

U.S. Department of Education
2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 13VA5

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

Name of Principal: Dr. Bridget Parsons

Official School Name: Snowville Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 4858 Lead Mine Road

Hiwassee, VA 24347-2814

County: Pulaski State School Code Number*: 077-0430

Telephone: (540) 643-0766 E-mail: bparsons@pcva.us

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I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Thomas Brewster Superintendent e-mail: tbrewster@pcva.us

District Name: Pulaski County Public Schools District Phone: (540) 994-2550

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Michael Barbour

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*
The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 1 High schools
 0 K-12 schools
 8 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 8586

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Rural
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	5	8	13
K	18	9	27
1	6	17	23
2	7	16	23
3	16	18	34
4	19	15	34
5	16	11	27
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			181

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
91 % White
6 % 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: 6%

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.	9
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	2
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	11
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	181
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.06
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	6

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 46%

Total number of students who qualify: 81

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: 15%

Total number of students served: 28

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>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>30</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:

14:1

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%	97%	97%	99%	97%
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?

PART III - SUMMARY

Snowville Elementary School (SES) is a small community school with a family atmosphere and a reputation for excellence. It is located in a picturesque farming community, surrounded by rolling green fields, large majestic trees, and a lovely view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. SES is the smallest and most rural of eight schools in the Pulaski County Public School Division. Our attendance area covers approximately ninety square miles.

The faculty and staff of SES strive to bring out the best in **every** child by working collaboratively with parents and students. The *Snowville Pledge* reminds students of their responsibilities for learning. Our motto is, “Strive – Excel – Succeed!” Our mission statement is, “*We are working together as a team of caring teachers, parents, students, and community to create a safe, nurturing learning environment to enable students to experience success all throughout life.*” These affirmations express our commitment to excellence. One of our teachers expressed it best, “We are not an ‘I’ school; we are a ‘We’ school!”

Our greatest strengths are our committed, hardworking faculty and staff, and our caring and supportive community. We have knowledgeable, enthusiastic teachers who know the curriculum and who have taught at SES for many years. Teachers know most every student in the school. They teach each child as if he or she were their own. They put their heart and soul into teaching and as one parent put it, “They go out of their way to help students be successful.” They are involved in students’ lives both inside and outside of school. Our support staff members are also committed to the success of our students. They know each student by name and provide encouragement and support through their positive interactions with them each day.

Snowville is a close-knit community with traditional values and a strong religious base. Our community members value and support education. Students feel safe and supported by the school board, division staff, local business partners, PTO, and by all school personnel.

We are proud of the accomplishments of our school and our individual students. SES has been recognized several times during the past several years by the state Board of Education for students’ academic performance. The school has been awarded the *2013 Board of Education Excellence Award*, the *2012 Board of Education Competence to Excellence Award*, the *2011 Board of Education Competence to Excellence Award*, the *2009 Board of Education Excellence Award*, and the *2008 Board of Education’s VIP Competence to Excellence Award*.

SES students have been described as positive, respectful, intelligent, and friendly. Many Snowville students excel academically and attend the Southwest Virginia Governor’s School (SWVGS) during their high school years. While the SES student population represents only 4% of the division’s total population, 20% of the students attending the SWVGS during the 2012-13 school year, were former Snowville students. Within the past four years, as many as 35% of those in honors classes at the high school were former Snowville students. It is worth noting that in just the past thirty-one years alone, Boy Scout Troop 151, serving the Snowville community, has produced 30 Eagle Scouts, an honor only achieved by 4% of the national scouting membership.

We celebrate our students’ successes during awards assemblies to recognize academic excellence and effort. The end of the year assembly also includes recognition for outstanding achievement in reading, math, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education. Students who receive a **perfect score of 600** on any of our state’s criterion-referenced tests are recognized and their names are added to a plaque that hangs in the front hall. Even though our current enrollment is around 190 students, a total of 257 names have been posted since 2006!

Parent Nights, held in September, have become a SES tradition with the expectation that **every** parent will attend. Teachers acquaint parents with the skills that will be taught and share vital information for the year. Kindergarten home visits are another tradition that parents have come to expect. The principal and reading resource teacher visit each home in the summer to inform parents of skills students need to acquire and provide gift bags for students including school supplies and practice materials.

Another tradition that has developed over time is our Veteran's Day celebration. This is an intergenerational event in which veterans are honored and invited to lunch. Among other presentations, each branch of the service is recognized and highlighted. The culminating event is our student's re-enactment of the planting of the flag on Iwo Jima while one of the veterans plays *Taps*. There is rarely a dry eye in the house!

Snowville Elementary School qualifies for the National Blue Ribbon School Award both as an *Exemplary High Performing* and an *Exemplary Improving* school. We at SES are honored to be part of this process. It is a validation of the effort and hard work of our faculty and staff and it is a testament to our students, parents, community, and the Pulaski County Public Schools Division.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

In the spring, students at the elementary level take the state's criterion-referenced tests known as the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL). To be accredited in our state during 2011-12, 75% of students needed to have passed English in grades 3-5, 70% in mathematics, 50% in 3rd grade science and history, 70% in 4th grade history, and 70% in 5th grade science. Third grade students take reading, math, science, and social studies SOLs. Fourth graders take reading, math, and Virginia Studies, while fifth graders take reading, math and science. Fifth graders also take the writing SOL test in March. Scores 400 to 499 are considered *Pass Proficient*. Scores 500 to 600 are considered *Pass Advanced*. While the proficient range is passing, we at Snowville strive to have students passing in the *Pass Advanced* range.

Students in grades PK through third grade take the *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)* in the fall, winter, and spring. Those who do not meet the benchmarks are required to receive additional support in reading. Our division also uses *STAR Reader* and *STAR Math* as universal screeners. Students take these assessments in the fall, winter, and spring and we use them to identify students who may be at risk in reading or math. Students in grades two, three, four, and five also take nine weeks benchmark tests in the core subject areas to test objectives covered on the division's pacing guides.

The most current data indicate that Snowville's scores in all subject areas were higher than both the division and state averages. Our data tables indicate that third grade reading has improved over the past five years from a low of 74% to a high of 97%. Fifty-six percent of our third grade students scored in the *Pass Advanced* area this past year. Students' scores have improved because teachers have in-depth knowledge of the curriculum and they emphasize reading at school and at home. Students are given time to read at school and are motivated to read at home to reach their *Accelerated Reader (AR)* goals. Students are taught to become strategic readers. They use storyboarding to help with comprehension. Teachers provide differentiated instruction based on informal assessments and nine weeks benchmark data. Fourth and fifth grade students enjoy reading chapter books individually and as a class. Teachers read to students daily to help them improve their vocabulary and expose them to classic literature and complex story structure. These teachers also use AR to motivate students to read books within their optimum reading range. One hundred percent of fourth and fifth grade students passed reading last year. Fourth grade students have passed at 100% for the past two years.

Our students have done well in math over the past five years; however, scores declined in 2011-12. As in many schools in the state, this may have been because of the implementation of new more rigorous math standards that were assessed for the first time in 2011-12. These new standards were slightly more problematic for our third graders (78%) and fourth graders (86%), than they were for our fifth graders (97%). We shall continue to work with students on how to approach multi-step word problems and technology enhanced items as there will be more of these types of questions on future tests.

Our subgroup data indicate that our ethnic subgroups are too small to be disaggregated. Our only subgroup large enough for disaggregation is the economically disadvantaged group. Approximately 46% of our students qualify to be in this category. Students' scores in this category were less than 10 percentage points different than our *all students* category in all subject areas except third grade math, where there was a 14 percentage point difference. The third grade math data over the past five years indicate that scores for students in this subgroup have kept pace with the *all students* category until last year. The difference may have also been because of the more rigorous math standards. Our economically disadvantaged fourth and fifth grade students have done extremely well in reading over the past two years with 100% pass rates.

2. Using Assessment Results:

We use data on a daily basis to drive instruction. We begin the school year by reviewing our SOL data from the previous spring. We carefully analyze the *Student Performance by Question* data to determine which objectives were problematic for children. This information is shared with the entire faculty so that teachers in the primary grades can ensure they fully address these objectives to support students in the upper grades. For example, our writing pass rate for fifth grade students for 2009-10 was 69%. This prompted us to emphasize writing at all levels and to begin collecting student writing samples to be shared with teachers as students progress to the next grade level. It also encouraged us to try a new strategy with our fifth graders using note cards to help them organize their writing. Students' writing proficiency greatly improved to 94% in 2011-12.

As the year progresses, teachers in grades 3, 4, and 5 use the SOL released test items to help students prepare and to determine which skills they may need to cover more thoroughly. Our teachers have been working on unpacking some of the more challenging standards to make sure that **all** components of the standards are being addressed in their instruction. They are able to create pre/post assessments using the *Flanagan and Mott* test item bank to reassess various standards.

Our school division is part of a cohort group in the state that is piloting Response to Intervention (RtI) countywide. One of our elementary schools has been participating in RtI for the past five years. Snowville and the three other elementary schools have been in this process for the past two years. We use *STAR Reading* and *STAR Math* as universal screeners to identify students who may need targeted intervention and to determine if our core instruction is being effective. The data are used by the Countywide RtI team at periodic data meetings to see if we may be experiencing the same issues countywide and to share successful strategies that are being used at individual schools.

We have a team of retired teachers who visit each school in the fall, winter, and spring to give the PALS assessment. Our county chose to use this approach so that teachers would not spend their instructional time giving this assessment and to ensure fidelity in its administration. Our reading resource teacher uses the data from this screening instrument to identify students needing reading support and to determine grouping for differentiation. Classroom teachers use the resources from the PALS website for targeted lesson plan ideas and the *PALS RtI Quick Checks* to progress monitor students who are targeted for intervention.

Students complete division wide benchmark testing in the core subject areas each nine weeks. These tests have been created to assess what has been taught during the nine weeks. The data are collected and disaggregated using the *Triand* data system. This program provides teachers with an item analysis for their class to see which objectives have not been mastered. We also use this information at our Countywide RtI data meetings to identify areas that may need to be addressed countywide. A newly acquired division wide data system called *Datacation* will help us to more easily identify and track students experiencing academic, attendance, or behavioral difficulties.

At SES, each grade level has a time built into the schedule twice a week that is called *Power Up*. During this time, non-classroom teachers are assigned to assist each grade level. This allows the grade level to use the data from the assessments mentioned above to provide additional small group support to students who need re-teaching, or to provide enrichment for those who have mastered the concepts.

Parents are informed about student progress during parent-teacher conferences, mid-term reports, and report cards. Teachers track mastery of SOL objectives and share this information with parents and students. In grades second and above, parents are able to view their child's grades daily through the use of the online *Parent Portal*. Teachers and parents frequently communicate by phone, through assignment notebooks, weekly homework/communication folders, and formal and informal conferences.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

SES is fortunate to have many talented teachers. The daily collaboration within and between grade levels is one of our greatest strengths. Our teachers freely share ideas and materials with each other and with other teachers in the county. Several of our teachers have been asked to share during countywide grade level meetings and on professional development days. For example, two of our teachers were asked to share their strategies and ideas for teaching Virginia Studies with teachers from another school because of our students' success in this area. Their presentation included ideas for the use of many hands-on materials, important concepts and ideas, and strategies for teaching them. They included a make-and-take time for participating teachers to create some of the displays and visuals that they found effective. At a recent countywide staff development, one of our teachers shared hands-on strategies for teaching science while another shared ideas for utilizing manipulatives for teaching math. Many of our teachers have worked on committees at the division level to help write nine weeks assessments and to develop pacing guides. Two of our teachers have worked on *Item Review Committees* at the state level to help develop the SOL assessments. Our division and schools have adopted the practice of utilizing *Professional Learning Communities* (PLC) to facilitate the sharing of ideas within schools and countywide. PLC groups have been created for administrators and various teacher and departmental groups throughout the county and they meet regularly to review data and share ideas. Our division also partners with neighboring Radford University, Virginia Tech, and New River Community College.

The principal attends the Countywide RtI team meetings and trainings provided by the state. She and other team members bring this information back to their schools. Most recently she brought back information on Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching, presented by Anita Archer. Several strategies were shared including some effective ways for teaching vocabulary.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Our building is clean, well maintained, and welcoming. Because we are a small school and most of our teachers have worked at the school for many years, parents feel comfortable talking to them and may even have had some of them as teachers when they attended SES.

Communication between home and school is important to us. Teachers communicate with parents throughout the school year using newsletters, weekly communication folders, and student homework folders. Many of our teachers share their home phone numbers and parents feel free to call them at home. Our division office has begun providing a quarterly newsletter to highlight events and accomplishments that occur throughout the county during each nine weeks.

Snowville is a true community school. The county's Recreation Department (RD) uses our facilities for basketball, soccer, and football practice. The coaches store their equipment in our gym. Many SES students participate on these teams. The RD's Explorers afterschool program is available for parents who work late. As part of this program, students have time for homework and to engage in many enjoyable activities. Family reunions, wedding receptions, and other events are held at SES. The Snowville Volunteer Fire Department holds its annual fund raising dinner at SES and receives a lot of support from the community. Voting takes place at the school for both local and national elections.

Events are held throughout the year to bring parents and the community to the school. Many events are sponsored by the PTO such as the Fall Festival, Movie Nights, Halloween Trick-or-Treat Trail, Technology Night, and the annual PTO Christmas Program. Others include Veteran's Day, Field Day, and book fairs. Parents and grandparents are invited to lunch, to attend poetry readings, or to watch a class play.

Many churches and community organizations support our students. The PTO provides scholarships to former Snowville college-bound high school students and they partner with the public library to provide

RIF books for all of our children. Each year the Ruritan holds an essay and poster contest awarding gift certificates to winning participants. Our more needy families are supported by the *Back Pack Buddies* program which provides food on weekends and over long holidays. Funding for this program is generously provided by local churches, private individuals, and organizations such as the Ruritan and Rotary. Local volunteers purchase and pack the food weekly.

SES also finds ways to give back to the community by holding yearly food drives and collecting funds for various causes such as Relay for Life or the American Heart Association. SES children and families have raised money for other less fortunate children. Over the past nine years, our small school has raised \$20,521 for St. Jude's Children's Hospital through participation in their Math-A-Thon. Our families also recently collected 8,511 items during a Goodwill donations drive.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Instruction at all levels is based on our division's nine weeks pacing guides. Students are assessed at the end of each nine weeks. Pacing guides include Standards of Learning (SOL) objective numbers, strategies, critical skills to be taught, and essential vocabulary. They were developed by teachers in our division using the SOL, Curriculum Framework, and the Blueprints of our state.

Reading/English Language Arts standards include reading, oral language, and writing. Reading fluently and comprehending what is read are foundational skills for all subjects. Our goal is for every student to read on grade level by the end of third grade. Students practice oral language skills through class discussion, reading poetry aloud, and during the 4-H Dramatic Reading competition. They have opportunities to write for a purpose. For example, fourth grade students produce a monthly newspaper that includes student and staff highlights, editorials, sports, and recipes.

In **Mathematics**, teachers place great emphasis on learning basic math facts, math reasoning, and solving word problems. Students are encouraged to find multiple ways to solve problems using graphic organizers and manipulatives.

In **Science**, students learn to understand the world around them through observation, investigation, and experimentation. They learn scientific principles through cooperative hands-on learning experiences. Science is often incorporated into reading lessons through *Reading A-Z* books. Second graders are learning from a Master Naturalist who visits monthly to make them aware of the nature around them. Emphasis is placed on learning and using science vocabulary at all levels. As a *Weatherbug* site, students at Snowville Elementary are able to study weather using live data.

Social Studies in grades K-3 emphasize history, geography, economics, and civics. Grade four students focus on Virginia Studies, while fifth grade students learn about United States history to 1865. Most field trips at SES involve visiting historic sites in our local area and around the state. Students enjoy learning from guest speakers about topics such as Jamestown or the Civil War. They take virtual field trips to far-away places through the use of *United Streaming* and *eMedia*.

Students enjoy creating **Visual Arts** projects during alternating quarters of the year. Projects build on progressively more complex skills. Art work displayed in the hallways greatly adds to the school's ambiance. Students' best work is framed and displayed in the "Art Gallery" near the cafeteria or in the principal's office. Students' art work is often displayed in the community during Youth Art Month. Each year, kindergarten through fifth grade students create, self-portraits that are saved and returned to them before moving to middle school. It is fascinating to see how their skills and views of themselves develop over time.

Students experience the **Performing Arts** through music during alternating quarters of the year. They gain a basic understanding of how music is created. Instruction focuses on singing, reading rhythms, playing instruments, and listening to music. Students spotlight their talents during PTO performances throughout the year.

All students receive **Physical Education/Health/Nutrition** instruction. Physical education classes are held three times per week. Students learn basic skills, develop physical fitness, and are introduced to sports they may enjoy throughout life. Health and nutrition information is incorporated into P.E. and science lessons and shared by our school nutrition staff and the 4-H Extension Office.

Students utilize **Technology** for skills practice, enrichment, and research. Fourth and fifth grade students learn basic keyboarding. Fifth graders use it in preparation for the online writing SOL. Students have access to skills-based programs like *Study Island*, *Go Solve*, *Breakthrough to Literacy*, *Star Fall*, *SOLPass.org*, and *Accelerated Reader*. They also have access to iPods, iPads, and Macbooks.

Fourth and fifth grade students have the opportunity to learn one of twenty-nine **Foreign Languages** after school through the use of *Rosetta Stone*.

2. Reading/English:

While many teachers use the basal reading series, all reading instruction follows our division's nine weeks pacing guides. Our reading instruction is designed to help students transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Beginning foundations for reading are developed through our VPI pre-kindergarten program. Typically about 60% of our kindergarten students have benefited from this PK program. Early childhood is a prime developmental period for acquiring these important literacy skills.

Kindergarten instruction emphasizes letter recognition, letter sounds, decoding, sight-word recognition, and reading simple sentences by the end of the second semester. First grade students spend time on decoding words, using picture cues, practicing high frequency words, and developing comprehension. Second grade teachers continue to reinforce skills learned in earlier grades and help students to begin to build reading fluency, to interact more with the text to gain meaning, and to use higher order thinking skills. In third grade, students start to begin the transition to reading to learn. Fourth and fifth graders are given opportunities to read more chapter books and to discuss and analyze what they have read. Our teacher of the gifted engages students in reading thought-provoking novels. Special needs students are supported with individual educational plans delivered through pull-out and in-class support from our special education teacher and para-educators. These students have opportunities to use technology for skills practice using *Earobics*, *Star Fall*, *Ed Mark*, and *Failure Free Reading*.

In K-2, teachers use the PALS data to identify children who need additional support. These students receive classroom reading instruction in addition to small group instruction with our reading resource teacher. Due to our small size, this teacher is able to provide additional small group support to about 50% of all students in grades K-2, even though only about 12% need targeted intervention. She uses the PALS data to group students by need and spends a lot of time working on vowel sounds (long, short, and "r" controlled), phonics, fluency, and comprehension. She supports upper grade teachers by providing strategies and materials for struggling readers.

All teachers use researched-based reading strategies such as accessing prior knowledge, word search (for building vocabulary), storyboarding, active questioning, building background knowledge (for comprehension), and cold/warm timed readings (for fluency). Teachers read to students daily to expose them to rich vocabulary, complex story structure, and motivating and inspiring stories.

Children learn to read by reading. Many teachers schedule a silent sustained reading time and require reading at home to give students reading practice. Students are encouraged to select books from the library within their *zone of proximal development* (easy enough to be challenging but not so difficult as to be frustrating) and then to test their comprehension by taking an *Accelerated Reader* (AR) quiz. Teachers provide incentives to motivate students to reach their AR point goals. Our extensive school library resources help to support the curriculum and the AR program.

3. Mathematics:

Mathematics has typically been one of our stronger subject areas. Teachers follow the division's pacing guides for math instruction. Students who are functioning below grade level based on the *STAR Math* or the division's nine weeks assessments receive additional support by the teacher in small groups or

individualized instruction. They may also receive support from a tutor or be part of a skills group during *Power Up* time.

New, more rigorous SOL math standards were tested during the 2011-12 school year. In the future, students will encounter more multi-step word problems and technology enhanced items. These types of questions will require students to think at higher levels. Teachers model how to approach these types of problems, provide graphic organizers to help organize the information, and give students continuous practice throughout the year. Students are required to communicate their mathematical reasoning as they explain how they arrived at their answers. They use math manipulatives to help them conceptualize and problem solve.

As review, students engage in solving a “Problem of the Day.” These are used to give repeated practice of skills previously taught. Many teachers also have students create interactive notes to record critical information about the math concepts they are learning. These notes help students internalize the learning by drawing pictures and summarizing the information in their own words. These notes also make great study resources.

At one of our countywide RtI meetings, we identified word problems as being a major area of concern. One school shared information from a Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) math training their teachers attended. This information was taken back to each elementary and middle school for implementation. Teachers were given one math problem per grade level and asked to observe students as they approached this problem. Many teachers found it interesting to hear how students reasoned through this problem. Some students were able to articulate more than one way to solve the problem, others were able to solve it but could not explain their reasoning, and still others had no idea how to begin. The VDOE recommends that students become proficient at mathematical problem solving, communication, reasoning, making connections, and using representation if they are to move to higher levels of mathematical understanding.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Social Studies and history “come alive” through the many field trips students participate in during their SES years. They travel to places throughout Virginia to experience its beauty and rich history. Beginning in first grade, students take a trip into the past by visiting the *Thomas J. Boyd Museum* and the *Rock House Museum* in Wytheville. Here they see life as it was in the 1800’s. Second graders learn about the history of transportation by visiting the *Transportation Museum* in Roanoke. They climb aboard old fashioned trains, view vintage cars, and are fascinated by the elaborate model train display. Third grade students view the majesty of *Natural Bridge* and experience first-hand life as it was 300 years ago in a Monacan Indian village. Fourth grade students tour *Monticello*, the home of Thomas Jefferson, and visit many historical sites in Lexington including the *Virginia Military Institute (VMI)*, the setting of *Ghost Cadet*, one of their favorite books.

The culminating trip of students’ SES years is the fifth grade overnight trip to Richmond, Jamestown, and Williamsburg. Students visit Richmond’s Capitol Building where they engage in a simulation of how laws are made. They visit the Jamestown settlement where they board ships modeled after those used by settlers to cross the Atlantic. While in Williamsburg, they enter the House of Burgesses and the Governor’s Palace to hear about history from guides dressed in period costumes. Upon their return, they are required to create a scrapbook of their adventure based on an information scavenger hunt they participated in throughout the trip. Many students remember these experiences throughout their lives.

Students engage in other events that make social studies exciting and memorable. Second graders create a class model depicting an American Indian village. They study and report on biographies of famous Americans. Third grade students study ancient Greece, create models of the Parthenon, and celebrate Greek Day dressed in togas while dining on olives and other delicacies. Fourth grade students learn about the Underground Railroad and early life in Virginia using *Social Studies Alive!* Fifth graders display

shadow boxes they have created of the Native American Indian tribes they have studied. Many grade levels use *Weekly Reader* and *National Geographic Kids Magazine* to expose students to current social events.

5. Instructional Methods:

SES teachers use a variety of instructional methods to meet the needs of all students, especially those with diverse learning needs. They incorporate strategies to address all modalities of learning (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) into instruction. Our division has provided many new math manipulatives to help students take learning from concrete to abstract thinking. Small group differentiated instruction is provided in the classrooms, and during *Power Up* time, for enrichment and remediation. Low pupil teacher ratios give more opportunities to provide one-on-one instruction. Disaggregated data from unit tests, nine weeks tests, SOL practice items, PALS, *STAR Reading*, and *STAR Math* guide instruction for small and individual skills groups.

Technology is incorporated into instruction on a daily basis. Each room is equipped with a Smart Board (SB). The SB allows students to use virtual manipulatives to aid in their understanding of concepts. It allows teachers to demonstrate how to solve technology enhanced items such as those students will encounter on the SOL math test. Students are able to “visit” far off places and take virtual field trips with *United Streaming* and *Brain Pop* videos. Many software programs are used to enhance learning and provide skills practice. Clicker systems are used for informal assessment and to engage all students in learning. iPads are being used to help support our special needs students. These have been especially helpful for those who have difficulty communicating.

Two of our teachers participated in a collaborative grant project with Radford University to put iPods and MacBooks into the classrooms. Students of these teachers have become very proficient in using these tools to explore, research, and create. For example, fifth grade students have used the MacBooks to research and become “experts” on various exotic animals. They demonstrated and shared their knowledge with parents during a PTO meeting. Third grade students are able to test their knowledge of science and social studies vocabulary using the iPods.

Teachers use *Total Participation Techniques* (TPT) to increase student engagement. Instead of the teacher getting a response to a given question from one student, TPT is a means by which all students are engaged and able to give a response. Some of the techniques that our teachers have begun incorporating are Thumbs Up, Quick Writes, Chalkboard Splash, and Think, Pair, Share. They periodically learn about a different TPT during faculty meetings.

6. Professional Development:

For the past few years, our division has focused on two major areas. The first has been on the use of research-based strategies. Teachers throughout the division have had professional development in this area using Robert Marzano’s, Classroom Instruction that Works. Emphasis has been placed on these nine effective instructional strategies to help students engage in higher order thinking. Administrators monitor the use of these strategies using an electronic walk-through instrument.

The second area of focus for our division has been on building a community of collaboration through the development and implementation of *Professional Learning Communities* (PLC). Through this process, various groups come together to share ideas, review and analyze data, and learn new strategies.

In addition to the ones mentioned for the division, SES teachers have participated in many professional development opportunities collectively and individually. They have participated in two book studies, including Classroom Instruction that Works and Building Academic Vocabulary. Many have participated in Clinical Faculty training to help prepare them for working with pre-service teachers. A few teachers

have attended conferences on working with children with autism. To help us to improve our writing scores, fifth grade teachers worked with another teacher in the division who had been having great success with writing. This collaboration has helped us to raise our writing scores.

SES teachers have spent the past two years learning about the RtI process. This includes learning about using a universal screener, problem solving to address the needs of targeted intervention students, data analysis, unpacking standards, and progress monitoring. They are learning to use *OneNote*, a software program that is helping us to organize and manage our RtI information and data. They continue to learn about using curriculum-based measures including *PALS RtI Quick Checks*.

Recently our kindergarten teachers, reading resource teacher, speech therapist, and principal, attended training on the use of *See the Sound Visual Phonics* (SSVP). This program has been used successfully with students who are deaf or hard of hearing to help them distinguish the differences in sounds. SSVP is a program that incorporates a hand cue for each phoneme. Participating SES teachers have been practicing these hand cues and will be part of a pilot study in the coming year to see if this approach can have a positive impact on helping students be able to better distinguish between sounds, especially those students who struggle in reading.

7. School Leadership:

Snowville Elementary School's success is in large part due to the vision and leadership of the individual who recently retired from the position of principal and who had been in the position for twenty years. She developed many of the programs and traditions that have made Snowville such a great success. She was relentless in her expectations for 100% of parents attending the Parent Nights and parent/teacher conferences because of her belief that parents are an important part of the student success equation. She and the reading resource teacher (a valued teacher leader who takes on many leadership responsibilities) began the practice of visiting each kindergarten home before students come to school. This practice has become a tradition eagerly anticipated by parents and rising kindergarten students.

This principal organized and planned the many worthwhile field trips that students and parents have come to expect. She designed these so that students would have the opportunity to explore and experience the great beauty and history of Virginia. The overnight trip to Richmond, Jamestown, and Williamsburg has become a highly anticipated event for fifth grade students. Adults who attended SES as children often come back and talk about these opportunities as some of those they remember most. Born and raised in the county, she had a wonderful knowledge of the culture and history of the community. She knew each family and because of the length of her stewardship at the school, she helped to educate the children of some of her former students.

The current principal has been at SES for almost three years. She came to the position with twenty years of administrative experience. She has built upon and maintained many of the programs and traditions established by the former principal. She collaborates with division staff and fellow principals and she has helped SES teachers implement RtI and PLCs at the school. To support the RtI and PLC processes, she created a master schedule so that teachers would have daily common planning time in addition to an 80 minute weekly planning time for them to work collaboratively on planning instruction, unpacking standards, analyzing data, and progress monitoring. She also built in *Power Up* time so that other teachers could help support each grade level with small group remediation and enrichment. She leads the child study process at Snowville to bring together problem-solving teams of individuals to develop and implement plans for students who may experience learning, social, or behavioral difficulties.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Pass Proficient	78	100	94	98	94
Pass Advanced	13	46	49	48	72
Number of students tested	32	28	33	42	36
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Pass Proficient	64	100	91	92	82
Pass Advanced	0	27	27	31	55
Number of students tested	14	15	11	13	11
2. African American Students					
Pass Proficient		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested		1	1	1	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked				
Pass Advanced	Masked				
Number of students tested	1				
4. Special Education Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	7	1	4	4
5. English Language Learner Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Two or More Races					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked			
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked			
Number of students tested	2	1			
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Scores do not include SOA adjustments or VAAP. They do include VMAST.					

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STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Pass Proficient	97	75	82	74	86
Pass Advanced	56	25	36	26	31
Number of students tested	32	28	33	42	36
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Pass Proficient	93	60	82	54	73
Pass Advanced	50	7	27	8	9
Number of students tested	14	15	11	13	11
2. African American Students					
Pass Proficient		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested		1	1	1	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked				
Pass Advanced	Masked				
Number of students tested	1				
4. Special Education Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	7	1	4	4
5. English Language Learner Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Two or More Races					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked			
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked			
Number of students tested	2	1			
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Scores do not include SOA adjustments or VAAP.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Pass Proficient	86	97	95	81	90
Pass Advanced	31	72	45	36	55
Number of students tested	29	32	40	36	29
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Pass Proficient	79	91	93	58	Masked
Pass Advanced	21	55	36	25	Masked
Number of students tested	14	11	14	12	8
2. African American Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	1	2	1	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	4	6	6	3
5. English Language Learner Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Two or More Races					
Pass Proficient	Masked				
Pass Advanced	Masked				
Number of students tested	1				
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Scores do not include SOA adjustments or VAAP.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Pass Proficient	100	100	95	81	79
Pass Advanced	52	50	55	39	48
Number of students tested	29	32	40	36	29
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Pass Proficient	100	100	100	67	Masked
Pass Advanced	36	45	57	17	Masked
Number of students tested	14	11	14	12	8
2. African American Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	
Number of students tested	1	1	2	1	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	4	6	6	3
5. English Language Learner Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Two or More Races					
Pass Proficient	Masked				
Pass Advanced	Masked				
Number of students tested	1				
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Scores do not include SOA adjustments or VAAP.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Pass Proficient	94	95	92	96	83
Pass Advance	34	65	59	58	44
Number of students tested	32	40	36	26	41
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Pass Proficient	86	93	85	Masked	81
Pass Advance	21	64	38	Masked	19
Number of students tested	14	14	13	6	16
2. African American Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Pass Advance	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Number of students tested	1	1	1		1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advance					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advance	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	4	8	6	2	7
5. English Language Learner Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advance					
Number of students tested					
6. Two or More Races					
Pass Proficient		Masked			
Pass Advance		Masked			
Number of students tested		1			
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Scores do not include SOA adjustments or VAAP. They do include VMAST.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Pass Proficient	100	98	78	89	85
Pass Advanced	47	38	42	23	49
Number of students tested	32	40	36	26	41
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	1	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Pass Proficient	100	100	54	Masked	81
Pass Advanced	43	50	31	Masked	38
Number of students tested	14	14	13	6	16
2. African American Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Number of students tested	1	1	1		1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	4	8	6	2	7
5. English Language Learner Students					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Two or More Races					
Pass Proficient		Masked			
Pass Advanced		Masked			
Number of students tested		1			
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Scores do not included SOA adjustments or VAAP.					