

**REVISED-March 18, 2005**

**2004-2005 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

*U.S. Department of Education*

**Cover Sheet**

Type of School:  Elementary  Middle  High  K-12

Name of Principal Mrs. Sheila Schneider  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name West Hill Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 301 Ellsworth Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Sharon PA 16146-1309  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Mercer School Code Number\* 1-04-43-560-3

Telephone ( 724 ) 981-4880 Fax ( 724 ) 981-0482

Website/URL www.sharon.k12.pa.us E-mail sheila\_schneider@sharon.k12.pa.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date February 9, 2005

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Donna M. DeBonis  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Sharon City School District Tel. ( 724 ) 983-4000

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date February 9, 2005

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

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date February 9, 2005

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

**[Include this page in the school's application as page 2.]**

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

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2004-2005 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. 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 the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. 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.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## **PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

---

All data are the most recent year available.

### **DISTRICT**

1. Number of schools in the district:      3   Elementary schools  
      1   Middle schools (a combined middle/high school)  
      1   High schools  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Other
- 5   TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure:         \$9,622
- Average State Per Pupil Expenditure:   \$9,371

### **SCHOOL**

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- [ X ] Urban or large central city  
 [ ] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
 [ ] Suburban  
 [ ] Small city or town in a rural area  
 [ ] Rural
4.   2   Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
- 9   If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

| <b>Grade</b>                                   | <b># of Males</b> | <b># of Females</b> | <b>Grade Total</b> |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Pre-K</b>                                   | 0                 | 0                   | <b>0</b>           |
| <b>K</b>                                       | 22                | 17                  | <b>39</b>          |
| <b>1</b>                                       | 21                | 17                  | <b>38</b>          |
| <b>2</b>                                       | 7                 | 20                  | <b>27</b>          |
| <b>3</b>                                       | 24                | 22                  | <b>46</b>          |
| <b>4</b>                                       | 12                | 11                  | <b>23</b>          |
| <b>5</b>                                       | 13                | 18                  | <b>31</b>          |
| <b>6</b>                                       | 13                | 27                  | <b>40</b>          |
| <b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →</b> |                   |                     | <b>244</b>         |

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school: 73 % White  
24 % Black or African American  
2 % Hispanic or Latino  
1 % Asian/Pacific Islander  
0 % American Indian/Alaskan Native  
**100% Total**

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 40 %

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

|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| (1) | Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.   | 51  |
| (2) | Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year. | 55  |
| (3) | Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]                                       | 106 |
| (4) | Total number of students in the school as of October 1   | 263 |
| (5) | Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)  | 40  |
| (6) | Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100  | 40  |

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 5 %  
13 Total Number Limited English Proficient  
Number of languages represented: 2  
Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 77 %  
Total number students who qualify: 187

10. Students receiving special education services: 26 %  
64 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

5 Autism  
2 Deafness  
19 Deaf-Blindness  
10 Emotional Disturbance  
1 Hearing Impairment  
22 Mental Retardation  
   Multiple Disabilities  
   Orthopedic Impairment  
2 Other Health Impaired  
19 Specific Learning Disability  
5 Speech or Language Impairment  
1 Traumatic Brain Injury  
   Visual Impairment Including Blindness

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

**Number of Staff**

|                                       | <u>Full-time</u> | <u>Part-Time</u> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Administrator(s)                      | 1                | _____            |
| Classroom teachers                    | 13               | _____            |
| Special resource teachers/specialists | 7                | 9                |
| Paraprofessionals                     | 6                | _____            |
| Support staff                         | 2                | 1                |
| Total number                          | 29               | 10               |

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 19:1

13. Attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage.

|                          | 2003-2004 | 2002-2003 | 2001-2002 | 2000-2001 | 1999-2000 |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 94%       | 94%       | 93%       | 93%       | 94%       |
| Daily teacher attendance | 95%       | 95%       | 95%       | 95%       | 92%       |
| Teacher turnover rate    | 5%        | 5%        | 0%        | 8%        | 10%       |

**PART III - SUMMARY**

---

West Hill Elementary School is the smallest of the three elementary schools in the Sharon City School District. Although at one time the community was a vibrant, thriving area, with the demise of the domestic steel industry and the closing of most factories it has become economically distressed. Thus, most of the students who attend West Hill Elementary come from families who are financially struggling since they have low-income and/or minimum wage jobs or solely exist on government assistance. The school’s free/reduced price lunch count substantiates that at least 77% of the student population is classified as low-income. Yet despite the surrounding poverty, the school thrives. It has become the nicest and visibly most attractive physical structure in the neighborhood. Sitting high upon the hill, West Hill Elementary provides an emotional beacon of hope for the community, inspiring promise for the future.

West Hill Elementary School is committed to providing education of the highest quality to her students. Maximizing student achievement is the cornerstone of our daily efforts. This is accomplished by providing rigorous instruction to all students. West Hill embraces the belief that all children can learn and that all children can attain high academic standards given the proper curriculum and instruction. The dedicated teaching staff at West Hill works tirelessly to insure this. They challenge each student to reach his/her maximum potential. Through the use of data

analysis and assessment pieces to guide instruction, they provide the means to make this possible. The goal is for each child to meet academic and personal success.

Since community involvement and support are essential components in quality education, West Hill has formed numerous partnerships with local entities and agencies to help each child achieve that success. Local churches comprise the West Hill Ministries which offers after-school tutoring, social programs and evening meals for many students. Local universities offer college students to aid in the before and after-school tutoring sessions. The Rotary Club provides businessmen and women of the community to come into the school to read to the students. The Lifelong Learning Council of Sharon provides in-school tutoring by retired community members. Each of these groups, along with many others, enhances the education of West Hill students.

West Hill Elementary also receives support through its Title 1 School-Wide program. Title 1 funds are used to provide both an on-site reading specialist and several instructional aides who work collaboratively with the classroom teachers to increase student achievement. West Hill met the criteria to be heralded as a Title 1 Distinguished School due to parent involvement and the students' outstanding academic accomplishments and growth as learners.

The students of West Hill Elementary are encouraged to maximize their achievement through personal effort. They are encouraged and supported to pursue their dreams by becoming lifelong learners. Their efforts have translated into success and high achievement. It is this success that validates West Hill Elementary School's status as meeting the criteria of the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon award.

## **PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

---

### **1. Assessment Results – What Do They Mean?**

The assessment results included in the attached (tables I & II) represent West Hill Elementary School's academic achievement on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) from the 2000-01 school year through 2003-04. The test has been designed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as a measure of student progress toward the States academic standards in reading and mathematics and is administered to all students in grade five during the spring semester. Results from the PSSA are provided for individual students, schools and the district in total. Individual student results are measured against four identified performance levels, defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as follows:

**Advanced:** Superior academic performance indicating an in-depth understanding and exemplary display of the skills included in Pennsylvania's Academic Standards

**Proficient:** Satisfactory academic performance indicating a solid understanding and adequate display of the skills included in Pennsylvania's Academic Standards;

**Basic:** Marginal academic performance, work approaching, but not yet reaching, satisfactory performance. Performance indicates a partial understanding and limited display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania's Academic Standards.

**Below Basic:** Inadequate academic performance that indicates little understanding and minimal display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards.

The Pennsylvania Accountability System and the federal No Child Left Behind act require that each student meet the advanced or proficient performance level to be deemed to have met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The results of the assessment clearly indicate each student's academic strength and areas of need in reading and mathematics. Parents receive a copy of the student's performance levels along with access to the Grow Network website which provides access to additional assessment information and support. To better inform the parents of their children's progress, the student's report cards were also revised to indicate progress toward the identified standards. Building and district results are also provided to the students, their parents and the community so that all can better understand the academic expectations of the district. Additional data on the Pennsylvania Accountability System and the PSSA can be found at [www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us).

The data presented herein indicates that West Hill Elementary has been consistently making progress toward her goal of having all children attain proficiency. Four-year trend data indicates that in mathematics the number of students scoring proficient or advanced has gradually increased, with a significant upward spike during the 2003-04 academic year. Reading scores show a similar growth pattern with an upward spike in the most recent data. Scores for the subgroup populations also indicate gradual growth. The sharp increase in student proficiency for the 2003-04 school year can be attributed, in part, to a building-wide focus on meeting individual student needs. Each of the building's students was evaluated using a variety of commercial and site-created assessments. The assessments include: the Developmental Reading Assessment (student reading level, fluency and comprehension) and the DIBELS Assessment (student reading readiness in grades K, and both fluency and comprehension in grades 1-3). Mathematics assessment includes the use of district designed Curriculum Based Assessment devices. Using the data gathered as a benchmark, individual student learning plans are developed and the building staff provides both guided and independent learning activities for the students based upon their identified needs.

It is the mission of West Hill Elementary School to create a learning environment where every child can achieve to his or her greatest potential. The use of individual student data to drive the daily instruction and the incorporation of focus guided and independent learning opportunities for all students have shown great promise as a means to help the school meet this goal.

## **2. Assessment Drives Instructional Practice**

The staff at West Hill Elementary School collaborates to analyze data, monitor student progress and plan instruction. A variety of informal and formal assessments are used to gather data.

Our Instructional Associate (Literacy Coach) along with the Title 1 reading specialist and paraprofessionals provide reading and math assessments at the beginning, middle and end of the year. The Instructional Associate, reading specialist and classroom teachers review results to plan instruction. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) testing is administered to kindergarten through third grade students three times each school year. Small groups of students receive direct instruction to address their deficiencies through a research-based intervention program. Reports can be printed to share results with parents and administration. Parents are also involved through parent participation letters and activities along

with their attendance at a celebration of literacy during which they receive free take-home books and materials.

The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) provides independent reading levels, while offering information about student fluency rates and comprehension. Classroom teachers administer DRAs to gather data and focus instruction. This assessment and the data generated allows for meaningful conversations with the students which focus on the individual student strengths and those strategies that may further improve their reading skills.

Standardized test results drive annual building goals. The principal, Instructional Associate and teachers meet in September to scrutinize standardized test results. Decisions are as to needed changes in curriculum and instruction. Student progress is monitored through data collections. Responses to literature, aligned with standards, rubrics and clear expectations, provide information about acquisition of literacy skills. Math understanding is monitored through three collections of math journals. The instructional coaches meet with teachers to provide strategies and develop lessons which are designed to help each child work toward proficiency. Soft data, including anecdotal/conference notes, classroom performance and student health and attendance records, is also collected when the principal meets with teachers individually. This is done each semester to better know each child as a learner.

Portfolios allow the students to actively monitor their own work. The students are responsible for providing entries into the portfolios and are required to respond to questions about how and why they chose samples for their portfolio. Portfolios are shared with parents throughout the school year and the parents are encouraged to respond to this collection of their child's work.

At the end of each school year, data is analyzed and results reported through statistical analysis. Collaboration is the key to successfully and efficiently gathering and analyzing data, monitoring student progress, and planning curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of West Hill's student population.

### **3. Communicating our Work.**

West Hill Elementary realizes the importance of communication between school and students, school and home, and school and the community. Building that bridge between home and school is an essential component in increasing student achievement. This is the rationale for sharing information about student performance and why it is done on a regular basis. It is a focus for both teachers and administrators.

At West Hill Elementary, teachers communicate daily with their students through conferences, which helps to determine the subsequent instruction. Personal letters and notes are sent on a regular basis to parents. Individual student progress is formally reported to parents eight times during the school year using both a progress reporting model as well as traditional report cards. The district has instituted new report cards for the current school year, which are designed to mirror the instructional practice in the classroom. Student growth is measured as it relates to proficiency in the standards rather than the traditional alpha-numeric grading scale format. Finally, both telephone and in-person conferences are held with each parent.

The *West Hill Times* newsletter and the Sharon City School District quarterly publication, *Expressions*, are additional methods of communication with parents and the community at large. At monthly Sharon City School Board of Education meetings assessment data is often shared with community members and the press.

West Hill Elementary nurtures a climate that is conducive to, not only, parent communication but also parent and family involvement. Classroom and building celebrations are held on a monthly basis at West Hill Elementary. Their purpose is to celebrate student work and accomplishments. Parents and community members are always invited to participate in these celebrations. Throughout the school year informative and practical workshops are provided for parents. Discussion groups are also held in conjunction with the monthly Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. West Hill Elementary encourages all parents to be informed and involved in the education of their children. This is achieved through deliberate and purposeful communication with all stakeholders in our culturally diverse community.

#### **4. Sharing our Success**

The successes experienced at West Hill Elementary School have been and will continue to be shared with other schools in a variety of ways. The school has opened its doors to instructional teams from throughout the Commonwealth on a regular basis. These teams accompany district staff on learning walks that occur monthly in the building. The learning walks, focused on improving quality instructional practice, are followed by debriefing sessions during which the visiting teams are provided materials, ideas and training. Members of the West Hill staff have also annually presented at regional and state seminars and conferences.

District professional development training sessions are made available to all district employees as well as our paraprofessionals and substitute teachers so that everyone who interacts with our children has been well versed in our curriculum and programming. The district holds monthly grade-level meetings focused on curriculum planning. Each of the grade level teams is directed by an administrator or instructional coach who directs the agenda and keeps the teams focused on curriculum planning. Within the community, the local media serves as a vehicle to share the success of the school. Local newspapers (The Herald and The Vindicator), television media outlets (WFMJ, WYTV, WKBN) and radio stations (WPIC, Y103) provided opportunity to highlight the success of the school. The district also publishes *Expressions*, a community newsletter twice during the school year. This newsletter, which is shared with the entire Sharon community, focuses entirely on the district programming and achievements.

West Hill Elementary will continue to open its doors and share its accomplishments with our peers and those who are focused on improving the quality of teaching for all children in our region and beyond.

## **PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

---

### **1. Curriculum Design – Achieving to Higher Standards**

West Hill Elementary's curriculum is standards-driven. It is based upon the New Standards Project as well as the National and Pennsylvania Academic Standards. These standards are not

only evident during instruction, but they are required to be included in all lesson plans and to be posted with every hall display.

In addition, West Hill uses the balanced literacy framework that follows the gradual release of responsibility model, which includes both guided and independent practice. Lucy Calkins' approach provides the framework and support for teachers to deliver both effective and academically rigorous instruction. The various components used in this framework allow us to successfully meet the needs of all of our students. Reading and Writing Workshop focus on numerous reading and writing processes. Schedules are formatted for a 90 minute uninterrupted literacy block which enables a smooth transition from reading to writing instruction, providing an optimal way to preview and review skills from both disciplines.

Furthermore, our balanced literacy program involves numerous processes to strengthen reading, writing and word study. Each classroom teacher plans carefully to include read alouds, shared reading, differentiated reading instruction (based on the students' reading level), independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, writing workshop, word study, phonics, and phonemic awareness in the literacy block. The teaching staff uses a variety of methods and materials (such as music, art, science, social studies, and hands-on manipulatives) throughout the school day in order to reinforce the skills being taught.

Because students need explicit instruction that is based on a developmentally appropriate scope and sequence tied to meaningful experiences, our learning goals and objectives are based on monthly units of study that are specific to each grade level. The teachers conference with students on a daily basis in order to plan future instruction suited to their needs. Conferencing gives teachers the knowledge that they need to plan whole group instruction as well as small, guided groups and individualized lessons in order to maximize student progress.

All students at West Hill are provided instruction in mathematics that will enhance their opportunities throughout their lives. Student-centered instruction focuses on conceptual math, problem solving and computation. Instruction is enhanced through the use of manipulatives.

The art and technology programs of West Hill are provided for all students in grades one through six. In art, students will experience artistic expression through thematic units, art history, art production and the elements of art. In our state-of-the-art computer lab, the primary focus is to extend learning experiences taking place in the classrooms with the help of technology. All students who have completed parental consent forms have the opportunity to utilize the Internet capabilities of the lab thus extending their world. This focused use of technology is very important to our students, most of whom do not have computer/technology availability at home. It is our goal to prepare students with the skills necessary to thrive in today's world of technology.

Currently English Language Learners constitute 5 % of West Hill's population. Curriculum and instruction for this student population has been aligned with both the Pennsylvania academic standards and Teachers of English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL) Standards. These standards are posted in student-friendly vocabulary. Learners can state which standard they are working on, when asked. A shift in the curriculum is occurring with the January 2005 release of

the English Language Proficiency Standards from the Pennsylvania Department of Education

We feel that by providing educational opportunities through a balanced curriculum, delivered by a highly qualified, professional staff, we are preparing the students of West Hill Elementary for the ever-changing society in which they live.

### **2a. Reading Instruction – Balance and Intensity**

Supporting children in composing rich, literate lives is the ultimate literacy goal for children in the West Hill Elementary School. A balanced and comprehensive approach to the teaching of reading and writing is critical for supporting growth of readers and writers. The foundation of this balanced approach to literacy instruction is immersing children in literature from a variety of genres and authors: “lives that are filled with literature are filled with knowledge” (Calkins, 2001).

Read Alouds are the most effective way to engage children in literature and demonstrate reading behaviors. Reading aloud improves students’ reading, writing, speaking, comprehension and listening skills and most importantly their attitudes towards reading, which are critical to reading success. At West Hill Elementary, students are engaged daily in a Read Aloud where they make connections between the book, their lives, other books and the world around them. They engage in accountable talk, discussing the book deeply with the reading community and supporting their ideas with evidence. After engaging in rich text discussions, readers are also expected to respond to literature independently. Written responses to literature include personal connections with the text, a summary of the text, identification of the “Big Idea” and an evaluation of the author’s craft. With explicit instruction and support, students can apply the strategies and behaviors learned during Read Aloud time to their independent reading and writing lives.

Children benefit from daily opportunities to read books they choose for themselves for their own purposes and pleasures. Independent reading time provides children this time to experience “real” reading. At this time, the teacher is a “decision maker” and “kid watcher”. This time provides the teacher with the opportunity to mentor children in creating a literate life. It is through individual reading conferences, shared reading, and differentiated reading groups that the teacher can mentor children in creating a literate life. Instructional decisions are made based upon students’ needs, therefore learning is relevant to the children’s reading lives and is immediately applicable. The independent reading workshop is the closest we come to seeing how children live their reading lives outside of the school.

### **3. Writing Instruction – A Workshop Approach**

Writing is another curricular area in which West Hill Elementary school, as well as the entire district, takes pride. The Sharon City School District has partnered with the Reading and Writing Project of Columbia University’s Teachers College. Extensive staff development has been dedicated to training the entire staff in Writing Workshop and its direct correlation to reading.

Writing Workshop is a process where every member of the writing community is immersed daily in writing in their Writers Notebook. Children are “marinated” in quality literature and use these “mentor and touchstone” texts to support their own writing. Children learn punctuation,

descriptive language, and literary elements from real writers and apply their learnings in real writing rather than on workbook pages or ditto sheets.

The needs of the writers drive the writing workshop. Teachers confer with students during their writing time and provide individual instruction. Teachers also “make students famous” for strategies they use. These students then serve as mentor authors for other members of the writing community. The students independently work through the writing process: collecting seeds, selecting a seed idea, nurturing a seed idea, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, with the support of the teacher and their peers.

The publication celebration is the pinnacle of the writing process. Parents, community members, administrators, and other classes share in celebrating the newest publishings of the writing community. Hors d’oeuvres, quiet music and comment booklets fill the classrooms as they are transformed into Writing Galleries. The implementation of writing workshop has created a culture where writing is truly valued by the students, teachers, parents and the community. It has created partnerships between teachers and students, not only in different classrooms, but also in other school buildings. Writing workshop has opened our eyes and our hearts after students truly share themselves in writing. We ARE living our lives differently because WE ARE WRITERS!

#### **4. Instructional Strategies that Drive Student Learning**

Research-based instructional methods permeate all curricular areas creating purposeful and effective instruction. The West Hill staff uses the Architecture of Effective Minilessons that follow the same structure everyday in all disciplines. Instruction begins with a connection to the previous day's work. The teaching point is then clearly made to the learner by the phrase “Today I am going to teach you ....” The teacher will model his/her expectations for the students and he/she will follow up by actively engaging every learner. At this point all students are given an opportunity to try what the teacher has just taught. The teacher reminds the students that they are now responsible for continuing this practice, not just today, but today and everyday. The students will then begin to work independently on the task at hand while the teacher conferences with individual students as well as with small groups of students with the same need. At the end of the work session the students are gathered for a whole group share. It is at this time that students are “made famous” for their work or individual successes and/or struggles can be discussed.

Current brain-based research influences cross-curricular instructional practices. Cooperative learning promotes skill development through student- to-student dialogue. Students accept responsibility for their own learning through accountable talk and self-monitoring progress. Differentiated instruction provides the opportunity for student choice.

Teachers at West Hill Elementary employ a variety of instructional strategies and methods to teach every child. One to one direct instruction and flexible grouping complete the repertoire of instructional strategies used to improve student achievement.

#### **5. Professional Development – Impacting Teaching AND Learning**

Research clearly indicates that improving student academic achievement is directly related to improving the quality of instruction within the individual classrooms. To this end the Sharon

City School District and West Hill Elementary School focuses five full days and 18 “early-dismissal days” during the academic year to professional development. As part of a joint effort with the local teaching association, the negotiated labor contract includes additional work time each Tuesday to allow for quality staff training as well as nine hours of professional development time, outside of the regular workday throughout the year for staff to self-select training. Bargaining Unit agreements also annually provide for \$10,000 of local funds for teachers to use when selecting off-site professional development training.

District sponsored professional development activities are coordinated by the professional development team. This team, composed of teachers, paraprofessionals, principals and central office staff meets monthly to conduct needs assessments, plan full-day and partial-day professional development programming and summer training sessions. The district also has formed partnerships with Slippery Rock University, Columbia University and its Teacher’s College, and the University of Pittsburgh and its Learning, Research and Development Center to provide ongoing training and research opportunities. Staff from our higher education partners provides onsite training for our staff members on a regular basis.

The impact of this intensive professional focus is evident through not only the assessment scores but in the day-to-day interactions that occur within the building itself. The emphasis on student work and improving instructional practice can be seen in displays of student work that are tied to the academic standards. All classrooms are filled with activity focused on the student’s academic success and personal growth. The community of West Hill Elementary School strives to use every available resource to ensure that all students are academically, socially and personally successful. As a result, the professional development activities provided enable the staff to meet the needs of all students and every achievement level.

## PART VI - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) Grade 5 Mathematics

Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

| Testing month   | 2003-2004 | 2002-2003 | 2001-2002 | 2000-2001 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|   | April     | April     | April     | April     |
| <b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>                                    |           |           |           |           |
| % At or Above Below Basic                               | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       |
| % At or Above Basic                                     | 100       | 73        | 88        | 94        |
| % At or Above Proficient                                | 89        | 57        | 47        | 71        |
| % At Advanced   | 66        | 16        | 22        | 26        |
| Number of students tested                               | 35        | 44        | 49        | 31        |
| Percent of total students tested                        | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       |
| Number of students alternatively assessed               | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed              | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| <b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>                                  |           |           |           |           |
| 1. <u>Economically Disadvantaged</u> (specify subgroup) |           |           |           |           |
| % At or Above Below Basic                               | 100       | 100       | *         | 100       |
| % At or Above Basic                                     | 100       | 88        | *         | 92        |
| % At or Above Proficient                                | 86        | 49        | *         | 71        |
| % At Advanced   | 59        | 13        | *         | 25        |
| Number of students tested                               | 22        | 31        | 0         | 28        |
| 2. <u>White</u> (specify subgroup)                      |           |           |           |           |
| % At or Above Below Basic                               | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       |
| % At or Above Basic                                     | 100       | 73        | 87        | 94        |
| % At or Above Proficient                                | 96        | 56        | 50        | 71        |
| % At Advanced   | 88        | 17        | 26        | 27        |
| Number of students tested                               | 25        | 36        | 38        | 22        |
| <b>STATE SCORES</b>                                     |           |           |           |           |
| % At or Above Below Basic                               | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       |
| % At or Above Basic                                     | 80        | 78        | 75        | 78        |
| % At or Above Proficient                                | 62        | 56        | 53        | 53        |
| % At Advanced   | 37        | 28        | 26        | 23        |

\* The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not report demographic scores for subgroups with an n-count of fewer than 10 students. For this site economically disadvantaged and white ethnicity were the only two categories for which data can be reported. Data for the 2001-02 economically disadvantaged subgroup was not reported in state testing documents. No explanation could be found in the literature for that year to explain the discrepancy.

## Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) Grade 5 Reading

Publisher: Data Recognition Corporation

|   | 2003-2004 | 2002-2003 | 2001-2002 | 2000-2001 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Testing month   | April     | April     | April     | April     |
| <b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>                                    |           |           |           |           |
| % At Below Basic  | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       |
| % At Basic  | 100       | 68        | 80        | 71        |
| % At Proficient   | 83        | 38        | 49        | 35        |
| % At Advanced   | 63        | 11        | 10        | 3         |
| Number of students tested                               | 35        | 44        | 49        | 31        |
| Percent of total students tested                        | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       |
| Number of students alternatively assessed               | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Percent of students alternatively assessed              | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| <b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>                                  |           |           |           |           |
| 1. <u>Economically Disadvantaged</u> (specify subgroup) |           |           |           |           |
| % At Below Basic  | 100       | 100       | *         | 100       |
| % At or Above Basic                                     | 100       | 61        | *         | 92        |
| % At or Above Proficient                                | 87        | 42        | *         | 71        |
| % At Advanced   | 64        | 0         | *         | 25        |
| Number of students tested                               | 22        | 31        | 0         | 28        |
| 2. <u>White</u> (specify subgroup)                      |           |           |           |           |
| % At Below Basic  | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       |
| % At or Above Basic                                     | 100       | 67        | 79        | 64        |
| % At or Above Proficient                                | 84        | 36        | 53        | 37        |
| % At Advanced   | 72        | 11        | 11        | 5         |
| Number of students tested                               | 25        | 36        | 38        | 22        |
| <b>STATE SCORES</b>                                     |           |           |           |           |
| % At Below Basic  | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       |
| % At or Above Basic                                     | 82        | 78        | 80        | 77        |
| % At or Above Proficient                                | 63        | 58        | 57        | 56        |
| % At Advanced   | 34        | 27        | 18        | 20        |

\* The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not report demographic scores for subgroups with an n-count of fewer than 10 students. For this site economically disadvantaged and white ethnicity were the only two categories for which data can be reported. Data for the 2001-02 economically disadvantaged subgroup was not reported in state testing documents. No explanation could be found in the literature for that year to explain the discrepancy.