

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr James Becker

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Southern Columbia Area High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 812 Southern Drive

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Catawissa State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 17820-8410

County Columbia County

Telephone (570) 356-3450 Fax (570) 356-2835

Web site/URL http://www.scasd.us E-mail jbecker@scasd.us

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/SCAtigers Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/Southern-Columbia-Area-School-District-156483377742283/ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Paul Caputo E-mail pcaputo@scasd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Southern Columbia Area School District Tel. (570) 356-3501

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Mike Yeager
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any 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.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 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	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	54	49	103
10	42	52	94
11	55	35	90
12 or higher	63	59	122
Total Students	214	195	409

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 95 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report 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.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 10%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	23
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	39
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	409
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.095
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
1 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Hindi

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %
Total number students who qualify: 98
8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
54 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 4 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 4 Mental Retardation
- 1 Multiple Disabilities
- 1 Orthopedic Impairment
- 10 Other Health Impaired
- 33 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	96%	93%	98%	99%	98%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	99
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	69%
Enrolled in a community college	8%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	13%
Joined the military or other public service	4%
Other	4%

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Every student will reach their individual potential for academic excellence and demonstrate the character traits of a productive and honorable citizen in a global community.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Southern Columbia Area High School is a small rural school nestled among farm fields in the southern section of Columbia County, Pennsylvania. It is located on the same 119 acre campus as the District's elementary and middle school, serving 409 of the District's 1,380 students. It is the "Home of the Tigers" for students living in the communities of Catawissa Borough, Catawissa Township, Cleveland Township, Franklin Township, Roaring Creek Township, and Locust Township in Columbia County, and Ralpho Township in Northumberland County. The District encompasses 108 square miles of rolling hills and valleys affording residents ample outdoor enjoyment such as hunting, fishing, ice skating, swimming, camping, and boating, as well as a multitude of cultural, educational, and community-based, pursuits. The District is approximately 75 miles northeast of Harrisburg, 50 miles southeast of Williamsport, and 53 miles southwest of Wilkes-Barre.

The Class of 1963 was the first graduating class of Southern Area High School. The school was created through a jointure of the seven school districts once maintained by the communities served by the District today. In 1965, the District took on its present name, the Southern Columbia Area School District. From its one-room schoolhouse origins through today, education continues to be highly-valued by the District's stakeholders who view it as the key to future success and progress.

The apex of the District's school system is its high school which offers an especially broad program of courses and experiences that address the interpersonal, social, physical, and academic needs of its students. Its student body is active and engaged with over 60% participating in interscholastic and extracurricular activities at any point in time throughout the year. Southern Columbia Area students are often recognized for their outstanding academic achievement, consistently scoring above federal and state thresholds for proficiency. Many students have also received individual and/or shared awards in the fields of music, technology, and athletics.

As stated in its Mission Statement, the Southern Columbia Area School District will provide students a "dynamic, rigorous and relevant learning environment that meets the needs of today's learner." In pursuit of this goal, its schools offer a differentiated and diverse curriculum designed to prepare students for an endless array of career pathways. Students have the opportunity to pursue career and technical education studies, enroll in honors courses, science and technology labs, Advanced Placement courses, fine arts, life skills, and college courses, and many more, allowing each to acquire the skills necessary to excel in an increasing complex, interconnected, world. The District espouses a student-centered and project-based pedagogy in its schools. Vibrant 1:1, STEM, and farm to school initiatives underway facilitate this learning approach and offer students ever-increasing opportunities to engage in experiential learning. During the past five years the High School's graduation rate has averaged 96.8% serving as evidence that students find the school's program of studies to be engaging and relevant.

The Southern Columbia Area School District strives to be an "exemplary 21st century learning community where students reach their individual potential." Promoting positive personal relationships, teamwork, collaboration, and lending assistance when needed are commonly-held beliefs which link the District's stakeholders. The widespread acceptance of these values and beliefs within the Southern Columbia Area community has facilitated the development of a safe and caring learning environment in our schools, and the creation of a culture in which all adults are focused on increasing student achievement and helping students grow socially and emotionally.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Southern Columbia Area High School students must successfully complete twenty-five (25) credits to be eligible for a high school diploma, including sixteen credits in the school's core curriculum (ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies). All students are required to schedule at least 6 1/3 credits in each of their high school years and a minimum of 40 class periods per week. The High School's core curriculum includes the following courses:

ELA: English 9, 10, 11, 12; Honors English 9, 10, 11; AP English; Journalism & Yearbook; Speech & Debate.

Mathematics: Applied Algebra; Algebra I; Algebra II; Honors Algebra II; Geometry; Honors Geometry; Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry; Honors Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry; Calculus; Honors Calculus II; AP Calculus AB; Statistics; Accounting I & II; Foundations of Math.

Science: Physical Science; Environmental Science; Biology; AP Biology; Chemistry; AP Chemistry; Physics; AP Physics; Ecology; Anatomy & Physiology; Honors Anatomy & Physiology.

Social Studies: American History 9; American History 10; World History; Problems of Democracy; AP European History.

The academic rigor of the core curriculum is enhanced by the inclusion of Advanced Placement courses offered by the College Board and college courses available through local universities and colleges. During the 2015-2016, school year 35 High School students were enrolled in AP courses. The number of High School students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities continues to grow with approximately 40% of the senior class enrolled in college courses. Among the college courses on student schedules this year are Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Philosophy, and English Composition. Many students take college courses through Bloomsburg University's Advance College Experience (ACE) program which offers high school students a tuition rate discount of 75%. Southern Columbia Area High School students also have the opportunity to enroll in Luzerne County Community College courses taught on our campus. Students are eligible to enroll in LCCC courses during their junior year, and by the time they graduate, they have the potential to earn twelve college credits without leaving our building. In addition to the aforementioned opportunities, sophomores with a 95 percent attendance rate, and who have taken Algebra I and II, Geometry and two years of science, are eligible to apply for admittance to a STEM Magnet program during their junior and senior years. Hosted by Bloomsburg University, the program allows students to earn 30 college credits in one of two areas of focus: engineering or health sciences.

The High School's ELA courses challenge students in the basic areas of reading, writing, grammar, public speaking, and listening with each level seeking the continued improvement of these skills. All courses have required readings, including short stories, novels, historical essays, biographical and autobiographical selections, and plays. Public speaking skills are also a focus, as students conduct research and present persuasive speeches. Students are required to compose a number of essays in response to works of literature covered in the class. Informative writing, imaginative and persuasive writing, technical writing, and poetry composition are stressed. During a student's freshman year, they will engage in an extensive research paper on a career cluster as part of a graduation project. The project is completed during their sophomore year. ELA students also regularly engage in group projects, including a forensics style debates.

The Math curriculum is based on the Pennsylvania Core Standards for Math which intentionally shift away from procedures and instead call on students to learn to apply their knowledge of Math in meaningful and multiple ways. Students are provided opportunities within the curriculum to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; preparing them to think and reason mathematically. Additionally, the school's math curriculum sets a rigorous definition of college and career readiness by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

The High School's Science curriculum offers a diverse selection of courses providing for the application of scientific thinking to problem solving and making decisions. Course content is learned in a variety of ways including discussions, readings, laboratory experiments, classroom demonstrations, use of technology, and field work. Among the topics covered are studies in forces, energy, sound, simple machines, and basic electrostatics. Students also have the opportunity to study genetics, investigate the basic structure and function of living organisms, interactions of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, simple mechanisms of evolution, conservation of biological resources, and how the balance of natural systems is affected by human endeavors. Among the unique projects underway at the High School is the transformation of a courtyard into an outdoor classroom complete with composting areas, rain collection systems, raised-bed gardens, and habitats for wild life. The outdoor classroom is a never-ending site for inquiry-based science lessons which enhance each student's knowledge of science, agriculture, and nutrition. In addition to its connection to the life science curriculum, it provides students with a learning ground conducive to project-based, experiential, learning, reinforcing the farm to school and STEM initiatives underway in the school.

The school's Social Studies curriculum is aligned with the Pennsylvania Core Standards, providing instruction in civics and government, economics, geography and history, including the history and cultures of the United States, the Commonwealth and the world. Throughout their four years of study, students are encouraged to ask questions and engage in the investigation of topics, current issues and problems as presented in class. Students are taught to examine issues from all perspectives, separating evidence-based claims from opinions. A goal of the department is to provide Southern Columbia Area students with the tools and methods needed for clear and disciplined thinking in order to successfully meet the demands of college, career, and civic life.

The District's curriculum provides for students to acquire foundational skills using a pedagogy that espouses a student-centered, project-based approach. This type of learning is endorsed by our schools as it keeps student interest and engagement high. Strategies to improve the skills of students performing below and above grade level start with a review of each student's strengths and needs. For students who are labeled as gifted or achieving above grade level, extension and enrichment activities that replace and/or supplement work in grade-level courses may be offered. Such students also have the opportunity to receive instruction in reading, math, English and/or science at an advanced level. This could include moving to a higher grade level for individual subjects or enrolling in college courses offered both on and off campus.

An assortment of student assessment data is used to help target the individual instructional needs of students who are performing below grade level. Data is used to inform instruction for differentiation, as well as determine interventions. Students that are below average learners are able to take functional math and consumer science classes to help hone foundational skills they may be lacking. Below grade level students who qualify for special education services can enroll in learning support math and language arts course which offer a curriculum tailored to meet their individual needs. In addition, learning support teachers work closely with regular education teachers to provide in-class support to students who are included in the general education curriculum.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In order to fulfill graduation requirements, all Southern Columbia Area High School students are required to complete a health course, four years of physical education, two credits in arts and humanities, and one computer course. The school offers a variety of electives allowing its students to shape their curricula to their own interests and future career goals. Listed below is an overview of these elective courses.

Foreign Language offerings include four years of traditional Spanish instruction (Spanish I, II, III, IV,) and two years of French (French I, II). Foreign Language courses are offered to all students in grades 9 through 12, with AP Spanish reserved for juniors and seniors. Students who enroll in these course are able to listen with comprehension, speak, read, and write in a second language. These courses help develop critical thinking skills and cultural sensitivity which are both increasingly important as students prepare to work in a global economy. Students who desire to study less common languages can do so through online learning and dual enrollment opportunities provided by local universities and community colleges.

The school's Technology Education program is the epitome of STEM Education as it offers a curriculum that is driven by problem-solving, discovery, and exploratory learning. Courses offered are Woodworking, Metal Fabrication/Welding, Drafting/CAD, and CAD I, CAD II, and CAD III. The program's woodworking lab allows students to craft finished products using traditional tools such as saws, planes and hammers as well as power-driven machine tools. Woodworking students also employ AutoCAD to design products and the lab's CNC router to craft them into a finished pieces. Students in the Metal Fabrication courses learn the fundamentals of machining using lathes and milling machines to fashion metallic products. The Metal lab affords students the opportunity to gain proficiency in stick welding, metal inert gas (MIG) welding and tungsten inert gas (TIG) welding. Students in this lab use the software program Inventor to design products such as pencil sharpeners, micrometers and other products with multiple, movable parts. Recently, the Technology Education and Computer Technology teachers introduced GPS and GIS technology into their respective programs, using these tools to engage in collaborative lessons such as soil mapping, with the High School's Environmental Science teacher. Through the years, the High School's "Tech Ed" students have come to expect to engage in relevant learning experiences, infused with rigorous academic standards. They graduate from the program thoroughly prepared for college and career success, with an estimated 50 to 60 students in the last 15 years, earning degrees in engineering, architecture, and drafting from post-secondary schools including Lehigh University, Bucknell, Johns Hopkins, Penn State University, and the Pennsylvania College of Technology.

Family & Consumer Science courses are open to all high school students, arming them with skills needed for future success. In the course Parenting & Child Development, students study effective parenting skills and styles which can be used throughout the developmental stages of children. The course, Relationships, teaches students communication skills within relationships, helping them to improve their conflict management skills and increase tolerance awareness. In courses such as Cooking on Your Own, Healthy Eating, and International Foods & Desserts students learn cooking basics including the preparation of food that is nutritious, safe, and healthy.

The High School Career Development Program provides Special Education students the opportunity to complete transitional activities, both on campus and at job sites in the community, allowing them to gain job skills in various employment settings. Students enrolled in this program operate the District's Copy Center, photocopying, packaging, and delivering resource materials ordered by their "customers," the District's teachers and other staff.

The High School offers a vibrant visual and performing arts program with over 30% of its student body regularly enrolling in music and art courses each year. While Senior High Band and Senior High Chorus form the foundation of this department, courses such as Piano & Guitar and Music Appreciation have attracted students not involved in band or chorus, allowing music to touch the lives of an increasing number of high school students. Senior High Band begins to practice during the first week of August in order to prepare and fine tune their marching and playing drills performed during varsity football games and community parades. The students also perform during a Winter Concert each December and a Spring Concert every May. Ensemble playing includes jazz ensemble, woodwind, brass and percussion. The Senior High Chorus is a mixed chorus, performing advanced choral literature (grade levels 4-6 on a scale of 1-6). Students perform in a variety of venues including Winter and Spring concerts, adjudication festivals, community functions, county, district, regional and state festivals, and Honor Choir Festivals. Gospel Choir and the "Encore" Musical Ensemble are extensions of the Senior High Chorus and are available to high school students. Encore celebrated its 10th anniversary this year with an outstanding production of Once Upon a Mattress. The program has produced a number of music teachers and professional musicians and has proven successful in exposing the High School students to a variety of musical experiences.

Foundations of Art, Drawing/Painting, Ceramics/Sculpture, Crafts/Photography, Two-Dimensional Design, Three-Dimensional Design, and Senior Studio encompass the High School's Art course offerings. Each meets every day and are year long courses. Southern Columbia Area's Art curriculum provides a study of the foundations of art including art history and the elements and principles of design as well as an opportunity to focus on specific mediums including ceramics, drawing, painting, and digital photography. The Art Department hosts a Fall and Spring Art Show and exhibits student work throughout the year in the High School's Art Gallery.

The High School's Physical Education curriculum emphasizes activities that encourage lifelong fitness and overall conditioning. It exposes students to a variety of activities allowing them to make educated decisions about their fitness after graduating from high school. Students in grades 9 to 12 can enroll in traditional physical education courses or specialize in Strength Training beginning in grade 10. Strength Training takes students through a carefully planned and regulated training program that is customized to meet their individual needs. Students in 11th Grade enroll in Health, a required elective which is delivered using a blended format. Working online at a differentiated pace, students explore a variety of topics which focus on the individual's overall physical health and wellness, while investigating other aspects such as mental health and its components. The course is facilitated by a Health teacher who meets with the students periodically, in face-to-face sessions engage in question and answer sessions and class discussion.

The program of studies offered by the Computer Technology/Business Department provides students with skills needed for success in college and the world of work including communication skills, computer skills, interpersonal skills, interview skills, teamwork skills, goal setting skills, resume writing skills, and financial literacy. In courses such as Introduction to Business, Multimedia, Web Page Design, Marketing/Management, Business Law, Computer Hardware & Forensics, Programming I, II, III, Digital Design, Advanced Applications, TV Production, and Cooperative Education, students have an opportunity to gain an explore and gain an understanding of topics including advertising, selling, purchasing, retailing, entrepreneurship, sports marketing, retail marketing, and human resources. Digital Design, Multimedia and Web Page Design gives students in grades 9 to 12, the opportunity to gain proficiency in use of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Adobe Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Flash and InDesign when developing their multimedia projects. Students interested in careers as computer technicians and programmers have opportunities to learn various languages including Pascal, C++, and Java. Successful completion of the Computer Hardware & Forensics course will prepare students for certification as A+ technicians and expose them to forensics software, investigations, and techniques. Seniors are eligible to enroll in the department's Cooperative Education program putting them community-based job placements which provide them a better understanding of the world of work as well as occupational training. Many of the High School's business students are also members of the school's Future Business Leaders of America chapter which has won state awards for membership and which routinely sends students on to state and national competition. The Chapter's Management Information Systems team won First Place at the 2014 Future Business Leaders of America National Leadership Conference held in Nashville, Tennessee. Students in the department's TV Production course produce "TigerNews Daybreak Live," a daily morning newscast which presents District news from a students' perspective.

In addition to the aforementioned electives, Southern Columbia Area students have the opportunity to enroll as full-time students at the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational Technical School, a comprehensive career and technical high school. Students must apply to the school with acceptance based on grades, attendance and teacher recommendation. As part of the application process, students choose four programs they would like to explore during their ninth grade year and then choose an area of emphasis for their tenth grade year. The following training programs are offered at that school:

Construction Cluster: Building Trades Maintenance, Carpentry, and Construction, Electrical Occupations, Plumbing/Heating/Air Conditioning.

Technology Cluster: Computer Technology, Drafting and Design Technology, Electrical Occupations, Electronics Technology, Printing Technology.

Transportation and Manufacturing Cluster: Automobile Mechanics, Automotive Repair Refinishing, Machining Technology, Welding Technology.

Service Cluster: Cosmetology, Food Preparation, Printing Technology, Health Occupations, Horticulture/Floriculture.

The District works closely with the CMAVTS to ensure that supports are available to assist any student with a disability in accessing the vocational curriculum. This includes, but is not limited to, specialized transportation, assistive technology, paraprofessional support, and specialized equipment.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Since 2002, the Southern Columbia Area School District has used Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching as its model, instructional method. The Framework provides our teachers with a steady, uniform guide allowing them to center instruction on high expectations for student achievement while recognizing and developing strategies which address individual student learning needs.

The District has also adopted the Learning Focused Schools model for student learning. This district-wide initiative has provided teachers and paraprofessionals with consistent instructional practices for reaching at-risk learners in regular and special education as well as a model for organizing and delivering course content. As an LFS school district, all teachers are required to develop standards-aligned lessons using the "E-A-T-S" model, incorporating the use of Essential Questions, Activating Strategies, Teaching Strategies and Summarization Strategies to ensure that course objectives are met.

In the Keystone Exam-tested subjects of Algebra I, Biology and Literature (these exams are one component of Pennsylvania's new system of high school graduation requirements), teachers have mapped their course content to the Pennsylvania Core Standards and Eligible Content identified for each subject. Teachers also incorporate Keystone Exam resources available in the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Standards Aligned System (SAS) portal for supplemental instruction activities and interventions. Other core and non-core subjects are also being revised to ensure alignment with the PA Core Standards, with the SAS portal also serving as a valuable resource for supplemental instructional materials and resources.

In 2014, the High School initiated a 1:1 program fostering our mission to provide students differentiated instruction. Every student in grades nine through twelve has received a laptop computer, with "digital textbooks" replacing paper resources in an increasing number of classrooms. This initiative has transformed the way instruction takes place in our school with classes now being best-described as collaborative, project-based, and student-centered, as opposed to being teacher-centered and lecture-based. The 1:1 movement has "modernized" our instructional practices allowing us to better address the needs of our "21st century learners." Teacher and student feedback, as well as classroom observation, report the movement has been a good motivator and has led to high levels of student engagement.

Technology has also enhanced communication and collaboration in our school. Many of the High School teachers use Moodle as their learning platform. This freeware program provides discussion and chat tools which facilitate communication between students and the teacher. Students submit assignments using its digital drop box, download and/or view course materials such as worksheets, reading assignments, and videos. This is especially valuable to students who are absent from school due to illness. The District's student information system has a lesson-plan feature that is used by the teachers to plan daily instruction. The online planner has been helpful in allowing teachers who teach the same course to collaborate on the lesson's details and it also affords the principal and other administrators the opportunity to view its contents and provide appropriate feedback.

Digital resources also help support the delivery of interventions and supplemental instruction at the high school level. Compass Odyssey, a subscription program which provides content aligned to Pennsylvania Core Standards, is used by all teachers to help individualize instruction and provide homework and other supplemental instructional activities. Students work through the program's formative and summative assessments at their own pace and when finished, the teacher will use the results to tailor instructional practices and devise a plan for remediation or enrichment, specific to a student's needs. The review of student assessment data takes places on an ongoing basis. Teachers analyze data individually and as members of data teams. Time to review the data is built into the school's daily and yearly calendar occurring during team meetings, PLCs, Act 80 Days, in-service Days, and "2-Hour Data Delay Days".

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

An assortment of student assessment data is used to help target the individual instructional needs of students. The data is used to inform instruction for differentiation, as well as determine interventions for students who have not demonstrated proficiency of the academic standards and enrichment activities for those who have

mastered grade-level content. Teachers are currently working to update common and benchmark assessments for Math and/or ELA to better align them to the PA Core Standards. This work is being done during common planning, department team meetings, in-service days, or through PLCs, (Professional Learning Committees). Data from a variety of sources including Compass Odyssey, PVAAS, PSSA, CDTs, Keystone, and eMetric data are used to help build a student's profile and assess the effectiveness of our curriculum. All regular and special educators serving in tested subjects for Keystone Exams have been trained in using the aforementioned digital data tools as well as other graded, or subject-specific, data. All administrators and teachers have user accounts and routinely use the data derived from these programs to make informed decisions regarding student grouping or instructional activities. Information, usually in a working digital spreadsheet format, is either provided to these teachers by the Director of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, or downloaded directly from those sites, for discussion and analysis at the data team meetings. High School data teams, at subject-area department meetings, also review assessment data to identify areas of concern for students who were not proficient on the Keystone exams, and follow this up with a discussion of possible interventions. All teachers in the Math, English and Science departments are responsible for providing interventions specific to each student's areas of need in an effort to prepare them to meet success on the next Keystone Exam.

The Southern Columbia School District uses many methods to disseminate information about assessments to the public. The District's website includes parent tips and resources which are designed to help parents assist their child in attaining success on local, state, and other summative assessments. The dates of the assessments are posted on the Southern Columbia Area website and communicated to parents through mailings sent home and announcements broadcast using the school's telephone and messaging system. Similar messages are delivered using social media, including via the District's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The Southern Columbia Area School District creates and maintains a district assessment calendar of all benchmark, diagnostic and summative assessments that are implemented throughout the school year. One purpose of this calendar is to provide a timeline and guide for teachers to help ensure their planned delivery of course content is aligned with the announced test dates of the State assessments (Keystones and PSSA). The results of the state assessment, along with the state-produced Report Card, are posted on the District's website. The site also provides links to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website and its vast repository of data including its Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS). Each building principal takes responsibility for sharing summative assessment information with his teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders. The principals also publish this information in their respective school newsletters and mail home each student's test results when they are received from PDE. The Supervisor of Curriculum and Instructional Technology makes an annual presentation at a public Board of Education meeting and at an assembly of District staff, reviewing the test scores and offering an analysis of the results. Summative assessment data is also shared by teachers during individual parent-teacher meetings.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

We truly believe having a student body that is actively engaged- inside and outside of the classroom- is critical in achieving academic success and creating a positive school climate. We are also fortunate to have many enthusiastic and dedicated teachers and staff who "go the distance" in supporting the academic, social, and emotional growth of our students. We strive to be a "shining beacon of educational excellence" and understand the importance of providing a program of studies and activities that will prepare students for future employment, further education, and active citizenship. This philosophy has helped keep our curriculum dynamic and relevant, which in turn helps keep students motivated.

The following shared values, which are published in the School District's Comprehensive Plan, help explain how we create a school culture/climate that provides a positive environment for students and staff. They represent core beliefs which are deeply embedded in the District's collective psyche. The Southern Columbia Area School District believes:

- Students are our purpose.
- All students are entitled to a rigorous and relevant education.
- Each student has the ability to learn and be successful
- Teaching methods must be responsive to individual students' needs
- Innovation in our schools must be embraced and encouraged to ensure we are providing a learning environment that meets the needs of today's learner
- An effective education is enriched by the arts, service, work-based learning, hybrid and other flexible learning opportunities, athletics and extra-curricular activities.
- Student achievement is positively impacted by the active involvement of caring adults in a supportive environment.
- Every person has intrinsic value and unique gifts and talents.
- Students and staff must adhere to high ethical standards and practice effective citizenship.
- Students and staff are entitled to a healthy, safe, clean and well-maintained, learning environment.
- Employees must be provided encouragement, time, resources and professional development in best practices, to meet high expectations for continuous improvement.

Through the years, the District has enjoyed a high student participation rate for extra-curricular and interscholastic activities, typically ranging from 60-70% of the student body. In total, the High School offers over twenty-five activities and seventeen sports teams with the majority of students participating in more than one activity or team sport. Our students have been very successful adding to the positive mood. The football team has won a record, seven Pennsylvania state football championships, including a title this fall. The baseball team won the state championship in 2000. Southern Columbia Area students also have claimed individual state titles in wrestling, swimming, and track and field, chorus, and band. Overall, the High School offers a vibrant and active program of activities, appealing to the students' diverse interests. Encore, a theatre arts group, regularly attracts a cast and crew of over 50 students each spring who work together to produce the school's highly-acclaimed musicals. The SCA Chapter of the Future Business Leaders of America typically enrolls over 25% of the High School's student body making it one of the State's top-ranked chapters for local membership and market share. The group has an active agenda filled with workshops, community service, and competitions keeping its members highly engaged and involved. Its members have also enjoyed success at regional and state FBLA competitions with the group's 2014 Management Information Systems team winning First Place at the National FBLA Leadership Conference Competition held in Nashville, Tennessee.

The High School has an established Student Assistance Programs (SAP) team "to assist students and families in removing any barriers to learning and increase student achievement through prevention and intervention using a collaborative method." The School District also employs a full-time social worker who provides therapeutic support to students and assists families in accessing community social agency resources. Maintaining a safe and secure environment is a priority of the District. It has used District and

Safe Schools funds to enhance the security of its buildings and to employ a School Police Officer, a position which offers an extra layer of protection for our students and staff.

We have high expectations for our students. We provide a challenging environment where students can enjoy learning while "reaching for the bar" which is consistently set high. We are proud of them and the efforts they put forth! We are proud of the partnerships we have formed with our parents and community and business groups. Our positive school climate and culture are direct indicators of our school's success and of our Tiger Pride!

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Southern Columbia Area School District strongly supports and encourages the active involvement and participation of parents, and other community members and agencies, in our schools. The District offers a broad range of school, family, and community activities that engage all parties in helping to meet student needs. We place a high value on engaging our community members because we see the direct benefits our students receive from such involvement.

One of the most common ways parents and community members are involved in our schools is through service as a volunteer. At the high school level, volunteers typically serve as chaperones, coaches, and as advisors during musicals and concerts. As explained on the District's website, individuals with "an interest in the District's educational programs, an enjoyment in helping students, and a sincere belief that by volunteering a contribution will be made to the learning process" are strongly encouraged to get involved in our schools.

Each Southern Columbia Area athletics program and music department has a booster organization which can be counted on to make sizable contributions of time, funds, and services. The groups typically meet monthly in classrooms and other spaces on the school's campus making the school not only a second home to our students, but to the many parents and other members involved in these groups. This past year the music boosters helped organize a trip to Disney World which was a "once in a lifetime" opportunity for many students. The football boosters helped pay for the mounting transportation costs incurred by the team as it traveled to distant stadiums for state playoff games on its path to the State Championship. The aforementioned are a sampling of the ways the boosters lend their time and talents to enhance the students' educational experience.

The District uses a range of communication tools and channels, including newsletters, websites, e-mails, text and phone messages, and parent-teacher conferences to support parents to be involved with their child's learning, at home and at school. The District's online Parent Portal has proven to be an especially popular tool as it gives each parent/guardian 24/7 access to their child's grades, attendance and other records. Its messaging features serve to foster communication and facilitate efforts to sustain the learning partnerships which have developed between school and home. All teachers and building-level administrators have systems in place to ensure regular contact with parents to discuss news, both good and bad, as well as any specific student concerns.

Participation on the Board of Education's Policy Committee, ad hoc Citizen Advisory Committees, Strategic Planning subcommittees, and meetings such as those hosted by Title I staff, afford community stakeholders regular opportunities to be involved in the District's decision-making process. Community input is also solicited through climate and similar surveys and the annual Speak Up Survey, sponsored by Project Tomorrow, a national, non-profit company which collects stakeholder input on education, technology, 21st century skills, schools of the future, and science instruction. For the past three years the High School has been recognized by Project Tomorrow as a Speak Up Loud and Clear School. This award recognizes the top 200 schools which effectively incorporate Speak Up data into their local decision-making. Last year, over 521,000 students, parents, educators, and members of the community, representing over 8,000 schools nationwide, participated in the survey.

The District's schools are the central hub of the community with area residents regularly invited to our campus for informational meetings, assemblies, concerts, and other gatherings. The High School History Department, for example, hosts an annual Veterans Day Assembly- always a much-anticipated community event- as is the annual Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner, also hosted by students. The school's students and staff routinely work with civic and non-profit groups to plan activities which provide for the welfare of the community. Semi-annual blood drives sponsored by the National Honor Society, blanket drives, Angel Network and Empty Bowl participation are examples of this outreach. The Guidance Office provides programs that assist parents and students with post-secondary planning, including a Senior Information Night, Financial Aid Night, an FSA ID Workshop, and a FAFSA Completion Night. The school has also hosted meetings on public interest topics including bullying prevention, safe internet surfing, and drug and alcohol awareness.

3. Professional Development:

Among the shared values of the Southern Columbia Area School District is the belief that all "employees must be provided encouragement, time, resources, and professional development in best practices, to meet high expectations for continuous improvement." The District strives to offer a comprehensive program that strengthens educators' performance levels, enabling them to improve student learning and meet the specific needs of our students.

As explained in Southern Columbia Area's Comprehensive Plan, a key objective of the District's professional development program is to increase each educator's teaching skills based on effective practice and research. Activities intended to develop the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically are provided as a means to ensure that assessments, curriculum, instruction, teaching materials, and interventions for struggling students and gifted, are aligned to each other, as well as to Pennsylvania's academic standards. Educators engage in activities which help them develop the skills needed to analyze and use data in instructional decision making. The District's professional development plan also seeks to empower educators to work effectively with parents and community partners, and to empower leaders to create a culture of teaching and learning, with an emphasis on learning.

Southern Columbia Area uses surveys to identify areas of need for professional development and to gauge the effectiveness of these efforts. The District's administrative team holds several planning meetings during the spring and summer months to solidify staff development plans for the upcoming school year. Student achievement data is utilized as part of the decision-making process, as is current research and the administrative team's vision and goals for the District. Planned professional development time is built into the daily bell schedule. Teachers and administrators utilize a 30-minute, common planning period at the beginning of each day to meet and work collaboratively on a variety of tasks including analyzing student assessment data, identifying RtII groupings and interventions, aligning curriculum to PA Core Standards, and/or planning integrated lessons. The 30-minute block is also used for workshops and trainings on topics related to District or school-specific initiatives. Recent examples include training on new technology, understanding mandated reporter requirements, and how to use an EpiPen (epinephrine injection). In addition, the District provides resources which allow staff to pursue professional development through in-service programs, conferences, workshops, online learning and graduate courses. This school year, the District's academic calendar earmarked nine days for professional development. Among the unique offerings available were graduate-level courses taught by a visiting professor. Nine courses are now available, including book studies, self-paced individual or small group instructional improvement courses, and on-site courses presented on three Saturdays and selected professional development days. A common theme of these courses is providing educators with an understanding of current research and best practices designed to promote success in the classroom.

4. School Leadership:

Southern Columbia Area's school leadership team consists of a superintendent, a supervisor of special education, a supervisor of curriculum and instructional technology, and three building principals. Promoting positive personal relationships, teamwork, collaboration, lending assistance when needed, providing a wholesome, caring, safe environment, and creating a culture in which all adults are focused on increasing student achievement and helping students grow socially and emotionally, are commonly-held beliefs which link this administrative team.

At the building level, the principal plays a key role in planning and implementing curricular and instructional improvement. The principal is empowered to organize key stakeholders and to facilitate discussions regarding the current state of curriculum and instruction, determining what revisions, if any, are needed. When an analysis of student assessment data, staff feedback, and other performance measures including classroom observations reveal curricular or instructional deficiencies, the principal, with discussion and validation from the administrative team, is authorized to make all necessary changes. The principal, in turn, empowers his staff, and works collaboratively with them to achieve goals that have been established with their input and that of other stakeholders, including students and parents. The High School principal, for example, has created a collaborative leadership team which consists of representatives from each of the school's departments. They meet monthly to discuss the progress and outcomes of academic goals set for the school and each department. The principal also solicits feedback at monthly staff meetings and regularly engages his staff in face-to-face conversation, both formal and informal, using such meetings as an opportunity to learn more about the duties and responsibilities of the staff member and to inquire about what they believe is necessary to perform his/her job most effectively.

Districtwide, the school leadership team strives to maintain a positive demeanor and demonstrate a true desire to assist those whom he/she leads. The team operates on the philosophy that the "health of an organization" is dependent on everyone completing their assigned task to the best of their ability. Those who are unwilling to do their fair share are held accountable for their inaction, a stand that is appreciated by others. Treating all individuals in a fair and consistent manner, and holding all individuals to the same standards of behavior and performance, tends to keep motivation high. The team itself, will use the following questions to reflect on the success of their leadership: Is student achievement increasing?; Is the student body active and engaged?; Are parents and other community members positive, active contributors to school life?; Is the staff satisfied and driven by student-centered, altruistic motivations? Collectively, Southern Columbia Area's school leadership team possesses a genuine appreciation and respect for all employees and believes that each has an important role to play in the education of the District's students conveying the sense "that we are in this together."

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Being a small school, with successes in both academic and extra-curricular areas, it is difficult to pin down just one single practice that has been the most influential in creating that success. As we worked our way through the completion of this application, however, and reflected upon the questions posed, what was once difficult to explain, eventually became crystal clear. The practice that makes our school so successful is “offering opportunity!” Giving students every opportunity possible, eliminating barriers to those opportunities, and supporting those opportunities, is what drives our school's teachers, staff, and leadership teams, as well as the members of the community it serves.

Limited resources and limited opportunities may be a common obstacle to success in schools, especially to those that are small and rural. This is not the case at Southern Columbia Area High School. Like the Southern Columbia Area parents of the 19th century who believed "education is the handmaiden of progress," we today, continue to look for ways to expand the horizons of our students. One hundred years ago, parents desired a secondary education for their children; today they desire a post-secondary option. While the number of AP courses offered each semester at Southern Columbia Area High School may be small when compared to larger schools, a post-secondary option is always available to our students because of partnerships we have formed with local universities and community colleges. This year, for example, we are offering four college courses taught on our campus by the faculty of Luzerne County Community College. We also have over 40 seniors and over 20 juniors enrolled in courses at Bloomsburg University. We are proud of such initiatives as they enhance our curriculum and offer students unlimited opportunities including a chance to earn credits that can be applied toward a bachelor's degree as well as build resumes that will make their respective, college application more competitive. Opportunities abound in the extra-curricular areas as well. Although we have many activities offered through the school, the administration has reached out to other schools to form cooperatives in sports and activities that our school may not have the resources to fully sponsor. Even though they may not have a tiger on their uniform, the students that take part in these opportunities gain valuable experiences that otherwise they would not have had a chance to enjoy. They also make our school proud of their accomplishments!

We here at SCA do not settle for the phrase “we can’t.” When faced with barriers to student, school, or community success, we do everything in our power to see how “we can!” We can provide opportunities for rigorous academics, fulfilling activities, and a positive learning environment for all members of our learning community. The late Milton Berle once said “if opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.” In the end, we here at SCA build doors, and will continue to build doors to opportunity.