

**REVISED 3/10/06**

***2005-2006 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

*U.S. Department of Education*

**Cover Sheet** Type of School: (Check all that apply)  Elementary  Middle  High  K-12  Charter

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

Official School Name Stone Valley Middle School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3001 Miranda Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Alamo CA 94507-1646  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Contra Costa County State School Code Number\*07 61804 6005144

Telephone (925) 552-5640 Fax (925) 838-5680

Website/URL www.svms.srvusd.k12.ca.us E-mail smcelro@srvusd.net

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, 2006

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Robert Kessler  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name San Ramon Valley Unified School District Tel. (925) 552-5500

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Bill Clarkson  
(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 \_\_\_\_\_

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

1. The school 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 2005-2006 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 2000 and has not received the 2003, 2004, or 2005 *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

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All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
 

21	Elementary schools
7	Middle schools
6	Junior high schools
4	High schools
	Other
38	TOTAL
  
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$6300  
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$6919

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
  - 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. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 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:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK					7	127	98	225
K					8	123	111	234
1					9			
2					10			
3					11			
4					12			
5					Other			
6	125	98	223					
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →</b>								<b>682</b>



10. Students receiving special education services: 0%  
682 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 categories.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>    </u> Deafness	<u>    </u> Other Health Impaired
<u>    </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>25</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>    </u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>    </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>    </u> Mental Retardation	<u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>    </u> Multiple Disabilities	

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

**Number of Staff**

	<b><u>Full-time</u></b>	<b><u>Part-Time</u></b>
Administrator(s)	2	1
Classroom teachers	24	6
Special resource teachers/specialists	2	
Paraprofessionals		4
Support staff	5	3
Total number	33	14

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 29:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	95%	95%	96%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	%	%	%	%	%

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Stone Valley Middle School, home of the PRIDE: a place where students and staff demonstrate **P**ersonal responsibility, **R**espect, **I**ntegrity, **D**ependability and **E**ffort. We are located in Alamo, California and serve the surrounding areas from the northern end of Danville to the southern end of Walnut Creek and all of Alamo. Stone Valley was established in 1950 as an elementary school. However, during the 1987 adoption of "*Caught in the Middle*" the school converted to the 6, 7, 8 grade level configuration and remains a "true" middle school today. Although Stone Valley is part of a large suburban school district, the "feel" of our community is similar to that of a small town. We have a small student population of 682 students, which allows students and staff to become very familiar with one another, and no student remains anonymous on our campus. Stone Valley students are bright and motivated with approximately 97% of our high school graduates attending college.

The staff at Stone Valley has a deep sense of commitment for middle school students and a passion for their subject matter. All teachers adhere to CA State Content Standards to guide instruction in all disciplines. Students and teachers build a three-year relationship that fosters emotional and intellectual growth. We have implemented early-release Wednesdays to allow for further staff development, to regularly assess the needs of our students, and to articulate with feeder/destination schools as well as other middle schools to evaluate our educational programs. Our Staff Development Committee in coordination with our School Site Council works as a governing body to create/review our SPSA. We are committed to supporting the No Child Left Behind Act and offer a variety of programs to address students at all performance levels. Teachers also have common planning times to discuss and develop curriculum. Students take an active role in the school community by participating in four service groups: leadership, California Junior Scholarship Federation, WEB, and Super S.T.A.R.S. Our commitment to academic excellence is evidenced in our 17-point increase (884) of our API score, placing us in the top 10% of schools across the state.

Parents are involved in a variety of school functions, including the typical school events such as driving/chaperoning for field trips, doing yard duty during lunch, and working in the library. Parents also sponsor major community events each year including a Back-to-School Pizza Night in the fall and an Open-House BBQ in the spring; over 500 parents, students, and staff attend each of these events. These events are a great way to start/end the school year and give parents and students the chance to visit with staff. The Back-to-School Pizza Night also allows the principal to introduce new staff and share the annual goals in a fun, social environment. The PTA also puts on a Ladies Luncheon attended by over 100 mothers from our school which funds our curriculum support fund. The Stone Valley Education Fund supports the reduction of class sizes in the English/Language Arts and math classes by funding nineteen additional classes. Additionally, the Education Fund provides for the purchase of technology hardware and software for staff, which provides for two state of the art technology labs on campus.

The Alamo/Danville community supports the school through the Alamo Music Festival held each September to support each local school's music program. The Education Fund hosts the "Art Under the Stars" fundraiser where local artists sell art of every medium and donate 50% of the profits to the school. The two local Rotary clubs, Danville/Sycamore and Alamo, honor one teacher and one student each semester at a catered luncheon attended by families of the honorees, local rotary members, and the school principal. The teacher and student each receive a framed certificate and cash award. The Alamo Rotary also provides \$1000 dollars annually to the library. The San Ramon Valley Education Fund sponsors the annual Primo's Run for Education, which generates funds for music and drama programs as well as school grants.

Stone Valley is a sought-after community because of our uniqueness in that 100% of our faculty is dedicated to the social, emotional, and intellectual growth of our students. Parents, teachers, and staff are committed to nurturing a community of learners who value education and are prepared for citizenship in a diverse world.

## PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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**Assessment Results:** All Stone Valley students take the criterion-referenced California Standards Tests (CST) and when appropriate the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), which comprise the state-mandated STAR assessment program. In addition, all 7<sup>th</sup> graders take the norm-referenced California Achievement Tests (CAT6). Based on the results, Stone Valley met state Academic Performance Index (API) growth targets and federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria for both English/language arts (ELA) and mathematics in 2005. The state has set 800 on a scale of 200 to 1000 as the API performance target that schools should strive to meet. Stone Valley's API score for 2005 was 884, an increase of 17 points over our 2004 API of 867, placing us in the top 10% of schools across the state. (Additional information on California's assessment system can be found at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov).)

The CST shows how students are doing in relation to the California state standards. Student scores are recorded as performance levels: Advanced (exceeding standards); proficient (meeting standards); Basic (approaching standards); Below Basic (below standards); and Far Below Basic (well below standards). All 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders take the CST in ELA. 2005 results on the CST show that on average our 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students show at least a 4% increase in students scoring proficient or above. From 2003 to 2004 the number of 8<sup>th</sup> graders scoring proficient or above increased by 5% and has since maintained that increase. Student scores disaggregated by ethnicity show that 87% of students identified as Asian scored proficient or above over the past three years. Students identified with disabilities have shown a 10% increase in those scoring proficient or above. These percentages show significant improvement over past CST scores and speak to our ongoing efforts to have all students meet or exceed standard.

All 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders take the CST in mathematics. 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders show an average 3% increase per year over the past three years on the CST in mathematics. Eighth graders take the CST in General Mathematics or Algebra 1. Of those taking the Algebra 1 test, 91% of students scored proficient or above. Student scores disaggregated by ethnicity show that 7<sup>th</sup> grade students identified as Asian consistently average 17 points higher than all other students.

Starting in 2005 the CAT6 only tested 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. All Stone Valley 7<sup>th</sup> graders took the CAT6 in the areas of Reading, Language Arts, and Math. The CAT6 shows the percentage of students scoring at or above the NPR, or the national average score. Our students' average over the past three years is above the 76 percentile. Students identified as Asian consistently out-perform all other students on the CAT6 by 3% in reading, 6% in Language Arts, and 9% in math.

All students take a district fall and spring writing assessment; 6<sup>th</sup> graders take a district-wide benchmark writing assessment. In 2005, 76 percent of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students scored at the Proficient level or above. This data shows a 10% increase over 2004 in students meeting the proficient level or above. All students take readiness tests for both algebra and geometry and district-wide benchmark final exams in math. Since 2001, when the state first identified Algebra 1 as the 8<sup>th</sup> grade course of study, the number of students meeting or exceeding standard continues to increase each year. Assessment data from state-adopted textbooks in math, spelling, reading, writing, ELD, world languages, science, and history/social science provide important instructional information for Stone Valley teachers to align lessons to state standards. English language learners are assessed and monitored closely via the California English Learner Development Test (CELDT).

Stone Valley's Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) is developed by all parts of the SVMS community and is the driving force used to help implement our school vision and ensure students excel in the established standards and benchmarks. The SPSA outlines programs, objectives, and the outcomes for improvement activities in curriculum areas, school climate, special needs, and professional climate and is updated annually in the spring and fall with input from staff, parents, students, administration, and community members. Annual goals are developed based on a review of multiple sources of data, including our LEAP; District goals; and disaggregated standardized data, such as achievement by ELD, Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), gender, at-risk and/or special education students. For example, one of the four district annual goals is to "Reduce by 5% the total number of students District-wide who

score below the proficient level on the California English/Language Arts and Mathematics Content Standards Test. We also review our AYP report (which shows we are meeting all AYP components), API scores, articulation feedback, and grade level assessment of student work (district writing scores, district math scores, and classroom assessment). This data analysis also provides information to set our course for curriculum development and instructional practices. For example, to give additional help to students identified as below standard, we have implemented the following programs into our Single Plan for Student Achievement: SUCCESS for each grade level (a one period course to work on organization, study, and ELA skills), before and after school study halls, Saturday remediation courses in math and ELA, and Language! class for those basic or below in ELA.

**Using Assessment Results:** A primary goal for both our school and district is to have all students meeting or exceeding state standards. In order to make this goal a reality, Stone Valley staff, at the beginning of each school year, formally analyzes and discusses local and state student and school testing data from the previous year to target needed intervention for students not yet meeting standard and to inform instruction for all students. This coupled with ongoing classroom assessments measures progress toward achievement of standards and guides instruction throughout the school year. Analysis of STAR data, results of the CELDT, student work, district benchmark writes and the state STAR seventh grade write, and the P.E. Fitness Gram test provide an indication of yearly progress in multiple areas whereas classroom assessments, both formative and summative, drive instructional decisions on an ongoing basis. This data is further monitored and assessed throughout the year in monthly department and grade level meetings and in weekly staff adjusted Wednesday meetings (on adjusted Wednesdays students are dismissed early to allow staff to focus on training or to examine assessment data). In addition, each grade level department team meets weekly to ensure that standards are being met in each classroom, to coordinate planning, analyze student weaknesses and strengths, and to share various teaching methods found successful in enhancing individual needs and differentiating to meet the various abilities in a classroom. To assist in our various meetings and ensure that each individual student need is met, teachers in the beginning of the year, disaggregate data by student characteristics and create a chart identifying which of their students fall at basic or below basic levels as well as all students that have Individual Educational Plans (IEP), 504 goals, ELD, GATE, Student Study Teams (SST), below proficient on the district Spring Write, summer school attendance, and/or previous D/F grades. SVMS measures the efficacy of instruction student by student, and teachers and administration meet monthly to discuss student progress towards meeting standards.

One example of our ongoing assessment analysis was in math. In 2004 we found that 42% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade female students scored basic or below in math, while only 29% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade males scored basic or below. To address this gap, we modified our SPSA to include reduced class sizes (less than 27 students per class) for Algebra 1A, which allowed for more one on one support for females. In 2005 our test scores reflected an increase in math scores for female students, thus removing this disparity.

**Communicating Assessment Results:** Ongoing communication between the classroom and the home is essential to be successful in our vision. Teachers and administrators at monthly PTA, Site Council, and Education Fund meetings share the results of student achievement based on the STAR data, the state API, and the AYP. We also have a school and district website for parents to access information regarding SVMS including the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) as well as teacher information. All families receive a weekly electronic bulletin (Newsflash) on important information affecting our school and a monthly newsletter (Roar) sent through the mail. The district also publishes an online, monthly newsletter, *Inside Our Schools*, which details school programs and assessment results. Individual STAR and CELDT results are mailed to each child's parents along with information for interpreting the data. The community can also view scores for the district by school in the local newspaper and on the district website. All teachers communicate grade level standards and benchmarks to parents at Back to School Night as well as use Edline.net (an online site that posts student grades weekly, support materials, assignments, and course syllabi). Through Edline.net parents and students can track the everyday



activities in the classroom, as well as email teachers with questions and/or concerns. Teachers also have voicemail so that parents may request to speak directly to the teacher. Stone Valley also utilizes a broadcast email system to notify parents quickly when there are noteworthy events on campus or to report emergencies. Conferences with students and parents formally take place for one week in both the fall and spring to review progress towards proficiency on standards. In addition, many teachers conference with parents as needed on a regular basis.

**Sharing Success:** To ensure the continued success of our student's and to continue in our professional growth as a staff, we find it critical to not only share and learn from our successes amongst each other but to also collaborate with other schools in our area. To accomplish this, we hold articulation meetings with all feeder/destination schools to ensure that we continue to foster growth with the students coming into our school, as well as measure preparedness for our students moving on to high school. By collaborating with the high school, we are able to assess how well our students are prepared for high school. Our articulations continue to confirm that our program is in line with the expectations of the high school. Evidence to this can also be seen on the passing rate of our destination high schools on the CAHSEE (98% in English/Language Arts and math). This year our district-wide staff development trained all Core teachers on the Columbia Writing project and is currently being implemented into all ELA classes K-8. Science teachers also met on this day to match classroom activities to state standards. For example, 6<sup>th</sup> grade science teachers identified specific standard(s) for each lesson taught during the school year. Special Education teachers also attended the workshop for the University of Columbia Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project.

Sixth grade staff meet with elementary feeder schools and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade staff meet with the destination high school staff by department to discuss standards and district-wide expectations for entering middle and high school. This gives teachers the opportunity to share programs and modify any changes necessary between grade levels. For example, the ELA teachers compared short stories and novels read to avoid duplication and to assure students meet grade level standards. The administrative staff also meets with incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents in the spring to discuss readiness and to orient them to the curriculum. Once a month each grade level academic team and departments meet to align curriculum with the knowledge and skills addressed in the state and district standards (i.e. while students study criminology in science they are learning about the judicial system in Core), analyze current student assessment, and discuss current curriculum.

Language art and math leaders meet monthly to articulate with other schools (elementary, middle, and high school) about curriculum assessment materials and the students they serve. Our department meetings are mixed grade levels, and we meet to share student work samples and review grade level expectations. 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, administrators, counselor, and special education personnel meet with elementary staff each spring to share ideas and promote positive student transition. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, administrators, counselor, and special education personnel meet with the high school staff to share ideas and ensure students are prepared to make the transition successfully into high school. In addition to articulation for our teachers, the administration is part of the Region 1 Principals network which allows principals from school districts within the Alameda and Contra Costa Counties to meet and discuss current issues affecting schools as well as share new, innovative techniques that have been successful with individual schools and/or districts. This year the same network was started for all co-administrators.

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

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**Curriculum:** A comprehensive core curriculum, based on the California state content standards, is the foundation of all instructional practices and materials used at our school. Differentiated instruction ensures that every student, including ELL, GATE, special education students, and regular education students receive a balanced interdisciplinary education which includes all areas of English/language arts, mathematics, history/social science, science, physical education, as well as the various electives we offer

including those in the areas of foreign language and visual and performing arts. The curriculum is enriched with fieldtrips ranging from China Town and plays in San Francisco to opportunities for participation in educational travel over spring break (Rome in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and France or Washington D.C. in 8<sup>th</sup> grade). We believe that opportunities to experience topics being discussed in the classroom through hands-on activities bring curriculum to life and further meet the developmental needs of middle school students. All curriculum is driven by state adopted materials, standardized testing, and individual classroom assessment to monitor growth towards meeting standards.

Sixth grade students are enrolled in a three-period CORE class in reading, language arts, and history that supports language development by providing two full periods for literacy and the natural integration of history with reading and writing. In the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, students are enrolled in a two-period ELA and history class that continues to build on the acquisition of language development in an integrated cross-disciplinary setting. The state standards for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in ELA cover reading (word analysis, fluency, and vocabulary development; comprehension with a focus on informal materials; and literary response and analysis), writing (writing strategies; writing applications; and written and oral language conventions), and listening and speaking (listening and speaking strategies and applications). The course of study of history/social science begins in 6<sup>th</sup> grade with investigation of the history and geography of the world's first civilizations. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade course of instruction continues with the study of the history and geography of medieval and early modern times. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students study the history of geography of the United States with an emphasis on growth and conflict. History content standards at all grade levels stress social science analysis skills.

Student placement in math is flexible and monitored throughout the year allowing students to be in a math class that equals their academic needs. The math curriculum for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade covers number sense, algebra functions, measurement and geometry, statistics (data analysis and probability), and mathematical reasoning. Algebra is the grade-level curriculum for 8<sup>th</sup> grade and meets the first year mathematics course credit for high school graduation, the University of California, and California State University preparation requirements. Students at all grades may be placed in advanced classes including advanced algebra and geometry. Stone Valley also offers transitional math classes and math lab for students who have difficulty in pre-algebra and need remediation prior to moving on to Algebra 1.

The standards-based science curriculum provided rigorous instruction on life, earth, and physical science and incorporates laboratory investigation and experimentation to prepare students for high school and postsecondary education. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade course of study introduces measurement and data collection through the study of earth science. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students study how living things function, have changed, and continue to change through the study of life science. Students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade improve skills in graphing, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions through the study of physics and chemistry.

World language courses provide standards-based instruction in Spanish and French to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. One year of 7<sup>th</sup> grade and one year of 8<sup>th</sup> grade world language is the equivalent of one year of high school world language if both courses are completed successfully. Instruction at both grades focuses student learning on the use of language for real world purposes in culturally appropriate ways.

The physical education program at Stone Valley provides students with opportunities to participate in a variety of activities. Standards-based course content includes health, fitness, and physiology. Students have a variety of semester-long visual and performing arts electives where they focus on artistic perception, creative expression, historical and cultural context, aesthetic valuing, and connections, relations, and applications.

**English:** Our English program has its strong foundation rooted in the District and State Standards and utilizes current research as its instructional model to ensure the best practices for all students. This year all ELA teachers were in-serviced in the strategies of Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and are currently in the process of implementing this program into all ELA classes. This program supports students in meeting and exceeding standards in reading and writing. In writing workshop, students learn to observe their lives and the world around them, and to collect, draft, revise, and publish well-crafted narrative and expository texts. In reading workshops, students are explicitly taught the strategies and habits of effective reading. Teachers present explicit instruction to the whole group, small groups, and conference with individual students to address their individual needs. This project is also conducive to integrating ELA and history. One example of integration is that all novels and

many short stories are aligned with the time period covered in history. Each grade level also uses teacher selected District core diversity literature and classic literacy works such as Crispin, Chinese Cinderella and Call of the Wild for skill building in the areas of comprehension, literary analysis, literature appreciation, and sensitivity to multiculturalism. In addition to required reading, each grade level requires independent reading. Rather than restricting students to either reading one book as a class or following a scripted curriculum to meet test standards, Stone Valley teachers help students select books they find interesting and best suited for their individual skill levels. While this means students may be reading either ahead or behind their classmates, the goal is to help them think critically about concepts such as voice, character development, and historical content. Teachers model and teach content at a high grade-level standard. Students read in comprehension-leveled texts to practice and demonstrate grade-level understanding, which allows students who read below grade-level to improve and at or above grade-level readers to further challenge their individual skills.

**Mathematics:** In order to accomplish our vision of challenging all students, Stone Valley provides a strong, balanced math curriculum, based on the CA and district standards. The topics spiral to reinforce skills as well as relate to real-world situations. Teachers' instructional practices are based on the research found in Principles & Standards for School Mathematics and Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Students are given an inventory test at the beginning of each year to ensure they are appropriately placed by skill level. In addition, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders take a readiness test through U.C. Berkeley. These tests break down each student's strengths and weaknesses by standard and benchmark. Placement of students is based on the above data as well as teacher recommendation. This placement is flexible and frequently monitored and is adjusted as needed. The math curriculum for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade covers number sense, algebra functions, measurement and geometry, statistics (data analysis and probability), and mathematical reasoning. Algebra is the grade-level curriculum for 8<sup>th</sup> grade and meets course credit for both high school graduation and the University of California and California State University preparation requirements and is part of a two-year program completed at high school. Students at all grades may be placed in advanced classes including advanced algebra, a rigorous course that completes the college prep requirement in one year. Stone Valley also offers transitional math classes and a math lab for students who have difficulty in math and need remediation in pre-algebra skills prior to moving on to Algebra 1. Extra help is offered to all students through sessions before and after school, peer tutoring, parent volunteers providing individual attention, Saturday classes, and tutorial technology for additional practice and explanation.

**Instructional Methods:** SVMS recognizes that there are many ways of reaching all students by differentiating instruction to reinforce high standards in the diverse classroom. Depending upon the objectives of specific lessons teachers select delivery models ranging from teacher directed lessons and whole group instruction to student-centered cooperative learning groups and individual learning. Hands-on and experimental activities, science laboratories, long-term projects, visual and oral presentations are all tools used to help students meet grade level standards and academic requirements, and can challenge students needing extensions and enrichment. Science and math teachers use instructional strategies, which incorporate multi-media visual stimuli and other technology in order to fully engage students in the curriculum. Teachers assess students for learning styles in order to provide assignments, projects, homework, and tests that address all cognitive levels based on Bloom's Taxonomy. All teachers assign homework to reinforce concepts introduced in class and to practice and extend learning. Students also have opportunities to apply learning to the real world. For example, students publish a monthly school newspaper, work with real-life attorneys to prepare for a mock trial, and meet with various local professionals at an annual career fair. Our GATE students are clustered and provided with activities in all areas of curriculum to create a challenge for the student. Our CLAD teacher, working with ELD students, provides additional resources to those students needing assistance. They have one period each day to work on language skills. For example, students keep a notebook and record words and/or phrases they do not understand throughout the day. The ELD teacher can then add those words and/or phrases into their

vocabulary program to ensure they are following in-class directions and discussions. Teachers modify assignments when needed for students with special needs.

**Professional Development:** The SVMS community sees learning as ongoing, so we are pursuers of “life-long learning”. Professional development lies at the heart of our high student achievement, and the SRVUSD sets the stage for professional development through the LEAP. In this district plan, the professional development trail for all teachers leads from a large scale analysis of standards-based student assessment results across the grade levels, to identifying areas of focus to support students scoring below proficient, to areas of focus for special populations including ELL, Special Education, and GATE, and finally to instructional development workshops and activities supporting the use of state and board approved instructional materials. Examples of district-wide workshops for all teachers include: the Columbia University’s Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project; BTSA support workshops on content standards and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students in the regular classroom; technology training on Windows 2000, Adobe Photoshop and PageMaker, and various other presentation devices. Our district and school process for planning professional development begins with assessing data on our students, leading to professional development directly supporting their needs, to instruction supported by our professional development, and finally to the evaluation of student progress to determine the success of our planning. Middle school administrators are included in teacher workshops and all SRVUSD administrators participate in yearlong discussion groups.

This year the focus is improving student achievement through teacher observation and feedback while developing a deeper knowledge of the CA Standards of the Teaching Profession. The principal and assistant principal spend two to three days during the week visiting individual classrooms. This allows the administration to provide teachers written feedback on how they are meeting CSTP (California Standards for the Teaching Profession) and helps to set agendas for SBCP days with a focus on creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning. Teachers and administration meet monthly to discuss student progress towards standards. This year all staff received an introduction to CSTP and wrote goals based on the CSTP. At semester teachers re-examined all goals. This is now the focus of discussion at each monthly meeting when school administrators report progress.

The SVMS staff professional development plan is successful because it comes from staff, parent, and student input, is based on teacher and student’s assessed needs, is site-based, ongoing, implemented weekly, has enabled our students to make steady achievement gains, and is fully funded. Our entire staff has been trained in adjusted assignments and the instructional strategies in This We Believe, Taking Center Stage, and Caught in the Middle. In math, teachers have attended a workshop with Rachel MacAnallen to increase the use of hands-on activities to better understand math concepts and have implemented strategies from Mathematics Teaching in Middle School, which encourages ways to differentiate instruction to help meet the needs of all students. This change in instruction has resulted in a 7% reduction of students performing below proficiency. Our coordinated, sustained, and ongoing professional development has contributed to a seventeen-point increase in our API score.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### Stone Valley Middle School

#### STAR 2003, 2004, 2005 \*California Standards Test (CST)

*(Numbers indicate percent of students)*

#### English Language Arts

<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Advanced	45	38	37
Proficient & Above	80	76	79
Number of Students Tested	225	236	252
Percent of total students tested	99	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0

<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Advanced	35	30	24
Proficient & Above	81	77	78
Number of Students Tested	237	253	225
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0

<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Advanced	35	27	26
Proficient & Above	72	72	67
Number of Students Tested	251	230	234
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0

\* More information available upon request.

## Mathematics

<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Advanced	35	38	31
Proficient & Above	83	76	73
Number of Students Tested	225	237	252
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0

<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Advanced	39	28	14
Proficient & Above	73	68	65
Number of Students Tested	237	253	225
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0

<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Advanced			
**Proficient & Above	71	70	68
Number of Students Tested	247	228	227
Percent of total students tested	98	99	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0

\*\* Composite scores for students taking CST General Math, CST Algebra I and CST Geometry.