



## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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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 2010-2011 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 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
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

1. Number of schools in the district: 2 Elementary schools  
 (per district designation) 1 Middle/Junior high schools  
1 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
4 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 9015

## SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	85	69	154
3	0	0	0		10	83	79	162
4	0	0	0		11	75	65	140
5	0	0	0		12	77	89	166
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>								622

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
1 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
3 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
94 % White  
0 % 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 2009-2010 school 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, 2009 until the end of the school year.	7
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	10
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	17
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	623
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.03
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 1%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 1

Number of languages represented, not including English: 1

Specify languages:

Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18%  
 Total number of students who qualify: 115

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-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 12%  
 Total number of students served: 77

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>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>76</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>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>33</u>	<u>3</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>14</u>	<u>3</u>
Support staff	<u>14</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>66</u>	<u>9</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: 18:1

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

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	92%	98%	86%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	96%	97%	97%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	8%	5%	2%	10%	7%
High school graduation rate	97%	99%	98%	98%	95%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

During the 2007-2008 school year, our high school began using a new administrative software program. At the end of the school year, we learned we had not correctly set up the data gathering points at the beginning of the year. Had we correctly identified and set up the data points, we believe our attendance rate would have been 96% for the year.

During the 2009-2010 school year, our attendance rate was lower due to the medical needs of several of our students who missed a significant portion of the school year; i.e. a car accident that left one student paralyzed from the neck down, several students who had orthopedic surgery, one student who was diagnosed with panic disorder, and five students who missed school due to legal involvement; i.e. drug/alcohol related incidents, law enforcement involvement, etc.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:	<u>137</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>67%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>25%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>4%</u>
Found employment	<u>3%</u>
Military service	<u>1%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>

Decorah High School, part of the Decorah Community School District, is located in the community of Decorah, Iowa, population 8070. This picturesque community nestled in Northeast Iowa, is a favorite of tourists year round. Area agricultural operations, Mayo and Gunderson Health Systems, and a thriving business community provide strong economic support. Luther College, located in Decorah provides college credit opportunities for high school students.

The vision Decorah High School is: To provide a safe learning environment where each student who works to the best of his or her abilities will achieve and demonstrate:

- a positive self worth
- mental and physical well being
- commendable citizenship qualities
- healthy interpersonal relationships
- strong work ethics
- effective communication skills
- creative expression
- high academic standards
- solid career preparation
- a desire for life-long learning.

DHS, “Home of the Vikings” has an enrollment of 622 students and 66 teachers and staff members. Decorah Middle School, St. Benedict’s Catholic School, and North Winneshiek School work closely with the high school as eighth grade students join the ranks each year through an in-depth transition program that continues once students enter high school. DHS serves as a special education “hub” for 12 area school districts, located in two states. Known for strong support, skill development, and innovative teaching practices, special education students consistently achieve goals beyond original expectations. The DHS Viking Academy serves students who select an alternative option to complete their high school course work and contributes to annual graduation rates of 98% or more.

A tradition of excellence in academics and co-curricular activities is a strong part of our culture. On the co-curricular side, 19 different sports, speech, drama, mock trial, band, orchestra, and choir are activity options for all students. Our FFA chapter consistently ranks in the “Top Ten” in the state for membership and competition results. Community club has a strong history of volunteer work and the members were recently named the United Way Volunteers of the Year. National Honor Society members sponsor an annual blood drive and tutor students whenever possible. Student council and fire squad members work with administrators and teachers to plan, promote, and implement school and community events, address concerns, and recognize student and teacher accomplishments.

Ninety percent of students are involved in at least one co-curricular activity and are working toward the goal for all students to be involved in two activities each year. The Vikings have 38 state titles in nine different sports and have won the Conference

All-Sports Trophy five of the last six years and DHS player, coach, and fan sportsmanship ratings are continuously near the top of the state rankings. Over 170 students are involved in speech and boast consistent superior ratings and perfect ballots. Ten or more groups are selected annually to perform at All-State featuring the best of the best in the state. The DHS music program is also known for excellence, as groups representing instrumental music, choir, and orchestra have brought home superior ratings for many years.

For the past three years, DHS students have been awarded the “Challenge Cup” in Class 3A for the State of Iowa. This state award recognizes high school students for excellence in academics and activities. In 2010, DHS was named the top high school in the state – all classes. Our student body is proud of this accomplishment and proudly displays their collection of Challenge Cup trophies.

Annually, 80% of junior and seniors successfully complete AP and college credit classes. Historically, 75% of students who enroll in AP classes pass the final exam. DHS has been recognized as a top 25 AP school the past two years and before that as a top 50 AP School. Steady growth in the number of AP classes correlates to a steady increase in the excellence and equity score, placing us near the top five AP schools in the state. DHS students graduate with an average of 10 college credits, and some enter college as sophomores. Data documents that 78% of 2010 graduates completed the ACT and 82% scored at or above the state’s college success indicator. This is 11 %age points higher than the state average and 23%age points higher than the national average. DHS annually has National Merit Scholar Semi-finalists, Finalists and Commended Students. Of the members of the class of 2010, 97% continued their education in the post-secondary arena.

Strong community and parent support is evidenced by attendance at school activities, parent conferences, and open house. This support was confirmed when 70% of district patrons voted for the proposed DHS new construction and renovation project slated to begin in May 2011. This project will add new career-technical classroom space, expand guidance and office areas, add a new competition gym and remodel every space in the building.

## 1. Assessment Results:

When reviewing ITEDs performance levels for DHS students, meeting the standard of proficiency in Iowa is defined as achieving a score at or above the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile. Performance levels are divided into three categories: low – a score between the 1<sup>st</sup> percentile and the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile; middle – a score between the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile and the 89<sup>th</sup> percentile; and high – a score between the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile and the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile. Information related to the scores of Decorah High School students can be accessed at:

<https://www.edinfo.stateia.us/data/aprchart.asp?s=16380000>

The ITEDs results in reading for DHS 11<sup>th</sup> grade students show stable scores for all students tested in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. An increase in the percentage of all students tested who were proficient increased eight percent from 2009 to 2010. We believe this increase can be attributed to continued intensive reading interventions for students who were non-proficient when tested in 2009. Seventy-five percent of students who moved from non-proficient to proficient, completed course work as outlined in the Second Chance Reading Program. Many of these students received assistance to improve their reading skills for two to three consecutive years. This resulted in a gradual increase in their scores over the two to three period.

We identified a 22 % difference between the number of special education students who were proficient and all students who were proficient. Even though students with IEPs who have reading goals, receive daily intervention assistance, we have learned this process needs to be in place for a multi-year period of time for them to achieve proficiency. For this reason we believe it is important to provide an intensive assistance program as soon as the need is identified. We also believe it is important complete an assessment to determine if the student is in need of assistance to address fluency, decoding, or comprehension deficiencies. To assist students with IEPs who are in need of skill building, we now complete assessments that help guide them into the reading class that can best assist them to improve their skills.

The ITEDs results in math for DHS 11<sup>th</sup> grade students show scores that remained the same during 2006 and 2007. In 2008 we saw a five percent decline in the percent of students who were proficient. Then in 2009 the scores for all students tested showed an increase of six percent. In 2010, the percent of students proficient dipped three percent from 94% proficient to 91% proficient. Even though there was a slight decline in the percent of students who were proficient, we believe the interventions we have in place will assist more students in moving from non-proficient to proficient.

We identified a 13% difference between the number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch who were proficient and all students who were proficient. Following this discovery, our math teachers reviewed the math curriculum and made adjustments to provide skill building assistance to a wider spectrum of students. This has been accomplished through additional problem solving activities that place students in real-life situations and our teachers are also using interactive technology on a regular basis in more math classes.

We also learned there is a significant gap of 81% between the percent of all students who were proficient and the percent of special education students who were proficient. We were surprised to see this difference and were challenged to find ways to address this concern. As explained earlier, we believe it is important for students to work in real-life problem solving situations that are meaningful and relevant. Our teachers have worked to add additional problem solving situations and have also increased the use of interactive technology when working with this group of students. We learned through research that student learning can increase as much as 20% when interactive technology is used with students. Through the curriculum mapping process in which our teachers are currently involved, we will hopefully identify additional ways to assist students to build solid math skills.

While we devote considerable time, energy, and dollars to assist non-proficient students achieve proficiency, we also work to challenge students as they build upon already acquired skills and strive for a

higher level of achievement. Following a curriculum revision and implementation of an AP stats class and pre-calculus class during the current school year, we plan to track achievement trends to identify the impact of this change. We are hoping to see a higher percentage of students who score in the high range as a result of these changes.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

DHS teachers review and analyze student assessment data on a regular basis as they strive to improve achievement. Teachers review ITEDs data each spring and use this information as a base in guiding students to select classes that will challenge them to work and learn at a more in-depth level. Teachers also use MAP scores (Measures of Academic Progress) as a secondary means to verify student achievement. The MAP assessment is completed twice each year – at the beginning of the school year and then again in the fall. It is aligned with our curriculum and provides feedback related to student achievement as it correlates to subject area curriculums. Teachers also use this information when reviewing curriculum to determine the need to make adjustments; where, when, and how.

Data review is typically completed in teams, so teachers at various grade levels have the ability to take part in the discussion and planning. They also use the results of these assessments on an individual basis to guide direct instruction, set up learning groups for a variety of activities, and make adjustments throughout the year as achievement is tracked or graphed to identify increases or areas of need.

District leadership team members also review student achievement data and set goals based upon identified student needs. The four high school representatives on the district leadership team join four additional high school teachers who together serve as the high school leadership team to set building goals that connect to and support district goals. Through their work, they guide the focus of building level professional development.

Work with student achievement data also showed a need to implement programs that would assist students to improve reading and math skills. Seven years ago, a data review by our high school leadership team showed that an increasing number of students were non-proficient as documented through their ITEDs reading comprehension scores. Steps were then taken to implement a multi-year reading intervention program designed to address the needs of identified students.

As data reviews showed the need to address weak and/or declining math skills, teachers explored ways to make adjustments, including the implementation of a new math program for students who needed to strengthen and build their math skills. Over a four-year period the new program was implemented and has shown solid improvement in student achievement.

## **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

When the ITEDs results are received each year, teachers review them individually and in curricular and grade level teams. It is common for teachers to discuss student achievement data across subject areas and grade levels as they identify areas of need, celebrate accomplishments, and plan future learning activities.

Achievement data is typically shared with students on an individual basis in English, reading, math, and science classes by teachers as they work with students to set learning goals. It is also common for students to talk with our guidance counselor and registrar as they complete four-year plans and select classes for the upcoming school year. Overall student data as it relates to classes, is shared and celebrated in class meetings by the building principal and guidance counselor.

Parents receive information related to student assessment data at conferences with teachers in the fall and spring and at the beginning of the year open house. ITEDs assessment results are shared at spring parent-teacher conferences so parents can talk with the guidance counselor, registrar, principal, and/or individual teachers about the results and their impact on current classes and future plans – for high school or college. Parents also have access to student achievement information on a constant basis through our administrative software program. We know through usage logs and survey feedback, that parents appreciate this avenue to view data. Midterm reports are also available for students and parents and provide information at benchmark times during the school year.

Each year, board of education members learn about student achievement data through presentations by the district curriculum facilitator and teachers as they present information about the use of data in

curriculum work, selection and implementation of new programs, etc. Our school district is also involved in the Lighthouse Study, facilitated by the Iowa Association of School Boards. In this project, BOE members work with members of the district leadership team to study student achievement data and identify the ways in which board members can support teachers and principals as they identify needs for professional development, new programming or materials to challenge students or to provide needed interventions.

Community members learn of student achievement results through our local media outlets; i.e. two radio stations, newspaper, on-line news source and our district website, where patrons can review achievement data for the entire district. Presentations are also made at community service groups to share this information.

#### **4. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Throughout the past five years, we have shared successful strategies with fellow educators that have made a positive impact when working to improve student achievement. We have also been open about lessons learned and how and when we made adjustments.

Following the implementation of our reading intervention program, we were able to document considerable success the first year. This success continued and as area principals, teachers, and superintendents talked about their need to improve students' reading skills, word spread that Decorah had a program that worked, as documented through our student achievement scores. Before long, teachers and principals from area schools contacted us to visit, observe our programs, examine materials, and talk with us about the ins and outs of the implementation process, staffing and funding required, etc. During the past five years, ten different schools have visited DHS and then implemented reading intervention programs like or similar to ours.

The same results occurred following the implementation of the cognitive tutor math program designed to help students build their math skills. As word spread, we were contacted by area schools to visit and observe our math teachers as they worked in the classroom with our students. The visitors also talked with us about our program implementation process – the ins and outs, success stories and lessons learned. Two of our math teachers have presented at state conferences about the cognitive tutor program, the use of interactive white boards in the math classroom, and their impact on student achievement.

Members of our 9<sup>th</sup> grade team have shared information with area educators about our 9<sup>th</sup> grade project that has been successful with regard to the smooth transition for students from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade, improved student achievement, and successful advancement of our students as they complete high school course work and move on to post-secondary work.

Plans are currently underway to complete a research project that will allow us to gather data related to the use of e-Readers with students who struggle to read. A second research project will be conducted with students who completed their high school course work through the Viking Academy, an alternative high school avenue and their parents to learn more about their success in this setting. The results of these research projects will be compiled into papers for possible submission to professional journals and for presentations at state and national conferences.

## 1. Curriculum:

DHS teachers have outlined a rigorous curriculum that challenges students through work in real-world situations. Active classrooms, where learning is fun, allow one to observe inquiry-based learning activities and differentiated instruction practices in classrooms. Driven by data, teachers work in curricular teams to review and adjust curriculum to meet student needs. Balancing the implementation of learning activities that build important skills and challenge students to reach beyond basic learning goals requires careful thought and reflection. This thought and reflection involves teachers from all levels as the needs of the whole child are addressed and gaps and overlaps are addressed. As teachers work to develop meaningful learning activities, it is a priority to establish and communicate effective, clear learning goals. As learning goals are established, teachers document progress, and share with students, parents, and other teachers. Celebrations of success are important steps in the learning process.

The English curriculum challenges students to develop skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and listening. Reading and writing intervention classes assist students who need assistance in developing these skills. Students are required to successfully complete four years of English through a selection of rigorous courses.

DHS students build strong skills through mathematical problem solving as they work in groups and use inter-active technology on a regular basis. Students complete three years of math through course work that includes pre –algebra, algebra, geometry, advanced algebra, consumer math, AP Stats, pre-calculus, and AP Calculus.

The science curriculum challenges students through inquiry-based learning activities. Students conduct research related to physics, chemistry, astronomy, and biology and environmental science classes allow students to study the inter-relationships of human society with the environment and the impact on the earth. School gardening experiences connect high school students with elementary and middle school students to develop sustainable food practices. Students are required to successfully complete three years of science.

The social studies curriculum provides opportunities for students to become informed and participating members of a democratic society. While completing the three-year requirement, students study world history and geography. AP US history and human geography challenge students to think at an in-depth level. Two college credit classes, American national government and macroeconomics allow students to study the fundamental institutions and practices of government and the economic forces at work in our global society.

Annually, 45% of DHS students enroll in Spanish classes. Four years of study allow students to learn the language through a focus on conversation and culture and communicate with students in a Spanish-speaking country via the Internet.

In third and fourth year classes, students develop writing and listening skills. One teacher, a native speaker from Bolivia, brings real-life experiences to the classroom when speaking and talking of life in a Spanish speaking country. Additional options for DHS students to study foreign languages are available at Luther College, where Norwegian, Russian, Greek, Latin, and French are favorite selections.

The visual arts curriculum outlines a year-long comprehensive class focusing on two and three-dimensional art forms. Students build upon this foundation through a variety of semester courses: pottery, fibers, contemporary art, and painting. Students gain hands-on experience in computer graphics through an introductory class and a companion class – digital painting.

All performing arts classes include classroom lectures, music listening and analysis, the study of music fundamentals, history and appreciation.

The instrumental music curriculum outlines two entities: curricular classroom performance lab settings - marching band, concert band, and private lessons; co-curricular activities – jazz and pep band, solo ensemble experiences, and music festivals.

The orchestra curriculum outlines two entities: classroom performance lab settings, string orchestra, full orchestra, and private lessons; co-curricular activities-chamber strings, community performances.

The vocal music curriculum outlines three chorus classes, including 9<sup>th</sup> grade chorus for freshmen, a non-audition choir and an audition choir. All classes include community performances and private lessons.

Students participate in physical education classes that meet every other day throughout their four-year experience. Students explore ways to maintain a lifetime commitment to wellness. An interdisciplinary physical education class is a cross-curricular option that connects marching band students with a physical education instructor as they complete a unique array of physical education activities.

All students complete a one semester comprehensive class, including the study of nutrition, stress management, risk-taking behaviors, mental health issues, OTC and prescription drugs, and topics related sexual health. Students receive training in CPR.

A second health class focuses on health related careers, during which students shadow a health care professional. In the health and life management class, students build upon previous topics in the comprehensive health class and plan and host a health fair for students. Foods classes set the stage to study healthy food preparation and eating habits, and safe consumer practices. Students explore foods from various regions of the United States the world.

## **2. Reading/English:**

The Decorah High School English curriculum challenges students to develop skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and listening. Students, grades 9 - 12 are required to successfully complete four years of English through a selection of rigorous course options that appeal to different student interests.

Ninth grade students read a variety of literature selections, write formal essays, and are challenged through a cross-curricular inquiry-based research project that focuses on a central question driven by real-world, unpredictable situations. Each student presents the results of his or her research to faculty and members of the student body at the conclusion of the year through a multi-media presentation.

Students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade English build upon these skills through the continued study of literature and expand their work to include autobiographical forms. Each student writes his or her autobiography and includes personal narratives, poetry, and a number of reflective pieces. Included in the autobiography is a reflective piece related to the central question that served as the focus of their research in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Eleventh grade students complete an in-depth study of American literature and compose personal and analytical responses related to these literature selections. Students' writing skills are expanded and enhanced through the study of academic papers. Each student writes a research paper, focusing on organization, format, mechanics, vocabulary practice, and persuasive writing.

A variety of semester electives are available. Options include literature, speaking, and writing based courses. On-site and on-line college credit classes, and classes at a private-liberal arts college located in our community offer enrichment opportunities for students who are ready for additional challenges. An

intensive writing class for students who need assistance in the further development of their writing skills is a key factor in helping prepare students for post-secondary work.

Decorah teachers believe being able to read efficiently and accurately is one of the most important keys to the success of any student. Students who are non-proficient as documented on the ITEDs are guided into a series of reading intervention classes as determined through additional testing. Reading classes are designed to improve decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills.

Students who need special assistance are guided into co-taught classes in which an English teacher teams with a special education teacher to develop and facilitate learning activities and offer options for modifications that help learners gain skills in reading, speaking, listening, and written expression.

### **3. Mathematics:**

The Decorah High School math curriculum is designed to not only challenge students but also to help those young men and women in need of special assistance develop their math skills. Students are guided into classes based up assessment data; i.e. ITEDs, the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) assessment, and teacher recommendation. All students are required to successfully complete three years of math while in high school. Math teachers focus on problem-solving situations that are relevant and challenge students to determine solutions to real-life problems. The use of group work and interactive technology creates a learning environment that is enjoyable and comfortable for both students and teachers.

Ninth grade students are guided into math classes that allow them to build upon the skills they bring to the table as they transition to the high school setting. Because 25 eighth grade students annually take geometry in the high school setting, these same students are ready to enroll in advanced algebra and complete their progression in the math sequence at the high school from this point. These students receive high school credit for their work.

The cognitive tutor math program helps students through hands-on, interactive learning activities develop and strengthen their math skills. Bridge to algebra, cognitive tutor algebra, and cognitive tutor geometry complete a three-year sequence designed to prepare students for advanced algebra, should they so choose. This math program allows all students to graduate with algebra and we are now working to have all students graduate with geometry.

Students with strong math skills compete a course progression that begins with algebra, followed by geometry and advanced algebra. Students who desire to continue their study of math can select from the following classes: AP stats, pre-calculus, consumer math, business and finance, and AP calculus/physics.

Students who enroll in AP calculus/physics complete their course work in a team taught setting as the calculus instructor teams with the physics instructor in this cross-curricular approach. Inquiry-based learning activities challenge students as they conduct related research in a variety of lab settings.

Students who need special assistance are guided into co-taught classes in which a math teacher teams with a special education teacher to develop and facilitate learning activities and offer options for modifications that help learners gain a variety of math skills.

### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

The DHS science curriculum centers on inquiry based learning activities and challenges students to think at in-depth levels in physical science, biology, chemistry, physics, environmental topics, and botany. Students in grade 9 – 12 are required to successfully complete three years of science through a selection of rigorous classes that are popular with students.

Ninth grade students complete a study of physical science through inquiry-based learning activities driven by a central question. This cross-curricular approach challenges students to conduct research in real-

world, unpredictable situations and work in the lab setting to provide additional hands-on experiences. Each student presents the results of his or her research to faculty and members of the student body at the conclusion of the year through a multi-media presentation.

Sophomores complete a year-long biology course that centers on the study of life. The study of cells and the balance of the environment are enhanced by outdoor experiences and laboratory investigations that provide students the necessary information to make decisions concerning their past, present, and future role in the web of life.

A variety of electives allow students to select classes that support their goals for further study in high school and in the post-secondary arena. Botany, electricity, and principles of technology provide a variety of hands-on learning activities that provide students with real-life experiences. Students who enroll in physics complete their course work in a team taught setting as the physics instructor teams with the calculus instructor in this cross-curricular approach. Inquiry-based learning activities challenge students as they conduct related research in a variety of lab settings.

Chemistry challenges students to consider atomic theories, global concerns, and work in lab situations to gain an understanding of chemical interactions, reactions, and concepts. Advanced biology is designed as a tool to prepare for a career in a health related profession and covers a wide range of topics including genetic engineering, physiology, and cell biology.

Environmental studies classes provide the opportunity for students to learn about the inter-relationships of human society with the environment and their impact on our world. The school recycling program is an important part of this class and the school garden project provides the opportunity for high school students to work with elementary and middle school students to plant and maintain the school garden, while learning about sustainable food practices.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

DHS teachers pride themselves in their innovative instructional methods in which students are challenged through a variety of learning activities. They consistently seek ways to improve their skills and to learn new ways to challenge gifted and talented students and to assist those who need skill development. Professional development opportunities have assisted in their skill development and increasing methods to challenge and assist students.

Teachers use a variety of approaches to make learning come alive. Differentiated instruction practices can be seen in nearly every classroom as teachers seek ways to meet the multiple needs of learners. This allows students with different interests to demonstrate their knowledge and mastery of skills in different ways through meaningful and relevant projects. Student-centered classrooms allow students to explore and learn through cooperative learning activities in which students examine and explore information and the teacher serves as the facilitator of learning, rather than the dispenser of information.

Inquiry-based learning activities drive the instruction for 9th grade students as they complete a research project that allows them to gather related data in their core classes. This cross-curricular approach challenges students to conduct research in real-world, unpredictable situations and work in the lab setting to provide additional hands-on experiences. Each student presents the results of his or her research to faculty and members of the student body at the conclusion of the year through a multi-media presentation. Our teachers are currently working with students to have them continue the research of their central question in each of their upcoming years in high school, with the goal to present a culminating, capstone project in their senior year.

Career-Technical teachers team with math teachers to work collaboratively as they coordinate similar learning activities, use common language to help students gain a stronger understanding of the skills they are working to master. Students have made significant gains through this instructional practice and the

teachers express positive feedback with regard to gaining a better understanding of different ways to create and facilitate learning activities.

Teachers who work cooperatively in a co-taught setting in which a general education teacher teams with a special education teacher have provided a nice avenue for each teacher to gain skills related to content area knowledge and ways to modify learning activities for the needs of special learners.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Decorah High School's professional development plan is based upon a continuum of opportunities that support teachers as they create a rigorous curriculum that challenges students through work in real-world situations. Driven by student achievement data, this multi-pronged approach guides professional development work at the district, building, and individual levels.

Each year, district leadership team members review student achievement data and set goals based upon identified student needs. The four high school representatives on the district leadership team join four additional high school teachers who together serve as the high school building leadership team to set building goals that connect to and support district goals. Through their work, they guide the focus of building level professional development. Work is also done to ensure individual teachers have the opportunity to attend conferences, workshops, and/or be a part of study groups to expand and refine their skills. All individual work directly connects to and supports district and building goals. Professional Development is available for all para professionals through our area education agency to help them develop and refine skills that support teachers and students.

Through a multi-year process, professional development work at the district and building levels involves all teachers as they work in curricular teams to review, adjust, and align department curriculums. This work identified the need to complete training related to differentiated instruction, inquiry-based learning, and the development of rigorous assessments that guide instruction. Teachers also made decisions to implement programs designed to assist students to improve math and reading skills. A comprehensive 9th grade program was launched to ensure student success throughout high school. These program changes have been in place for five years and resulted in improved student achievement as documented in ITEDs scores. Multi-year data indicates that 75% of the students who complete a year of reading intervention move from no-proficient to proficient. The math interventions make it possible for all students to complete algebra in high school and we are working toward having all students complete geometry.

As gaps and overlaps in our curriculum were identified, district leadership team members recommended a district-wide focus, on curriculum mapping that will allow teachers to examine their curriculum both horizontally over a student's K – 12 experience. This multi-year process is guided by a national consultant and curriculum software experts and will ensure an enacted curriculum that is rigorous and viable for all.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The students, faculty, and staff are served by a principal and an assistant principal/activities director. Both the principal and assistant/principal work cooperatively to create an environment in which students feel welcome, safe, and know that the adults with whom they work, respect them and believe that their contributions are valued. The building principal is responsible for the overall operations of the high school and focuses her efforts on curriculum and instruction and student achievement. The assistant principal/activities director manages student discipline and the activities program.

The high school principal believes that all students can learn and communicates this message to both students and teachers. This is evidenced as students are held to high expectations and accountable for their actions. She believes that students should be encouraged, supported, and challenged each and every day so they have the ability to accomplish goals that are truly reflective of their abilities.

Building leadership team members meet with the principal on a quarterly basis to review student achievement data, discuss concerns, develop possible solutions to identified problems, and celebrate accomplishments. Coffee with the Principal allows the principal to meet with curricular or grade level teams on a quarterly basis in small group settings to discuss student achievement, current information related to policies and procedures, and to gather feedback with regard to faculty needs and goals. This helps build relationships, provides the opportunity discuss a variety of topics and reduce misinformation. Weekly emails with important information help keep everyone up to date with the latest news.

Collaborative grant writing with teachers has assisted with the acquisition of funds to carry out innovative projects and acquire equipment and supplies that are not always available due to limited funds.

Celebrations in which both students and faculty and staff members are able to feel good about accomplishments and congratulate each other provide an excellent way to build positive relationships – both with are essential to a safe, comfortable environment for all.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: 11 Test: Iowa Test of Educational Development  
Edition/Publication Year: 2003 Publisher: University of Iowa - Riverside Publishing

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent Proficient	91	94	88	93	93
High Percent	34	41	33	40	35
Number of students tested	135	127	131	117	163
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	2	2	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	1
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent Proficient	78	100	100	64	100
High Percent	28	23	6	21	20
Number of students tested	18	13	16	14	20
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Percent Proficient	10		64	96	82
High Percent	0			41	
Number of students tested	10		14	11	22
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

111A4

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading                      Grade: 11 Test: Iowa Test of Educational Development  
Edition/Publication Year: 2003 Publisher: University of Iowa - Riverside Publishing

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent Proficient	92	86	88	87	87
High Percent	31	31	26	26	22
Number of students tested	135	128	131	117	163
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	2	2	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	1
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent Proficient	89	100	69	71	85
High Percent	22	39		7	10
Number of students tested	18	13	16	14	20
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Percent Proficient	70		71	27	64
High Percent					5
Number of students tested	10		14	11	22
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

111A4

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent Proficient	91	94	88	93	93
High Percent	34	41	33	40	35
Number of students tested	135	127	131	117	163
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	2	2	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	1
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent Proficient	78	100	100	64	100
High Percent	28	32	6	21	20
Number of students tested	18	13	16	14	20
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Percent Proficient	10		64	96	82
High Percent				41	
Number of students tested	10		14	11	22
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

111A4

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Percent Proficient	92	86	88	87	87
High Percent	31	31	26	26	22
Number of students tested	135	128	131	117	163
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	2	2	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	1
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Percent Proficient	89	100	69	71	85
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<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Percent Proficient	70		71	27	64
High Percent					
Number of students tested	10		14	11	22
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Percent Proficient					
High Percent					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

111A4