg Middle School, the English curriculum incorporates a comprehensive approach encompassing reading, writing, language development (vocabulary, morphemic awareness, and grammar), as well as speaking and listening skills. A daily, double-period block of time is allocated to strengthening literacy aptitude. Students are assisted in reaching their fullest potential by empowering them with the proficiency needed to become successful lifelong learners.

This Language Arts program centers upon the Common Core State Standards. Teachers from Sandburg played an integral role in the aligning of curriculum to the state standards. An important tool in the facilitation of these standards is the use of Springboard, the College Board's pre-AP college readiness program. This research-based program incorporates higher-level thinking strategies through an array of targeted activities. Students can express their creativity while strengthening literacy skills through activities ranging from developing original monologues to creating a newscast. Teachers further weave word cells, novel studies, vocabulary strategies, and the strengthening of narrative, persuasive, and expository writing skills as students implement what they learn in units with real-life applications such as advertising.

Perhaps, though, the greatest strength of Sandburg's Language Arts program lies in its inherent ability to provide differentiated levels of instruction. REACH English classes at each grade level build upon the Common Core State Standards to help gifted students grow as thinkers, readers, and writers. English teachers further work in conjunction with special education teachers, the Reading Specialist, and Reading Strategies teachers to meet students' needs. Reading Strategies classes are available to provide data-driven, research-based instruction for struggling readers. Interventions in fluency, provided by English teachers and the building's Reading Specialist, assist students in developing greater levels of fluency. In addition, Instructional English teachers work even more closely to provide intensive, data-based instruction in reading and writing as needed.

The entire Sandburg staff, in fact, works together to promote literacy throughout the curriculum. We have implemented common, research based vocabulary strategies throughout the school as designed by Dr. Marzano. These strategies are used in conjunction with identified target vocabulary for each grade level and content area. These words are selected because they transcend the one subject area, and lead to long term understanding of the concepts and ideas taught in class.

Quarterly, the Sandburg staff conducts data review sessions where faculty meet to look at common and standardized assessments, as well as classroom data and interventions, to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. It is during this time that students currently in an intervention are evaluated to see if they are ready to transition out, or if they still could benefit from an intervention. Team also look at all other students at this time to see if new needs have arisen and if other students should be considered for reading interventions. Sandburg Middle School is committed to assisting our students in becoming true 21st century learners whose literacy skills transcend the Language Arts classroom.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics program at Sandburg Middle School is designed to challenge and help all students progress through an integrated approach of concept building and problem solving. Continuing the structure of classes begun in elementary school, three levels of courses are offered at each grade level and a variety of supports are provided for all students to be successful. The regular series of classes are aligned with Common Core Standards, supported by the Glencoe McGraw-Hill series. All students in the regular level are Algebra ready freshman year of high school.

Multiple measures are used to identify the appropriate math level to balance challenge and ability level. The regular and accelerated levels incorporate MathScape for additional investigative activities. The course has high expectations for all students, with additional basic skills practice to insure students are ready for Algebra as their next step. The accelerated level includes pre-algebra in seventh grade and algebra in eighth grade. A majority of the students progress to Geometry in high school. For gifted and talented level students, the accelerated curriculum is shifted one year earlier, with algebra in seventh grade. In eighth grade, students study intermediate algebra and statistics, building a strong foundation for high level math courses. The text, *Applying Algebraic Thinking to Data*, uses investigations and discussions to discover new concepts and incorporates extensive graphing calculator usage. At all levels students learn to communicate math and link math to the real world.

In and outside the classroom teachers bring together their passion for math and love for teaching middle school students. A variety of instructional methods are used in the classroom including whole group instruction, guided practice, collaboration, flexible learning groups, and the use of technology. Teachers use their web sites to link online books and other resources to extend learning outside the classroom. They offer support including lunch help sessions and before/after school reviews. Students performing below grade level are identified through a variety of measures, including review of state testing and MAPS results. Articulation between math teachers at the elementary, high school, and other middle schools has yielded creative and effective solutions to improving specific areas of opportunities.

As a culminating activity, students in eighth grade complete an interdisciplinary project. Students present “STEM infomercials” using a wide range of technology. Topics have included velocity and force in baseball, statistical analysis of best-selling novels, and the angles and forces interacting with skateboarding tricks.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Sandburg Middle School sets itself apart from other schools with its strong commitment to Unified Arts. Sandburg staff understand that in order to develop well-rounded students, equal emphasis must be placed on supplemental curricular areas AND the core curricular areas. The Unified Arts curriculum puts to rest the timeless question: “Why do I need to know this?” Each unified arts strand is designed to provide our students with career and life skills. These skills include computer literacy, hands-on problem solving, social/emotional competence, and an understanding and appreciation of various forms of art. Additionally, each course integrates basic reading strategies to help support the school-wide goal of improved reading comprehension. A curricular rotation allows students to access each Unified Arts strand. At the 6th and 7th grade levels, students rotate through all six Unified Arts offerings. At the 8th grade level, students take four self-selected courses for in-depth experience in their areas of interest.

Guided by the principles of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math), Sandburg offers students the opportunity to experience each of these fields:

Art - Students learn a variety of media, including acrylic painting, 3-D sculpture, 2-D art, Adobe Photo Shop, and clay medium. Students have the opportunity to participate in numerous art contests and shows within the Elmhurst community.

Computer Literacy - Students gain proficiency in the following programs: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Window’s Moviemaker, and Adobe Photoshop. Students also receive extensive internet safety training to prepare them to navigate the online world.

Family and Consumer Sciences - Students are engaged in hands-on learning in the areas of: nutrition, machine and hand sewing, food preparation using culinary techniques, and consumer education.

Guidance - Guided by the state social/emotional learning standards, the guidance curriculum focuses on developing emotionally healthy students. Through a discussion-based approach, students learn to handle emotional and social difficulties, peer pressure, and school stresses in a productive manner.

Industrial Technology - In line with the STEAM principles, students are engaged in hands-on learning using current technology such as AutoCAD, Corel Draw, and Microsoft Excel. Additionally, students explore aspects of wood working, metal working, architecture, and engineering through real-life, problem-solving projects.

Music - Students expand the understanding and appreciation of music by studying the history of music, music theory, instrument instruction, and music composition. Students expand their musical skill sets by learning to play the keyboard and guitar. This curriculum is supplemental to our instrumental and vocal music programs.

5. Instructional Methods:

The staff at Sandburg Middle School uses a variety of instructional strategies striving to meet the needs of each of its students. Our goal is to see that each student is being pushed to grow in each of their content areas as well as their social emotional development. The students at the middle school level are going through one of the greatest physical and social emotional growth periods in their lives. Each of these students go through this growth in their own ways, and because of this, Sandburg teachers meet frequently to analyze current student data to accurately place students and guide classroom instruction. Teachers assess and determine student needs and intervene through differentiated instruction and interventions. The result is a high level of student learning and performance.

Since the 2010-2011 school year, Sandburg teachers have been diligently working in Professional Learning Communities to create Power Standards, proficiency scales, and common assessments across all curricular areas. Teachers communicate these learning targets to students in creative and engaging ways. For example, science teachers create unit “roadmaps” for students to self-monitor their mastery. Additionally, our teachers use frequent formative assessments to monitor student learning. The results allow them to create re-teaching activities for students who need continued practice, and plan enrichment activities for those who grasped the skill. Teachers use technology to assist them with planning differentiated instruction. iXL is an online database of math skills; teachers assign targeted skills for enrichment and re-teaching purposes. Students experience confidence on summative assessments because they have practiced the learning targets throughout the unit.

While differentiated instruction reaches most students, some require more intensive supports to achieve mastery. For these students, Sandburg is excited to offer a growing, tiered system of RtI interventions. Tier I interventions are integrated into the classroom setting. For example, the reading specialist partners with English teachers to provide direct instruction on core reading strategies during literature circles. Tier II and III interventions provide more intensive supports to students. Teachers work with small groups of students using research-based interventions. Sandburg has invested in a variety of software-based interventions to allow students to access interventions both at school and at home. These interventions include: Reading Plus (comprehension, silent fluency), Read Naturally (fluency), Lexia (decoding), iXL (math concepts), and Symphony Math (number sense). They closely monitor student progress using measures such as AIMsweb and intervention data. Sandburg is proud to offer seven reading strategy classes for students who scored below the 62nd percentile locally on the district Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. Periodic data reviews allow students to seamlessly flow in and out of interventions based on need.

Sandburg teachers understand that students enter the classroom with a variance of learning styles, background knowledge, and interests. Through skillfully planned, differentiated instruction, along with a fluid system of interventions, they ensure that all students achieve proficiency.

6. Professional Development:

Sandburg Middle School staff participates in a wide array of professional development that aligns to our school mission of educating the whole-child to achieve his/her highest potential. In this pursuit, Sandburg staff engages in the following opportunities:

- Training Math, Science and Unified Arts teachers to connect their common core standards with the STEM literacies and design processes in order to promote college and career-ready students.
- Vertical articulation among departments and grade levels to align meaningful power standards and a cohesive curricular sequence.
- The creation of common assessments that provide authentic feedback for student learning.

In our pursuit of lifelong learning - for not only our students, but our staff as well- we encourage and empower teachers to share their own expertise with their colleagues. This is evident during morning professional development time when staff members confidently share techniques or trainings related to our building initiatives. For example, the school CHAMP/PBIS team has attended outside training on implementing a school-wide behavioral curriculum. This team leads faculty meetings to help the staff implement these strategies within their own classrooms. Sandburg also utilizes this method of in-house professional development when educating staff on ways to increase student achievement in reading. Our reading specialist meets with individual teams to present research-based strategies that help students retain new vocabulary, increase fluency, and further comprehension. Teachers are then encouraged to share successful reading strategies with their departments and colleagues. Sandburg teachers constantly serve as references in their own field of expertise to support consistent expectations and strategies for our students.

Sandburg continues to increase student achievement by operating as a Professional Learning Community. In 2011-2012, the School Leadership Team met with an outside consultant from the Regional Office of Education on a regular basis. This training enabled staff to be effective teacher-leaders among their colleagues, as well as act as a catalyst for the implementation of PLC concepts and philosophies. The shared training also allows for common dialogue among other buildings within District 205 and to insure we are efficiently using data as a tool for guiding student learning and growth.

7. School Leadership:

An exemplary educational institution operates on the premise that a school can only be as good as its leadership. Sandburg Middle School's leadership fosters a culture of shared responsibilities and accountability for student learning. Our leadership includes the Principal, Assistant Principal, School Leadership Team, consisting of Department Chairs and Grade Level Team Coordinators, Building Leadership Team, CHAMPS/PBIS Team, RtI Team, and SST (Student Support Team), all operating within the framework of a Professional Learning Community culture. This represents a cross section of teachers who are experts in their field and utilize collaborative decision-making on behalf of students to ensure success through positive change.

The rigor of our instructional program – which has as its goal the promotion of high academic standards and expectations – is guided by our collegial leadership teams' shared goals and sense of common purpose, which reflects the commitment to our district's and school's vision and mission. Our administration is proactive in promoting and protecting that vision and mission to ensure our goals are achieved through monitoring daily operations while cultivating a high-performing professional culture.

To support new staff members, Sandburg provides mentors for facilitating professional dialogue necessary for growth as a professional, as well as acclimation to our learning community. At Sandburg, every staff member is offered a chance to fill a leadership role, including new teachers and support staff, whose insight and practical experience is second to none. Even our students hold leadership roles, as evidenced by our Peer Mediators, Circle of Friends, and Student Council.

Along this journey to educational excellence, we are continuously supported by our district administration and parents. Our leadership, along with the whole Sandburg staff, work in unison to make student-centered decisions focused on the whole student. We recognize the potential of all students, and strive to facilitate a lifelong love of learning. Leadership at Sandburg is not simply in the hands of a few, but rather found in the dedication of many.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 1999

Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	97	95	98	95	94
Exceeds	60	56	56	38	37
Number of students tested	274	209	247	242	231
Percent of total students tested	98	98	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	4	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	2	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	94	82	83	90	73
Exceeds	18	29	17	10	27
Number of students tested	17	17	18	10	11
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	5	8	3	3	3
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds	95	94	88	92	Masked
Exceeds	45	56	29	15	Masked
Number of students tested	20	16	17	13	7
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds	85	67	92	78	68
Exceeds	31	17	21	10	13
Number of students tested	26	24	24	41	31
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	4	2	6	1	1
6. Asian					
Meets/Exceeds	100	Masked	100	100	Masked
Exceeds	46	Masked	57	30	Masked
Number of students tested	13	9	14	10	9
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. The minimum of reporting subgroup is 10.					

13IL2

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 1999

Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	98	96	98	96	98
Exceeds	58	53	59	47	54
Number of students tested	274	209	246	242	231
Percent of total students tested	98	98	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	4	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	2	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	94	88	89	80	100
Exceeds	24	35	17	0	27
Number of students tested	17	17	18	10	11
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	5	8	3	3	3
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds	100	81	88	92	Masked
Exceeds	45	44	18	15	Masked
Number of students tested	20	16	17	13	7
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds	88	71	83	80	90
Exceeds	27	8	25	12	26
Number of students tested	26	24	24	41	31
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	4	2	5	1	1
6. Asian					
Meets/Exceeds	100	Masked	100	100	Masked
Exceeds	62	Masked	69	50	Masked
Number of students tested	13	9	13	10	9
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. The minimum of reporting subgroup is 10.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 1999

Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	96	98	97	94	93
Exceeds	64	59	47	48	45
Number of students tested	208	251	244	234	241
Percent of total students tested	98	99	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	2	0	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	88	89	89	71	80
Exceeds	35	39	26	24	30
Number of students tested	17	18	19	17	10
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	8	3	1	5	4
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds	100	93	92	83	93
Exceeds	67	33	15	25	33
Number of students tested	15	27	13	12	15
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds	67	86	80	62	63
Exceeds	17	18	5	24	16
Number of students tested	18	22	40	29	32
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	4	1	2	2
6. Asian					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	100	100	100	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	57	40	50	Masked
Number of students tested	9	14	10	12	8
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. The minimum of reporting subgroup is 10.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 1999

Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	96	98	95	93	93
Exceeds	47	46	39	39	35
Number of students tested	208	252	241	233	242
Percent of total students tested	98	99	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	2	0	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	76	89	78	75	100
Exceeds	12	6	22	25	20
Number of students tested	17	18	18	16	10
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	8	3	1	5	4
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds	93	93	77	73	87
Exceeds	20	25	8	27	7
Number of students tested	15	28	13	11	15
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds	72	91	74	76	72
Exceeds	17	14	8	10	9
Number of students tested	18	22	39	29	32
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked		Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked		Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	4		1	2
6. Asian					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	93	Masked	100	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	43	Masked	50	Masked
Number of students tested	9	14	9	12	8
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. The minimum of reporting subgroup is 10.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 1999

Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	98	98	93	94	95
Exceeds	71	52	50	50	49
Number of students tested	246	249	237	249	252
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	90	95	75	40	71
Exceeds	43	16	15	10	5
Number of students tested	21	19	20	10	21
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	4	4	3	5	7
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds	88	92	86	79	92
Exceeds	58	12	36	37	17
Number of students tested	26	25	14	19	12
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds	79	87	76	62	67
Exceeds	16	3	20	17	7
Number of students tested	19	31	25	29	30
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	
Number of students tested	4	1	3	2	
6. Asian					
Meets/Exceeds	100	100	100	90	100
Exceeds	85	42	62	40	64
Number of students tested	13	12	13	10	11
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. The minimum of reporting subgroup is 10.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 1999

Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds	99	95	97	95	96
Exceeds	23	18	20	17	18
Number of students tested	248	249	236	248	252
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds	95	84	89	Masked	81
Exceeds	5	0	5	Masked	0
Number of students tested	21	19	19	9	21
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	4	4	3	5	7
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds	92	88	93	94	92
Exceeds	4	4	0	0	8
Number of students tested	26	25	14	18	12
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds	90	80	84	72	70
Exceeds	5	0	8	3	0
Number of students tested	20	30	25	29	30
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	
Exceeds	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	
Number of students tested	4	1	2	2	
6. Asian					
Meets/Exceeds	100	100	100	100	100
Exceeds	31	25	25	20	27
Number of students tested	13	12	12	10	11
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. The minimum of reporting subgroup is 10.					