

U.S. Department of Education
2010 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) Charter Title I Magnet Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Ellen Cwick, Ed.D.

Official School Name: Vernon Hills High School

School Mailing Address:
145 N Lakeview Pkwy
Vernon Hills, IL 60061-1566

County: Lake State School Code Number*: 431

Telephone: (847) 932-2000 Fax: (847) 932-2049

Web site/URL: http://vhhscougars.org/ E-mail: ellen.cwick@d128.org

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

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. Prentiss Lea

District Name: CHSD 128 Tel: (847) 247-4500

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

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Pat Groody

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

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

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

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2004.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)
- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| | Middle/Junior high schools |
| 2 | High schools |
| | K-12 schools |
| 2 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 9598

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. 7 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position 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			0	6			0
K			0	7			0
1			0	8			0
2			0	9	184	168	352
3			0	10	182	176	358
4			0	11	169	161	330
5			0	12	167	148	315
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							1355

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: % American Indian or Alaska Native
17 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
11 % Hispanic or Latino
 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
65 % White
5 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 3 %

This rate is 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.	17
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	29
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	46
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	1355
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.034
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3.395

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 3 %

Total number limited English proficient 40

Number of languages represented: 11

Specify languages:

Spanish, Arabic, Ukranian, Mandarin Chinese, Filipino, Russian, Hungarian, Korean, Serbian, Gujarti, Punjabi

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 11 %

Total number students who qualify: 149

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

Total Number of Students Served: 176

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>10</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>2</u> Deafness	<u>23</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>84</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>37</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>2</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>6</u> Mental Retardation	<u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>13</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>75</u>	<u>12</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff	<u>43</u>	<u>8</u>
Total number	<u>150</u>	<u>24</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 17 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	95%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	98%	98%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	3%	3%	6%	14%	7%
Student dropout rate	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Please provide all explanations below.

Due to an early retirement incentive, at the end of the 2005-2006 school year, we had an unusually large number of retirees.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	318	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	72	%
Enrolled in a community college	19	%
Enrolled in vocational training	2	%
Found employment	1	%
Military service	1	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	5	%
Total	100	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Vernon Hills High School is a public, four-year, comprehensive educational institution serving grades 9-12 and is located in Vernon Hill, Illinois. The Village of Vernon Hills incorporated on July 16, 1958. The village has grown from a few hundred residents to a total population of 20,120 according to the 2000 census. The vision of the Village of Vernon Hills is to create a safe, aesthetically appealing, fiscally viable, family-oriented community with excellent educational, social, recreational, and cultural opportunities fostering on a strong and diverse residential and business community with concern for ecological stewardship and cooperation with other governmental bodies and agencies.

The realization of a dream to have a high school in Vernon Hills began with the passage of a referendum in the fall of 1997. Planning and construction began immediately on the new building, which would house students in the southern part of the Community High School District 128. The building known today as Vernon Hills High School officially opened in the fall of 1999. Its mission - To provide quality educational opportunities for all students, including developing within each student: respectful, responsible and ethical attitudes and behaviors; an awareness and appreciation of the diverse cultures in our learning community and our world; an ability to think critically and solve problems; an ability to communicate effectively; an ability to appreciate and demonstrate creativity; and a life-long desire to pursue knowledge. VHHS held its first commencement ceremony on June 6, 2002.

Like its surrounding community, the student body at VHHS continues to grow in its ethnic diversity. Down from 80% in 2001, 66% of the student body is white/Caucasian. The next two largest student groups by ethnicity are Asian/Pacific Islander (17%) and Hispanic (10%). 9% of VHHS students classify as 'Low-Income' and 3% are 'Limited-English Proficient'. Programs that meet the growing needs of the student body help to define and strengthen the positive culture at VHHS. Each fall we immerse our freshmen in a program that focuses on three core character values – respect, trust, and integrity. The goal of the program is to have students understand that the levels at which they demonstrate respect, trust and integrity will ultimately form their life's experience. Our annual Diversity Fair and Unity Fair create a sense of belonging and cohesiveness within the building. The faculty-to-student mentoring program partners our greatest resources, the teachers and staff, with students who need extra support and accountability.

VHHS has much to be proud of. In its short ten years of existence, Vernon Hills High School has accomplished much to distinguish itself as a school worthy of Blue Ribbon School status. Last year, VHHS' ACT scores ranked among the top 10 in the state. Since 2001, the National Merit Scholarship Program has awarded honors to 36 finalists, 8 semi-finalists, and 63 commended students. In a comparison of regional schools, VHHS ranks sixth in Advanced Placement (AP) tests scoring 3 or higher per 100 students. Through the efforts of a dedicated staff and a gifted student body, VHHS has earned 13 state championships in various arenas including: Math, Music, Athletics, Dance, Science, and Engineering. VHHS consistently is named to the *U.S. News & World Report's* rankings of the Best American High Schools. VHHS is comparatively a smaller high school that is successfully implementing a program typical of a much larger high school.

VHHS serves not only its freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. This high school affords the community the opportunity to partake in numerous adult and continuing educational opportunities. This past year, two hundred seventy-five site classes were offered at schools in the CHSD 128 adult education program. Nearly one thousand community members took advantage of the offerings. The importance the community places on continual learning is evident by the use of the high school facilities morning, noon and night year round.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

The data for both state and national assessments of our juniors is worthy of celebration as Vernon Hills High School has continued to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year over the past five years, as required by *No Child Left Behind*.

State Assessment Information

Information about the Prairie State Achievement Examination, the PSAE, which is the assessment given to all juniors in Illinois in the spring, may be found at the Illinois State Board of Education website - <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm>.

There are four levels of performance on the PSAE including Academic Warning (A), Below State Standards (B), Meeting State Standards (M) and Exceeding State Standards (E). Those students meeting or exceeding are included in the school percentage for accountability as defined by *No Child Left Behind*.

PSAE - ACT Trends

- The percentage of students meeting all four college readiness benchmarks on the ACT subtests has increased from a low of 32% to a high of 41% (in 2008) as compared to the state percentage of 19%.
- The overall school composite score for juniors on the ACT test has risen 1.1 points in the last five years. The range of composite scores is 22.8 to 23.9 in 2008 as compared to the state average composite score of 20.0. This state average has only risen 0.2 over the last five years.
- 60% of VHHS students are taking core academic courses as defined by ACT. This has been a fairly consistent percentage over the last five years. Those students taking the core courses have been improving in composite ACT scores. Those students taking fewer than the recommended core courses have average composite scores that have remained fairly level. Students taking the core have seen increases of between 1.0 and 2.0 in their composite score in all four subtest areas.
- Vernon Hills High School has met AYP benchmarks and met the *No Child Left Behind* targets for the past five years for all groups of students. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the PSAE test for all students has remained consistent between the range of 75.0% to 85.8%. The 85.8% score was reached in 2005, when a smaller junior class of only 284 students was tested. As the school has grown, the percentage seems to be leveling off closer to 75% meeting in the area of reading. In the area of mathematics over the past five years, VHHS students have demonstrated consistent growth and improvement as demonstrated by their recent, highest achievement percentage of 81.1%

Disparities of Subgroup test scores

- African American/Black – This small group of students has demonstrated growth. The ACT composite score indicates a gain of two points over the last five years from 20.4 to 22.4.
- Asian Pacific Islander – This subgroup is the strongest performing subgroup at VHHS. In three of the past five years, over 81% have met or exceeded state standards in reading and every year there has been an increase of students meeting or exceeding state standards from a low of 87.1% in 2005 to a high of 93.1% in 2008. As for the ACT test, this group has shown an increase of 3.2 points from a low composite score of 23.4 in 2005 to a high of 26.6 in 2008. This population is currently growing at VHHS.
- Caucasian American/White – For the PSAE, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding in reading has remained consistent between 78% and 84%. The percentage of students meeting or

exceeding in mathematics has been above 80% all five years. The ACT composite score has remained steady at about 24.0.

- Hispanic – This subgroup is small and has not reached the state level of 45 as a measurable group. The data shows that this subgroup is the lowest performing group of students at VHHS. They are consistently achieving below the state average of a 20.0 composite score. However, the range of composite scores for the last three years has risen from 18.3 to 19.7 demonstrating recent improvement. As for the PSAE data, only 45% to 50% of the students are meeting or exceeding state standards in reading. In mathematics, the success rate is between 33% and 58%. These percentages are increasing, but remain lower than the NCLB targets.
- Low income, Multi, Other and the ELL groups – These groups have had fewer than 10 students and the data has not consistently been reported over the last five years. However, those students who recently identified themselves as “Other” on the ACT have shown an increase of almost 4.0 points in composite score, ranging from 20.8 to 24.7.
- Students with IEP’s - The number of students with IEP’s has remained below the state level of 45, ranging from 15 to 41. Data from the last two years, a time period in which we had comparable, similar-sized populations, shows that in reading, only 44% of these students are meeting or exceeding state standards. In mathematics the percentage is approximately 40% meeting and exceeding.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The use of data to confirm learning and improve instruction is not new to VHHS. In fact, it has been the focus of our Student Achievement Goal, part of our School Improvement Program that began in 2006. Departments have been asked to work on common assessments of a variety of sorts and have been working in course teams to analyze data from those assessments. Currently, VHHS is in the process of designing our own departmental course standards and targets. Next year, departments will begin to correlate common assessments to those newly written standards and targets to be able to provide more specific feedback to students on their learning achievements and areas of weakness. Members of our current School Improvement Committee have made site visits to high schools with an established RtI program to be able to better define how VHHS uses data to follow up with appropriate social and academic interventions.

Instructors at VHHS are always continuing to find ways to gather data that will assess student learning and guide their instruction. In our Math Department, teachers of each course team include a set of common questions on each chapter assessment. The results are analyzed by the team to determine if the students sufficiently mastered the material. If not, the team discusses how to revisit the topic and what additional strategies might be implemented. This sequence of steps is repeated until instructors are satisfied with student performance on a given skill. This process assists with the vertical alignment of math courses, as well. Once students at one level are identified as weak in a skill, course teams meet to creatively find ways to introduce and practice these skills within prerequisite courses. Junior math students are given the practice WorkKeys test. Each instructor is given student results to analyze. When the data identifies areas of weakness, instructors then develop strategies to reinforce the skills and topics in their lessons.

Assessments and their results have an important place in the Social Studies curriculum. The department has created common semester final exams for each of the four core courses offered by the department: Geography, World History, United States History, and Government. At the classroom level, data of student performance is analyzed and used to guide future instruction of current students. It is also a key consideration in the annual curriculum revision process. At the department level data is used to drive alignment of the curriculum to the exams and vice versa.

Similarly, our Science instructors review data in specific course teams. Preliminary assessment data is reviewed by the whole department, then the course teams collaborate to review the data more closely to determine the effectiveness of current common assessments, and to share effective resources and teaching strategies. These discussions have led to plans to increase focus on graphing skills, scientific investigation, and for data analysis.

The English Department, our final example, uses a series of three grammar skill assessments throughout the year. All classes give these assessments at the same time. The goal is for each teacher to see improvement over the course of the three tests in each skill area in each of their classes. The tests are scored and data showing the amount of improvement in each skill area is given to each teacher. This analysis helps drive subsequent grammar instruction. The data is individualized so that instruction can meet the learning needs of every student.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

Vernon Hills High School is one of two high schools in Community High School District 128. A variety of communication tools and methods are employed on the school district level to share assessment information with students, parents and our community. At the District level, the quarterly news magazine, *PawPrints*, is published and distributed via our district webpage. Two issues each year are mailed to all parents. An annual report includes student achievement data and is both mailed to the community and available online. Our schools regularly update their homepages with news of our students' achievement. Each fall a Student Achievement Data sheet is compiled for staff and the community with statistics on the previous year's assessments (ACT, PSAT, SAT), graduation statistics, Advanced Placement scores, and athletic participation. These are archived on our district website for reference.

Voice activated message systems, such as Alert Now, are used to inform our community of important events and highlight recognition of student achievement. Local media outlets are sent regular press releases regarding these achievements and assessment results which are often highlighted in the newspapers. *Twitter* is also used to communicate information with the district community. Presentations are done at Board of Education meetings each fall sharing our recent performance outcomes. These meetings are videotaped for the community, broadcast on the local cable station, and archived on Cougar Tube, the district's internal version of *You Tube*.

Students are mailed individual performance results as well as class and school results. Counseling staff hold evening meetings for parents and students to explain the tests results of the exams recently taken. Orientation programs highlight and explain school performance levels. At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent shares a longitudinal view of student performance. Community High School District 128 makes it a priority to celebrate the fine work and efforts of our students and staff, always recognizing their academic, athletic and extracurricular accomplishments.

4. **Sharing Success:**

We are fortunate that our students have the opportunity to experience success in many ways. Academically, success is shared with our feeder schools through the opportunities we have for Articulation Meetings each year. One example is the International Languages Department provides a report for 8th grade teachers and feeder school administration on the great success rate of 8th grade students on their January Placement Tests showing that a great majority of students are ready to begin language study at the Spanish 2 level after completion of the program offered in the feeder school.

The Languages Department has had wonderful success with the Sony Lab for six years now. Throughout the past six years we have hosted several other high school and university language departments in the lab to share the positive impact this lab experience has had on student language learning.

Teachers throughout the departments attend local and national conferences, both as attendees and presenters, to share with others our programs, strategies and techniques that have demonstrated improved student learning.

With our extracurricular activities, one of our academic clubs, Math Team, has had great success over the past several years. This group always invites the feeder school math teachers to help at the pep rally, T-shirts are

shared with these teachers, and the feeder school teachers are invited to this club's end-of-the-year party, as well. The Student Council members attend the Illinois Directors of Student Activities State Leadership Workshop in order to share and exchange ideas for future programs and activities.

This year, our Health and Wellness Committee, responsible for one of our School Improvement Goals, held the first ever Cougar Classic 5K Race for our students and community. It was a great success, but we had a surplus of t-shirts. Our students were offered the opportunity to purchase the shirts at a minimal cost and then donate them, with a personalized message included, to a student or family member at a school in Uganda, Africa that we are supporting through a program called The Cove Project. All of the surplus t-shirts were bought and donated, over 100 of them.

National Louis University is a near-by college that specializes in educational degrees. We are one of their favorite schools where they frequently send their education students to do observation of our instructors and classes. Other local 4-year colleges often contact our Personnel Department with the hopes of placing student teachers with our excellent instructors here at VHHS. In each of these situations, we are able to pass on our expertise and success with instruction and learning to future educators.

In athletics, high school teams invite the athletes from feeder schools to high school competitive events. There is a designated section in the football stadium for feeder school students. VHHS hosts some of the feeder school games and contests at the high school facility. At halftime during some of the games, there is a scrimmage between community youth teams or a performance by a feeder dance or cheer team.

In the event that we are presented with the Blue Ribbon Award, we would certainly celebrate this success at our opening day district meeting where we could share this success with our sister school, Libertyville High School, a previous Blue Ribbon Award winner. Then, at our VHHS faculty meeting, we would continue the celebrating and invite our local newspapers who are supportive of school events. They could run a celebration article to inform not only those in other schools, but all of our community members of this great honor. The celebration could continue in the fall at our articulation meetings where supervisors could share with our feeder schools appreciation and recognition for preparing students so well for their experience here at VHHS. The focus of one of our fall assemblies could be recognition to all, faculty, staff and students, who make VHHS a Blue Ribbon School.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Vernon Hills High School offers a challenging and diverse curriculum. Across nine academic departments, 201 courses are offered to meet the needs of our students. In addition to these courses, a partnership with nearby College of Lake County has been created to serve as an extension of the school's curriculum. 19 career and tech centered courses are offered offsite to junior and senior students. While a part of a cohesive and highly structured curriculum, each core area has its own philosophy and instructional strategies to engage its learners. Each course is built upon high standards and learning targets that are aligned to state and national standards. Teams within each core department use data from common assessments to analyze trends and create instructional interventions that improve student learning.

Mathematics: Mathematics is a way of approaching new challenges through exploring, reasoning, visualizing, and problem solving with the goal of communicating the relationships observed and the problems solved. VHHS math courses empower students to think critically, reason effectively, and become better problem solvers. Technology is an important tool that enhances student learning in mathematics. While paper and pencil are still appropriate in many situations, the demands of an ever-changing technological world mandate that every student be a competent user of technology. Graphing calculators and computers are widely used at home and in the workplace. Use of these devices in mathematics will match the realities of everyday life, develop students' reasoning skills, and promote the understanding and application of mathematics.

Social Studies: The Social Studies Department is committed to educating students to become discerning, intelligent, and compassionate citizens in our democracy. It is also entrusted with the responsibility of fostering an awareness and appreciation of the people and cultures of the world.

Science: A broad understanding of the living world and the physical laws fundamental to all science is essential in today's technological society. A quality education includes significant study in the areas of biology, chemistry, earth and space science, and physics. Each course is designed to be content rich, activity centered, and student friendly. Varied techniques will ensure that individual learning styles will be addressed. A cooperative classroom atmosphere will create the best possible learning environment. The department is committed to showing students the importance, the wonder, and the joy inherent in the study of science.

English: The English Department expects a student to read both classical and contemporary literature; to analyze written, oral, and visual material; to express ideas with confidence and logic both orally and in writing; to think critically and creatively; and to attain an appreciation for literature. The department values the free exchange of ideas and the goal of being a life-long reader and learner. All courses contribute to these expectations. Summer reading is a requirement.

International Languages: The purpose of language study in VHHS is to equip students linguistically and culturally to communicate and function in the world neighborhood as an individual and within a group. Language study develops an awareness of other people's views, an understanding of their unique ways of life, recognition and respect for their contributions to the world at large. Linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge combined will enable students to interact in a variety of culturally authentic situations. To reach proficiency, daily use of the target language is the expectation. Consistent with other years, in 2009-10, approximately 58% of all students enrolled in a foreign language course.

Performing and Visual Arts: It is the desire of the Music Department to provide a musical experience for all interested students. Through musical study and performance, students are exposed to various styles,

techniques, and terminology necessary for their musical development. It is our hope that through participation students will gain an appreciation for the finer aspects of music and will carry this appreciation into adult life.

The visual arts are an essential part of all learning because the customs, beliefs and social, economic, and aesthetic growth of past cultures have always been, and always will be recorded through visual symbols. It sharpens perceptual and analytical skills, and encourages innovative thinking and problem solving. Art experiences improve the development of conceptualization, reasoning, perceiving, and making abstract associations. By actively participating in the visual arts, students will develop a lifelong appreciation of the production, critical analysis, and language associated with the creation of original artwork.

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

(This question is for secondary schools only)

The English Department is committed to a program of excellence. The department expects a student to read both classical and contemporary literature; to analyze written, oral, and visual material; to revise and express ideas with confidence and logic both orally and in writing; to think critically and creatively; and to attain an appreciation for literature. The department values the free exchange of ideas and the goal of being a life-long reader and learner. All courses contribute to these expectations.

The English Department is committed to improving student performance in reading. The recently implemented reading initiative consists of four complementary strands:

- Instructors provide students with explicit instruction in reading strategies, opportunities to practice those strategies, and opportunities to reflect upon the effectiveness of those strategies. Specific strategies include: KWL, SQ3R, graphic organizers, annotation and note-taking, and other research-based techniques.
- A generous number of nonfiction prose works is incorporated into the curriculum.
- Instructors give students a choice in what they read and include titles that represent students' interests and actual reading levels. Specific instructional strategies include Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), outside reading projects, and reading / literature circles.
- All courses provide students with opportunities to practice reading and analyzing ACT-style passages during the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades.

The English Department has also crafted a sequence of three Critical Reading courses designed to serve students who are functioning below grade level as measured on standardized tests. Instruction is provided for specific reading skills. The program provides group and individualized instruction in comprehension, vocabulary, and content -specific reading. These courses are supplementary courses, not courses that satisfy a graduation requirement.

To provide additional practice, all students also complete summer reading projects.

Finally, to support our students with limited English language skills, course offerings include four years of English Language Learner classes, English Language Learner Support classes, and an English Language Learner Reading course. These classes provide appropriate learning opportunities that address skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening .

The expectation is that as a result of our departmental reading initiative, students will apply strengthened reading skills across all academic areas, resulting in improved student learning.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

The Applied Arts Department (Business, Applied Technology and Family and Consumer Science) models their curriculum with what is the "industry standard" such as MacIntosh computers for graphic arts, 3-D

printer and CAD software use in Architectural and Engineering Design, the latest Microsoft Office version in business classes, music-making software and digital equipment (flip video cameras for student use) for interactive media, just to name a few. All areas of D128's Mission Statement are addressed in these classes. For example, in many of the business classes the topics of business ethics and social responsibility are included in the curriculum (*Mission Statement: respectful, responsible and ethical attitudes and behaviors*). Outside speakers have spoken to business classes on this topic and supplemental reading has been added in Business Internship to emphasize the importance of ethical work behavior.

An awareness and appreciation of the diverse cultures in our learning community and our world – There are units of study on international business and cultural diversity in the workplace. In the FACS Department, many of the advanced food classes have ethnic cooking units. The FACS teachers received an innovation grant last year to buy special cooking equipment for ethnic cooking. Many outside speakers are included in the classes (such as a corporate female officer who is also a Muslim) *An ability to think critically and solve problems; An ability to communicate effectively*- All of the applied arts courses require oral and written presentations and some student groups have presented to our Career Advisory Council, a group of area business people who meet with the department three times a year to work on curriculum enrichment.

An ability to appreciate and demonstrate creativity – Instructors incorporate abundant “hands-on” activities in Applied Arts. Whether it is creating a prom dress, decorating a cake, marketing a new product, writing a business plan or creating a DVD cover, students get the opportunity to use their individual creativity. In the process of taking Applied Arts courses, students not only develop the skills mentioned, but also a curiosity that inspires them to want to continue to *pursue knowledge*.

4. Instructional Methods:

Students can experience a variety of instructional methods and levels of intensity of instruction in the courses here at VHHS. For U.S. History, for example, three levels of instruction are offered. ELL U.S. History meets the needs of our English Language Learners. AP U. S. History offers a more intensive structure for highly motivated and college bound students. U.S. History, a regular weighted course, is the level chosen by the majority of students. These courses share the same standards, but the outcomes and instructional methods used to reach those outcomes differ.

Besides varying the structure of courses that are similar, but weighted differently, the various needs students have who are in a particular class are also addressed. Teachers often use partner activities and strategically match stronger and weaker students, students with like interests, students who show assessment anxiety with others who are good test takers or presenters, etc. Students are offered choices in their daily class work. They may be given four tasks to complete over the week, but are allowed to pick the three that will best help them learn, that are the most interesting, etc. Choice carries over into assessments in many ways. Students are allowed to choose from a given list of research topics the one that is of most interest to them. Students in International Languages typically have sections on assessments that address knowing vocabulary and if fifteen items are offered, students may be asked to select the twelve that they prefer to answer. Also, for oral presentations, students may be offered choice of their presentational venue, choosing from a PowerPoint, skit, lecture with guided notes, poster and discussion, etc. In Science, students self-track their progress mastering the goals for a unit. Formative assessments are used to help students determine their level of mastery. Retakes of summative assessments are offered to allow slower learners the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery. Science also incorporates guided-inquiry labs and activities to keep the classroom student-centered and student guided. In our ELL Science course, our instructor has discovered success in using sign language to support vocabulary development by physically describing processes and characteristic differences at the beginning of units when presenting words needed for that area of study. This strategy is effective regardless of the first language of our ELL students. All students, but our special needs students in particular, are responsive to guided notes, breaking down major projects into portions with their own due dates, frequent and timely feedback. In all departments, accommodations are made for students with IEP's, extended time for assessments being one of the accommodations most often requested.

Additional instructional challenges are offered outside of the classroom, as well. VHHS has clubs that give our more gifted students an opportunity to enjoy their skills and challenge themselves further. We have Academic Bowl, DECA – a business club, Junior State of America, and a State Winning Math Team.

5. Professional Development:

District 128 is currently focusing on a Professional Development program that incorporates elements from The Basic Four – Curriculum Revision, Assessment, Instruction, and Feedback as researched and documented by Jane Pollock, Robert Marzano, and others. The primary, district-wide focus for all departments this year is Curriculum Revision. All departments are sending instructors to in-house workshops addressing the reasons for updating and how we are revising our curriculum documents to include our own district standards of student achievement and learning targets based on state standards, national standards and college readiness standards. This year, all departments at VHHS are also focusing professional development on the current School Improvement Program which is developing an RtI process that implements and monitors interventions to enhance student achievement.

The administration continues to be very supportive of both departmental and individual professional development. For example, in the Social Studies Department instructors attend professional conferences and workshops and incorporate new ideas for course content, learning activities and strategies into their lesson design. Secondarily and informally, instructors read professional journals, periodicals, and books to keep current of both new developments in historiography and in an effort to enrich their content knowledge base. Relevant details are then incorporated into their lesson design.

In the International Languages Department, some instructors attend local and national conferences each year. Other instructors host meetings and invite other professionals in the area to share best practice and strategies with each other, as well as ideas for new programs, such as the newest language program at VHHS, Spanish for Native Speakers. After attending conferences, teachers share new strategies, activities, and updated materials at department meetings.

A recent example of our ongoing professional development is the newly instated District 128 Summer University. The district now offers several programs over the summer in which teachers can enroll that directly support the mentioned areas of focus. Teachers can receive credit hours towards advancement on the salary schedule for their attendance and participation in these programs.

Technology has been of great importance to teachers' professional development for many years. Some of the courses offered in our Summer University are of a technological nature. Last year, many teachers enrolled in a Moodle course and are now implementing this communications strategy in their classrooms. Workshops and programs to help teachers learn a new Student Information System for next year are already planned for this spring and this summer's Summer University. The district offers workshops that support the topics in the Basic Four, as well.

Professional growth occurs regularly at an individual level, a departmental level, as well as a school and district level in District 128. The goal is to make professional development meet the specialized needs of all of the instructors, but also to provide teachers with similar experiences to be able to "be on the same page" with the district's major focus areas. Professional growth at VHHS is a reflective process which focuses on instructional decisions and practices and takes place in an environment of dignity, mutual respect, and integrity.

6. School Leadership:

In addition to the Principal position, Vernon Hills High School also has an Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction and an Assistant Principal for Student Services. Each administrator oversees three curricular departments in the school, working closely with the department supervisors and the members of their

departments. Since the opening of the school ten years ago, the leadership has felt strongly about developing a vision in conjunction with the students, staff, and parents, as well as sharing this vision on a regular basis. This vision has helped VHHS develop into a high school that maintains its small school caring atmosphere while offering a big school program. VHHS always “pushes the envelope,” looking for ways to improve, keeping expectations high and challenging students to grow and learn.

Each year all administrators, through a common administrators’ academy workshop, focus on learning together as a professional learning team. The staff is then informed of the findings regarding innovative and relevant research gleaned from the sessions. For the past three years, our professional development focus for all staff has been on CRISS training, professional learning communities, and the Basic Four based on the works of Rick DuFour, Robert Marzano, Jane Pollock, and Jim Burgett.

One specific example of the leadership role of the principal involves the conducting of our opening day staff meeting. At this time the Principal takes the opportunity to start the year by focusing on the vision for the upcoming school year. ACT, PSAE, and AYP data are also shared and celebrated with the staff. One year the staff celebrated our successful completion of the goal of moving our ACT composition score into the 24 range. This year’s meeting time was devoted to outlining our new curriculum revision process which will positively impact student achievement. All student achievement initiatives align with our District Strategic Plan and RtI / SIP goals. Therefore, student achievement is a major focus during weekly leadership meetings with department supervisors as well as regular departmental meetings involving the supervisors and their teachers.

Another important function regarding the leadership role in the school is to continue our philosophy of building and mentoring perspective leaders in our school. When talking with staff members who come from other schools, it is not uncommon to hear them comment on the sense of ownership they feel here at VHHS. The leadership team hires outstanding educators and empowers them by providing leadership opportunities within the school. For example, it is commonplace to see a teacher working side by side with our Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction to create and administer the state test tutorial sessions for struggling students. Within the RtI/SIP committee, teachers take the lead in managing the subcommittees. Lunch and Learn sessions, a type of in-house professional development workshop, address such topics as assessment tools and are often organized and run by teachers and support staff. The district consistently provides the resources necessary to allow these leadership opportunities to flourish, as well as to implement programs that enhance student learning such as the new Incoming Freshmen Academy, lunchtime Key Train sessions, and the evening ACT preparation program. The leadership at VHHS takes great pride in how well we listen to and collaborate with the staff, students and our community members.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 11 Test: Prairie State Achievement Examination

Edition/Publication Year: See notes.

Publisher: See notes.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets	82	79	77	81	80
Exceeds	28	28	26	26	17
Number of students tested	312	342	317	287	282
Percent of total students tested	98	97	99	90	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	1	1	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets	46	52	60		
Exceeds	9	9	25		
Number of students tested	35	23	20		
2. African American Students					
Meets			40		57
Exceeds			10		7
Number of students tested			10		14
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets	58	38	41	31	43
Exceeds	11	14	0	0	0
Number of students tested	36	29	29	13	14
4. Special Education Students					
Meets	39	41	48	25	53
Exceeds	0	7	24	0	3
Number of students tested	39	41	29	16	30
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets		55			
Exceeds		0			
Number of students tested		11			
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Meets	93	93	91	90	87
Exceeds	42	53	51	40	29
Number of students tested	53	58	47	42	31

Notes:

Sub-group #6 is our Asian Pacific Islander population.

Several of the subgroups above have had fewer than 10 students.

English Language Learners have not been required to take this exam until 07-08 and 08-09.

Edition and Publisher information:

04-05 - Workkeys and ISBE Science - 2005 - NCS Pearson, ACT, and ISBE
05-06 - WorkKeys and ISBE Science - 2006 - McCraw / Hill, Harcourt, ISBE and ACT
06-07 - WorkKeys and ISBE Science - 2007 - Pearson Educational Measurement, subcontracted for ACT;
ACT and ISBE
07-08 - WorkKeys and ISBE Science - 2008 - NCS Schoolhouse / Pearson; ACT and ISBE
08-09 - WorkKeys and ISBE Science - 2009 - Pearson, subcontracted for ACT: ACT and ISBE

Subject: Reading

Grade: 11 Test: Prairie State Achievement Examination

Edition/Publication Year: See notes

Publisher: See notes

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets	75	75	76	82	86
Exceeds	27	22	18	27	27
Number of students tested	312	342	317	287	282
Percent of total students tested	98	97	99	90	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	1	1	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Meets	46	38	80		
Exceeds	6	0	10		
Number of students tested	35	23	20		
2. African American Students					
Meets			60		57
Exceeds			20		7
Number of students tested			10		14
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets	47	42	55	50	57
Exceeds	11	7	10	0	0
Number of students tested	36	29	29	12	14
4. Special Education Students					
Meets	44	44	35	46	50
Exceeds	5	7	7	0	3
Number of students tested	39	41	29	13	30
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Meets		9			
Exceeds		0			
Number of students tested		11			
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Meets	81	79	87	86	78
Exceeds	32	31	21	37	26
Number of students tested	53	58	47	42	31

Notes:

Subgroup #6 is our Asian Pacific Islander population. Many of the above subgroups have had fewer than 10 students. English Language Learners have not been required to take this exam until 07-08 and 08-09.

Edition and Publisher Information: 04-05 - Workkeys and ISBE Science - 2005 - NCS Pearson, ACT, and ISBE; 05-06 - WorkKeys and ISBE Science - 2006 - McCraw / Hill, Harcourt, ISBE and ACT; 06-07 - WorkKeys and ISBE Science - 2007 - Pearson Educational Measurement, subcontracted for ACT; ACT and ISBE; 07-08 - WorkKeys and ISBE Science-2008- NCS Schoolhouse / Pearson; ACT and ISBE; 08-09 - WorkKeys and ISBE Science - 2009 - Pearson, subcontracted for ACT: ACT and ISBE.

ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 11

Test: ACT

Edition/Publication Year: 2009,08,07,06,05 Publisher: ACT all except 2006 - Harcourt

Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	24.3	24.7	24.1	23.6	23.7
Number of students tested	312	340	318	326	284
Percent of total students tested	98	97	99	99	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	1	1	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Average Score	19	21	22	20	
Number of students tested	34	26	24	15	
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score	21	21	19	19	
Number of students tested	32	30	33	13	
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score	18	19	17	17	18
Number of students tested	34	34	26	36	19
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Average Score	27	29	28	26	26
Number of students tested	43	54	40	40	26

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
NATIONAL MEAN SCORE	21	21	21	20.8	20.7
NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION	5.3	5.2	5.1		5

Notes:

Subgroup #6 is the Asian Pacific Islander population.

