

U.S. Department of Education
2019 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. Jason Cendroski

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

Official School Name Sunset Valley Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11605 Dickens Drive

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

North Huntingdon PA 15642-6909
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Westmoreland County

Telephone (724) 861-3035

Fax

Web site/URL https://sunsetvalley.norwinsd.org/

E-mail jcendroski@norwinsd.org

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.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. William Kerr

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail wkerr@norwinsd.org

District Name Norwin School District Tel. (724) 861-3000

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.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Barb Viola

(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.

Date _____

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

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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	38	49	87
1	35	42	77
2	53	48	101
3	51	42	93
4	56	48	104
5	0	0	0
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 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	233	229	462

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93 % White
 - 3 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	456
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0%
0 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9%
Total number students who qualify: 43

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
66 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.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>24</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>22</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>4</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 24:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

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.

Through quality educational experiences, Sunset Valley Elementary School prepares students to become productive and responsible citizens in an ever-changing global society.

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

Sunset Valley Elementary School is part of the Norwin School District, a large suburban public school system located east of Pittsburgh. Norwin serves the rapidly growing areas of North Huntingdon, Irwin, and North Irwin. Sunset Valley Elementary consists of kindergarten through fourth grade with a current enrollment of just under 500 students. Families come to Sunset Valley from several neighborhoods. Many families live in newer housing plans that have been constructed over the past fifteen years; while other families live in surrounding homes that were constructed during the 1950's. Students have a broad range of economic needs, but the population is mostly stable with students attending most of their elementary years at our school. The area attracts a wide range of professionals that work in and around the Pittsburgh area.

“Through quality educational experiences, the Norwin School District prepares students to become productive and responsible citizens in an ever-changing global society.” This is the mission statement for Sunset Valley and is evidenced in various ways. In order to achieve academic success, all curriculum is aligned in all subject areas to the Pennsylvania Core state standards. The elementary staff consists of over 50% teachers that possess a master's degree and one state board certified teacher. We offer two full day kindergarten classrooms, and two sessions of half day kindergarten. Our second through fourth grade classrooms are departmentalized, with two teachers in each grade level focusing on ELA and two specializing in Mathematics. Data from DIBELS, Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), CDT testing and classroom performance drives daily instruction. This same data is used to target students during daily enrichment and remediation time block.

Since opening in 2002, Sunset Valley has enjoyed sound family support. Teachers, parents, grandparents, and other caregivers all comprise our school's Parent-Teacher Association. The PTA sponsors many memorable events for the students and staff. Some include the following: field trips, holiday parties/parades, yearbook, mystery readers, pancake breakfast, bus driver breakfast, staff appreciation week, safety programs, Veteran's Day program, fire safety day, gently used book exchanges, talent show, book fairs, school store, art show, gallery walks, field day, and library helpers. Another area of success occurs on STEM days. This is when parents are welcomed into the school to spend the day teaching and presenting hands-on activities that showcase science, technology, engineering, or mathematical professions. An additional highlight is “Pennsylvania Days,” in which fourth grade parents supervise various stations centered around the history of Pennsylvania.

Each morning Sunset Valley students begin the day with 30 minutes of enrichment and remediation Reading instruction. This allows for teachers to utilize formative assessment data by reteaching difficult skills, and challenging students where necessary. The students are mixed throughout each grade level according to strengths and weaknesses in current reading concepts. All members of the faculty instruct small groups of students while supporting various modes of learners. In addition, the school counselor runs social groups for students who need a positive start to their day. This initiative empowers all students to reach maximum potential and has been instrumental to the academic success of Sunset Valley.

The school focuses on applying innovative technology into daily instruction. Our students' creativity, aptitude, and problem solving skills are enhanced through the use of the following: Wi-Fi, two computer labs, two mobile computer labs, an iPad cart for music and art instruction, iPads for each classroom, Ziggi document cameras, Osmo kits, green screen broadcasting system, 3-D printers, grade level cameras, teacher laptops, Apple televisions, large screen televisions, and a telephone intercom system in each room. Sunset Valley also has secure doorway entrances with card swipes, motion detectors, an emergency alarm system, hallway cameras, and two-way radios to ensure safety.

We have a complete science lab and an outdoor classroom that is used for many STEM and interactive lesson plans. For the gifted students, there is a robust enrichment program called Seminar of Elementary Advanced Learners (SEAL). In this program, students receive weekly project-based instruction that is done in a small group pull out setting. Also, there is a strong learning support team that addresses the individual needs of students with learning disabilities. Speech and occupational therapists are also available for any student that qualifies. One of the programs that we are extremely proud of is our life skills program. This

program accepts special needs children from across the Norwin School District and from neighboring districts. These students are integrated as much as possible into the regular education setting and have provided numerous learning experiences and cherished memories for everyone here at our school.

Sunset Valley has made a strong commitment to the emotional and cultural well-being of our students. Led by a program developed by the Norwin School District called Noble Knights, our students learn and use seven essential character traits. These traits include: responsibility, respect, fairness, courage, caring, perseverance and honesty. Each trait is explained and taught during a specific month, tickets are given for observed behavior, a “Noble Knight” is selected from each classroom and an assembly is held to recognize and reward all students who exhibit positive behavior traits.

Another area of social development is our affiliation with Saint Vincent College. This program focuses on drug, alcohol, and smoking prevention along with bullying, internet safety, and peer pressure education.

Throughout the years, we have heard and believe that Sunset Valley is the “place to be.” Our staff, students and families firmly perceive Sunset Valley Elementary as being a safe, inspiring atmosphere that allows all students to reach their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Reading/English Language Arts instruction supports modifications and accommodations that allow students at all mental and physical ability levels to access and master a rigorous Pennsylvania state standard curriculum. ELA curriculum maps and Student Learning Objectives (SLO) are aligned to the PA Core Standards. Teachers work with colleagues in a professional learning community to write curriculum. All ELA curriculum maps and SLO's are kept online in the District student management system and are used as a guide for instruction.

The balanced literacy approach is evident throughout ELA. Guided reading, flexible grouping, and differentiated instruction allows all learners to be supported through the use of the McGraw-Hill Wonders series. Our school uses this comprehensive balanced literacy program designed to meet challenges of today's classroom and provide intervention support. A combination of print and digital resources enable strong literacy foundations. Complex texts are accessed while sound character and social emotional skills are presented. A school-wide reading teacher provides extra support to the students during guided reading instruction. Teachers use student learning profiles for flexible grouping in order to promote maximum learning. The students move frequently among groups according to their specific content related needs. Academic, social, and emotional needs of each student are met while working with and learning from their peers.

All grades use reading and writing workshop methods of instruction. Grammar, spelling, and phonics are all infused within the workshop approach. Additionally, as students advance through the grades, writing skills are developed through the identification of text evidence, and analysis of elaborate thinking. Students are led by modeling, practicing, and implementation. Additional aspects of ELA instruction are refined through the use of materials such as Scholastic News subscriptions, the online component of McGraw-Hill Wonders, skill based leveled readers, monthly reading "engage-its," Learning.com, novels, book clubs, genius hour, Google Classroom, literature circles, research & inquiry projects, STEM projects, read-a-thons, Scholastic contests, Epic, Readworks, and Freckle.

In addition to classroom records, the Acadience Data Management System is used to evaluate independent reading levels, progress monitor, and create grouping plans for daily instruction and enrichment/remediation sessions. Teachers hold students accountable with mastering daily learning targets. Therefore, formative assessment is ongoing throughout instruction.

1b. Mathematics:

At Norwin School District, we embrace research and classroom-proven curriculum and instruction that foster true depth of mathematical understanding to ensure student success and higher achievement. In 2016, the District adopted Pearson's enVision 2.0. for grades kindergarten through sixth. The program achieves coherence across grades through deliberate learning progressions with Common Core aligned Standards. The scope and sequence is built around a focused curriculum that enables students to accelerate and maximize growth as a mathematical learner.

Teachers incorporate higher-level questions and student engagement strategies to accelerate the growth of all learners. Content is developed with focus, coherence, and rigor. This attention to rigor is reflected in the balance of conceptual understanding, procedural skills, applications, and basic fact fluency. Problem-based teaching and learning is at the core of creating rigor in mathematics. Students acquire a mathematical foundation through a productive struggle of relating previous skills to new ones as an active participant. Differentiation is evident because the teacher aids each student in his/her mathematical progression. The eight Mathematical Practices are reinforced that enable a learner to demonstrate observable verbal and written behaviors to achieve math competencies.

At Sunset Valley, teachers use formative and summative assessments as a guide in making instructional decisions. Analysis of assessment data by teachers and Response to Intervention monitors growth and informs educators to provide interventions or enrichment. District-wide benchmarks provide evidence of mastery or gaps in mathematical fluency, concepts, and applications.

1c. Science:

Science instruction is driven by a variety of approaches to meet the PA Academic Standards for Science and Technology and Engineering, PA Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology, as well as, the Next Generation Science Standards. A curriculum framework was designed to ensure that all standards are met through a child's elementary school years. The curriculum helps to enforce continuity across grade levels, and it spirals topics as children progress through the grade levels. The MacMillan McGraw Hill science textbooks have been aligned with our reading curriculum and literacy resources to ensure students know how to interact with informational text.

Students at Sunset Valley explore scientific and engineering practices through collaboration and group work. Many master the long term goal of developing conceptual understanding. Lessons involve hands-on investigative activities within classrooms, at the science lab and also at the outdoor learning classroom. In addition, students are given a variety of opportunities using the engineering design process by participating in STEM based activities and project-based learning. Teachers use inquiry-based lessons to encourage students to ask questions and develop experiments to test their theories. Students in third and fourth grade use Legos to study robotics and programming in the computer lab. With all of these lessons, students are challenged and given many opportunities to question, problem solve, improve, persevere, and collaborate with others.

Similar to other subject areas, Sunset Valley teachers use formative and summative assessments to guide instructional decisions in Science education. Students are assessed through quizzes, chapter tests, unit tests, labs and science notebooks. These curriculum-based assessments provide teachers with information to identify students who need remediation or enrichment. The science notebooks provide an additional opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding and growth.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

At Sunset Valley, social studies education is an important aspect of our curriculum. We believe that social studies instruction prepares the students to successfully function in our global community. It is the primary source in which our students are prepared to understand and be inspired to participate in our democracy and as a citizen of society.

Our curriculum is heavily infused in the McGraw-Hill Wonders Reading series. It includes elements from the four strands of social studies: Civics; Economics; History; and Geography. Instruction and concepts in these areas occur throughout all grades kindergarten to fourth. Through a close connection of social studies and language arts, teachers are able to provide historical fiction activities that include but are not limited to the following: dramas, myths, read alouds, literature circles, poetry, debates, elections, and career exploration.

For example, students in our third grade plan, create, and implement an independent business. Each student learns how to write a business plan. Then, they create a "good" to market. The entire group of 100 entrepreneurs hold an economic fair day, barter with one another, and thrive on the excitement of success.

Assessment and instruction of social studies content is carried out in various ways. Teachers mainly collect data to make decisions about remediation or enrichment through performance assessments. These formative assessments are considered to be short term while students work to master common goals. Some assessments are writing projects, map making assignments, collages, debates, speeches, and timelines. Each one serves as a bridge between students' prior knowledge and life experiences to the learned content of core text. They also provide teachers the evidence of connection among concrete understanding and application

of social studies concepts to students' lives. This is only one way teachers use to evaluate how well students comprehend and apply what they have learned. Students are then assessed formally through quizzes, chapter tests, and unit tests. All of these assessments enable students the opportunity to use analytical thinking, reasoned decision-making, problem solving and inquiry-based learning tasks to better understand their role in the society they live in. The teaching of social studies also offers endless opportunities to emphasize the seven character traits of our Noble Knight program through the study of both present day and historical figures. Our social studies curriculum also encourages parental involvement through end of the unit implementation projects, field trips, and special in-school programs such as the fourth grade Pennsylvania Day Program.

1e. For secondary schools:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to our core subjects, the itinerant classes (art, library, music, physical education, and technology) are structured to promote project-based learning, support hands-on educational materials, and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration in a high-tech work-like environment with the primary goal of fostering STEM/STEAM fluency and college/career readiness. All students in grades K-4 at Sunset Valley attend one itinerant class per day for forty minutes.

In music, we strive to promote musical literacy in all grade levels through positive musical experiences that develop the areas of the brain related to language and reasoning skills. Each class prepares for a variety of performances including Veterans Day, a Holiday Program, and a Fourth Grade Performance. Throughout the year, students play an assortment of musical instruments, including boomwhackers, shakers, drums, xylophones, and rhythm sticks. Technology is incorporated through the Mimio Teach device, in which students interact with images on the screen and collaborate with others. Through the Quaver Music Program, students use iPads to complete interactive lessons with their teachers and classmates. First grade students complete a combined project with our art teacher to show the importance of expressing emotion in the book, "The Noisy Paint Box." Second grade students learn folk songs from around the world, helping them to understand cultural and musical similarities and differences. Third grade students use STEM to create musical instruments out of recycled materials. They work collaboratively through the engineering design process to perform for one another. Fourth grade students learn how to play the recorder and work through "Recorder Karate" belts as songs increase in difficulty. Students in our adapted music class have learned how to play the piano and a variety of instruments using a color-coded note system.

In Art, students in all grades explore a variety of materials and processes and are encouraged to take risks in creating. This allows students to develop a sense of innovation. From color theory and art history, to contemporary styles and graphic design, students explore many different creative progressions. By utilizing project-based learning, students are hands-on with various mediums, and are able to use creative problem solving skills to think "outside of the box." Through Artsonia, students use iPads to share their work with their families and friends. Student in our adapted art class develop stronger fine motor skills through their artwork, and display their work with pride in various art exhibitions throughout the county. The third grade class takes a field trip to a local art museum. While there, they experience art through history, create a project at the studio, create still life exhibits, and perform a dramatic theater through observations of oil paintings.

In Physical Education class, all students are taught fitness components to develop a strong, healthy, fit body. Students learn the importance of routine activity for daily fitness to promote a healthy lifestyle. They also learn about proper portion size and nutrition. Students compete while motivating one another to work towards reaching their personal best fitness goal. Within each lesson, students work on power, speed,

cooperation, and reaction time. Students have the opportunity to earn a top achiever spot, in which their names are read over the daily announcements. Additionally, students have the opportunity to win the “hardest work award” for each class. Students dance while getting fit through programs such as “Just Dance.” They also participate in physical fitness olympic challenges. At the end of the year a “Fun Day” is held to promote physical fitness and encourage all students to live a healthy and active lifestyle. Parents attend fun day and provide numerous fitness activity stations for the students to enjoy. Through physical education, students learn the importance of good sportsmanship, and how to appropriately handle winning and losing.

In Library, students are encouraged to bring home a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts to build upon current and past reading skills. The librarian works collaboratively with classroom teachers to align instruction with weekly vocabulary and comprehension strategies. Many projects that are completed in the library are based off of the students’ interests, as the students complete reflection surveys where they share what they would like to learn throughout the school year. First grade students have the opportunity to video-chat with an author living with special needs to encourage acceptance and kindness in our school. Second grade students research biographies and then create a brief audio file where the mouth of the person that they researched moves to the sound of their voice and then is displayed in the library with a QR code. Third grade students collaborate with the music teacher and librarian to create music playlists to wordless picture books. Fourth grade students have the opportunity to become innovators and creators through the publication of class books that they write and illustrate.

In technology, students think critically about a topic, communicate and collaborate with others, and generate ideas and solutions to relevant, curriculum-based problems and scenarios. Technology interconnects all Sunset Valley itinerant areas as 21st Century Learning environments, in which students become proficient in creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. Kindergarten and first grade students concentrate on acquiring beginning technology skills with a strong focus on developing mouse, typing, and word processing skills. Second grade students utilize the foundation in typing and writing to expand into more diverse skill sets including Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint slide shows, explore internet research, internet safety procedures, learn basic coding and programming logic, word with iPad apps, and continue their development of word processing and typing proficiency. Third grade students combine multiple skill sets to complete projects in which they research facts, collect images, name files, store files, manage files, and create multimedia presentations. Fourth grade students complete science and social studies PowerPoint presentations, a variety of research assignments, play coding and programming games, develop skills in word processing and typing, and learn about internet safety and digital citizenship requirements.

3. Special Populations:

Special education services are provided to students who demonstrate a need in understanding or in using language (written or spoken), reading, writing, and/or mathematics, as well as students whose needs include functional academics, self-care, social or emotional skills, language development, communication, and perceptual motor skills. Students may be serviced through Learning Support, Life Skills Support, and additional service providers that are directly on sight including Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language Support, and English as a Second Language Support. Students receive individualized instruction through 1:1 teaching, direct instruction, specially designed instruction, push-in services, pull-out services, co-teaching, and various resources and curriculums to fit the needs and strengths of each student.

Sunset Valley is the home of the Norwin School District K-4 Life Skills Program. Through this program, students receive functional academics, daily living skills, social skills, and opportunities for inclusion, and reverse inclusion. While some students do very well in inclusive settings, others will exhibit behaviors, social anxiety, and lack of participation simply because they are not as familiar with a specific setting. Through reverse inclusion, typically developing students are invited into the Life Skills classroom are provided with opportunities to participate in the special education class. Examples of these activities include, social skills groups, gardening club in the outdoor classroom, school store and group OT and speech activities such as running a “Target Store”, operating a pizza shop, and delivering mail or goodies to classroom teachers.

SEAL (Seminar of Elementary Advanced Learners) students are pulled out of the regular education program for approximately two hours per week to attend enrichment experiences with the focus of helping to develop the whole child. The SEAL students participate in hands-on extension activities while working towards mastering their Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) goals and concentrate on real life application. The eight areas of focus in the SEAL Program include: reading, comprehension, presenting, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and technology.

The Reading Assistance Program serves students in first through fourth grade who are performing below grade level. Students are selected to participate in the Reading Assistance Program according to data obtained from benchmark assessments and teacher recommendations. Students in the Reading Assistance Program are provided with daily, intensive, small-group instruction for thirty minutes outside of the general classroom. The Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI) is used to support students in first and second grade through the use of gradually increasing texts to build reading proficiency. Students are progress monitored every other week through running records to show growth in benchmark instructional and independent reading levels. Wonderworks Intervention is used to support students in third and fourth grade, in which instruction is scaffolded to support students. Weekly themes, skills, and strategies coincide with the general classroom.

Students are also supported through the implementation of the Response to Instruction and Intervention. (RTII) This multi-tiered framework is used to provide academic and behavioral assistance to students. Students are identified as having a need and provided support within the regular education classroom.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Through our Character Education Program is a platform that builds attributes of good character, improves relationships between professional/support staff personnel and student, and ends bullying. The Positive School Wide Behavior (PSWB) Committee ensures that the students and teachers to feel valued and respected in a school culture while promoting a growth mindset. Our Knight Note school-wide token system acknowledges students for showing Responsibility, Respect, or Safe Behavior in the classroom, hallways, cafeteria, and bus. Students who receive Knight Notes are chosen for daily rewards. Winners from each grade level use educational technology in reverse inclusion in the Life Skills classroom for twenty-five minutes. Students also can be chosen for monthly rewards, as all of the Knight Notes from each classroom are entered into a raffle. Two students from each grade level participate in Minute to Win It games and at Positive School Wide Behavior Assemblies. The winning classrooms are awarded with social and emotional growth activities such as extra gym time, pajama day, movie day, and extra recess.

Our Character Education Program focuses on the following seven character traits: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Caring, Fairness, Courage, and Perseverance. During our monthly assemblies, one student from each classroom who was chosen by their teacher, is recognized in front of the school as a Noble Knight for embodying one of the character traits. Our Noble Knights receive a certificate and have their photographs displayed in our Sunset Valley's Noble Knights showcase at the center of the school.

Sunset Valley's PSWB Committee and Social Committee create a positive valued culture among the staff. Similar to the students, the staff nominates one another for modeling the monthly character trait, two teachers are chosen each month who are recognized in front of the school at the assemblies and receive incentives. The social committee organizes monthly themed luncheons, holiday gift exchanges, holds bonding activities outside of school to continually encourage morale, and displays a "Sunshine in My Pocket" bulletin board.

Emotional growth is supported through the program titled, Girls on the Run. Third and fourth grade girls meet bi-weekly in the spring to build confidence, leadership skills, and positive body image, while ultimately training for a 5K. The team is run by volunteer teachers. The girls in the program demonstrate profound social and emotional growth that carries over into academics. As part of the program, the girls work on community impact projects that positively affect the culture of our school such as organizing a pep rally for Special Olympians in our school, sharing the importance of a "buddy bench" at recess, and running an anti-bullying campaign school wide.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Sunset Valley works diligently to become immersed into community events that foster relationships with students, parents, faculty, and community members. Each teacher informs and includes parents in their child's learning experiences through open communication. At the beginning of the school year, families are invited to attend an Open House in which they have the opportunity to come into the school, meet their child's teachers, and become acclimated for the school year. Families are then invited to attend Parent/Teacher Conferences to discuss their child's strengths, needs, and progress. To establish a home-school connection, Online/Digital learning resources are available to parents that include Connect-Ed (Reading Website), Pearson (Math Website), Skyward Gradebook/Communication, and weekly newsletters.

Opportunities are presented to families to come into the school and view their child's work through Gallery Walks and an Author's Tea. Family events are incorporated throughout the school year that include a Science Fair, STEM Night, Science Olympiad, Field Trips, Pennsylvania Days, Pancake Breakfast, School Store, Round Table Reader (a free book exchange), and a Flea Market in which our school demonstrates charitable giving.

The Sunset Valley PTA provides information for families at Sunset Valley through a website, text alerts, email alerts, and school calendar. The PTA helps staff organize events such as a Read-a-Thon, McTeacher Night at McDonald's, a catered breakfast for bus drivers, Cookies and Canvases (, Book Fair, School Movie Night, and Fun Fair. Through the fundraising efforts of the Sunset Valley PTA, an outdoor classroom was established.

Sunset Valley participates in many school and district sponsored events such as a Talent Show, Race for Grace (a community event in honor of a former student from our school to raise money for pediatric brain cancer), Relay Recess for American Cancer Society, Fun Day (a relay day for students), Red Ribbon Week, Officer Phil program, and the St. Vincent Drug Awareness program. Our staff and students celebrated Read Across America by promoting positive reading experiences, with parents, community members, and high school students visiting our school and reading to the students. Each month our school chooses a grade level to sponsor a Dress Down Day for a community member, event, or charity. In December, staff and students demonstrate caring by donating Christmas gifts to community organizations. The Young Knights Program involves Sunset Valley Kindergarten teachers and local preschool teachers who work together to create a smooth transition for students entering Kindergarten.

Sunset Valley strives to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and staff on a daily basis. We work closely with our local police department and have developed procedures and plans for different types of emergency situations. The staff is thoroughly trained and well prepared for emergencies, and the students practice these drills throughout the school year.

3. Professional Development:

The Norwin School District prides itself in providing all employees with a variety of professional development opportunities and emphasizes the importance of ongoing learning for all who work in the district. The success of the model owes a great deal to the culture that was created in the school community—one in which all teachers and staff have opportunities to learn and share in learning experiences with one another. Sunset Valley's goal is to operate as a professional learning community where teachers and administrators work together to continuously share in learning and take the necessary steps to improve teaching and learning.

Our school calendar allows for district professional development days throughout the year. During these meetings, professional development is provided in one or two concentrated areas that are aligned to the District educational goals and vision. For the past few years, the District has engaged in providing training and support in assessment. In addition to formative assessment, the District continues to integrate past District professional development initiatives, such as balanced literacy, summative assessment, data analysis, Understanding by Design, strategic questioning, QUILT, Reading Apprenticeship, Student Learning Objectives, and differentiated instruction. These topics are all included within the Induction Program in which teachers are trained throughout their first three years of service. Many teachers in our building have also received additional training in STEM, Project-Based Learning, Kid-Writing, and the St. Vincent College Student Assistance Program.

One of the newest initiatives at Norwin is to make each classroom a 21st Century learning environment. Teachers are provided technology courses to aid them in using technology and enter into the augmentation, modification, and redefinition stages. Each teacher has also been trained on using Google Classroom to incorporate student involvement within the classroom.

At Sunset Valley, the principal uses ninety minutes per month for building level goals. During a time called "seminar time," our teachers engage in various types of professional development that is both principal and teacher initiated. The bulk of the time is devoted to student progress, during which teachers analyze data, evaluate current student interventions, and explore new teaching and learning strategies. The remaining time is spent in professional learning communities researching topics such as growth mindset and trauma in students.

4. School Leadership:

In addition to the formal leadership structure at Sunset Valley consisting of the building principal and the head teacher, a shared leadership philosophy is present. Staff members are encouraged to build partnerships and jointly move the plan of the school forward. The principal constructs a common vision with members of the school community, initiates meaningful conversations, upholds a focus on the whole child, educates and fosters leadership within others, guides and participates in collaboration, and encourages flexibility. This vision is carried out during monthly building meetings, grade level meetings, data meetings, and two-hour early dismissal workshops.

The principal believes in educational achievement for all students based on high expectations and standards. Policies are in place with the goal of promoting student success. One way this occurs is that teachers set student learning objectives or SLO's, which target student growth in a specific need based area. The principal meets with each teacher to review and support the plan as necessary for each SLO throughout the year. Walk-throughs and formal observations provide the principal with a deeper look into classroom environments that promote safety, cooperation, and productive collaboration. This also helps the principal better connect with teachers on a professional level, understand the challenges the staff encounter, and monitor instructional practices. Teachers and the principal collaborate through Pennsylvania's Electronic Teacher Evaluation Portal regarding SLO's, walkthroughs, observations, and anecdotal notes. Effective classroom models are built around daily targets and look-fors that support formative assessment. The principal also holds teachers accountable for posting homework daily to the district online parent communication system.

Shared leadership occurs through lead STEM teachers. Two lead teachers experienced professional development training where they met monthly and focused on inquiry-based instruction, development as a leader, and project based learning. They implemented professional learning community in the area of inquiry based instruction. As a result, the following were created: Science Olympiad, STEM Squires, and Family STEM Night.

Due to the overwhelming success of the Lead STEM teacher program, our model was duplicated with our 21st century facilitators. Sunset Valley has one teacher 21st century facilitator that provides educational technology staff development, conducts 3-D printing camps for students, and organizes "Remake Learning" days for our school and district.

All stakeholders within the school share leadership through various committees. Included in the committees are Building Advisory, School Safety, Positive School Wide Behavior, Response to Instruction and Intervention, SAP, and STEM. Representatives from each grade level, special education, itinerant teachers, the nurse, custodian, support staff, and the principal all are part of each of the above committees. Each committee meets 1-2 times per month to discuss, revise, and enforce current building-wide celebrations and complications.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) is a multi-tiered, standards aligned, collaborative framework used to provide academic and behavior supports to all learners, most importantly struggling learners, at increasing levels of intensity based on student need. Sunset Valley Elementary School has spent the last six years focusing on the RTII process with the goal to ensure all children have access to high quality instruction and learning opportunities. Sunset Valley has used the RTII model to identify and address academic and behavioral difficulties prior to student failure. The core belief of Sunset Valley staff is that all students can learn and be successful.

The RTII process begins with our universal screening tool that is given three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring in the areas of reading and math. After the beginning of the year assessment, teachers analyze the data and discuss classroom observations from the research-based core curriculum in grade level meetings and begin to identify the needs of students. Once the targeted students are identified, the team tiers the students in three different levels (tier 1, 2, 3) and begin to develop a plan of action. The interventions selected by the team occur in the classroom and during the daily thirty minute enrichment and remediation period.

Through the use of enrichment and remediation, students' needs are met and their strengths are challenged. Using the screening tool data, formative assessment data from classroom interactions, and previous years' intervention plans, the teachers select the most appropriate intervention strategy to support growth in that specific student. The intervention plan is also documented in the district data warehouse software that is accessible to all staff and administration. Following the intervention plan, progress monitoring occurs regularly among students who fall in tier 2 or tier 3. Grade level teams meet with the principal monthly to determine intervention effectiveness and decide if a new intervention needs to be implemented. Teachers document progress and data warehouse software. Additionally, all teachers meet monthly in what we call our "intervention check-up" meetings. During this time, teachers have the opportunity to share success stories, explore new and different strategies, and receive professional development from experts in the field. This process continues throughout the year until the last day of school.

Collaboration, documentation, research, and celebrating success are several components of the RTII framework in place at Sunset Valley that make it "most important" to our success. We have embraced this process, and it has become the foundation of how we teach and learn. While we believe there is always room for growth, we are excited about the success our students continue to demonstrate.