

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12MO9

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 2011-2012 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 foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
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

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 (per district designation): 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 1 High schools
 0 K-12 schools
 3 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 10729

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 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	31	39	70
3	0	0	0		10	31	32	63
4	0	0	0		11	48	33	81
5	0	0	0		12	31	38	69
Total in Applying School:								283

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
6 % Asian
21 % Black or African American
5 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
67 % 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 2010-2011 school year: 7%

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, 2010 until the end of the school year.	8
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	11
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	19
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	264
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.07
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	7

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 2%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 5

Number of non-English languages represented: 3

Specify non-English languages:

Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese.

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 37%

Total number of students who qualify: 100

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: 20%

Total number of students served: 56

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>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>12</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>34</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</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>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>25</u>	<u>12</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:

13:1

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

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	89%	98%	97%	95%	98%

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

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>58</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>31%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>43%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>4%</u>
Military service	<u>1%</u>
Other	<u>21%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

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Everyone connected with Valley Park High School (VPHS) is very proud and excited that the high school has been nominated for the Blue Ribbon Schools Award. The school district, which is in its 129th year, is a small but progressive district located in southwest St. Louis County. The district serves a 4.6 square mile area consisting of the City of Valley Park, the Village of Twin Oaks, and some unincorporated areas of St. Louis County.

We are flattered to be considered for Blue Ribbon School status, and most importantly, we feel deserving of this recognition. Because of the joint effort of our students, faculty, principal, superintendent, and the Board of Education, we have made tremendous strides in the past several years.

Our district's enrollment is 1,011 students, K-12, with 283 students in the high school. The high school student population represents a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds: 37 percent of students receive free or reduced meals. Our enrollment is also diverse ethnically: 67 percent white non-Hispanic, 21 percent African-American, 5 percent Hispanic and 7 percent of other ethnic backgrounds. Of our student population, 20 percent receive special education services, while two percent qualify for gifted or enrichment programs.

Valley Park is part of the Voluntary Inter-district Choice Corporation Program (VICC) in which St. Louis City students are bussed into county schools. Thirteen percent of students utilize the VICC program. We provide an after-school enrichment and tutoring program for city students called "I Choose Success." This program provides computer access and one-on-one help to those students who desire additional help with school work. Though the VICC program originated in a court-ordered, area-wide desegregation program, Valley Park has voluntarily chosen to continue participating. We are committed to the value of diversity and the obligation of service to area students outside our small district.

Over 50 percent of our students participate in after-school activities, with many involved in more than one activity. In general, our students are well behaved and enjoy being at school. Our students are concerned about each other and are willing to take the time to help one another. New teachers and new students often comment on the surprising mixes of student social groups. We rarely see cliques of students who exclude others or set themselves apart. In the last seven years, the number of students we send to SCOPE (South County Opportunity for the Purpose of Education), our county wide alternative school for behavioral problems, has steadily declined. In 2005-06, we had seven students; in 2006-07, we had five students; in 2007-08, we had three students; in 2008-09 we had one student; and for the past two years, there have been no referrals.

Approximately 74 percent of our students currently follow a college preparatory sequence of courses. That percentage has risen from the past average of about 60 percent. We have surpassed the state and national average ACT scores six out of the past seven years. From 1995-2005, we averaged one Bright Flight qualifier plus one other senior with a score of 28 or higher. Since 2006, we have averaged three Bright Flight qualifiers plus three other seniors with a score of 28 or higher. From 2000-2010, we did not have any National Merit qualifiers; however, in 2011 and 2012, we have three students qualifying.

The faculty displays a true sense of purpose and unity. We are fully committed to help our students further their education. We are constantly striving to strengthen both our classroom techniques and our relationships with our students. Many describe us as a very professional and caring staff who truly enjoy teaching at VPHS. Anyone walking through our building cannot miss the comfortable rapport among teachers who stand outside their rooms between classes, talking to each other and to students, and cannot miss the relaxed, positive atmosphere in the building.

The principal is constantly challenging the school to improve; but this is a two-way street. He seeks our input in solving school problems or tackling issues and is open to new ideas introduced by faculty members. When dealing with the students, he is both caring and consistent in his approach. At the same time, teachers feel confident about being supported and about the decisions he makes.

There are two other important factors that contribute to an enjoyable, effective working environment at VPHS. First, we are the beneficiaries of a top notch middle school that feeds our high school. Our middle school is nationally recognized as a National School of Character by the Character Education Partnership (CEP). The academic training the middle school students receive, and the values instilled in them before entering Valley Park High School, give us great students with which to work. Second, we receive a tremendous amount of support from the superintendent and the school board. There is a mutual feeling of respect and understanding between the faculty, the superintendent and the board. The pride and passion we all share about our school comes through actions, not merely talk. Our teachers are supported with instructional materials requested and innovations put forward. There is a confidence and a confluence among faculty, central and building administration, and the board members that we are “in this together.”

Our district has received the Distinction in Performance Award by the state of Missouri, with a perfect score for five consecutive years, from 2007 to 2011. Valley Park High School has been recognized nationally by U.S. News and World Report for the past three years and is designated a Missouri A+ school.

We are dedicated to providing a supportive, personalized environment in which students grow strong intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially today in preparation for tomorrow. We have come a long way in the past 10 years. We take great pride in all of our accomplishments. However, we are comfortably restless, wary of complacency, eager to tackle unsolved problems and to re-visit even successful programs. We will continue to strive to improve so that our students can reach a higher level of success than they ever imagined possible.

1. Assessment Results:

At Valley Park High School (VPHS), we hold ourselves and our students to a high standard of performance. We consistently examine internal and external data to assure that our students will be adequately prepared for college and careers once they graduate and leave our campus. Teachers are “data hungry” and anxious to know to what extent our students are meeting standards, both as a group and as individuals. Our most important external assessment of student performance is the state’s “Missouri Assessment Program” or MAP. In 2007 and 2008, mathematics and English language arts were assessed at grades 10 and 11 respectively. Science was assessed at grade 11.

Three years ago, as a part of the MAP, the state of Missouri began requiring challenging End of Course (EOC) assessments for high school students. Assessments are now directly aligned to standards tied to courses. Students complete the assessments at the conclusion of the associated course. The state offers eight EOC assessments with Algebra I, English II, Biology, and Government being required. Algebra II, Geometry, English I, and American History are voluntary assessments in which districts can choose to participate. Valley Park High School has consistently administered all eight assessments to utilize this data for continuous improvement of instruction and student performance. For all assessments, student performance is reported in four levels of proficiency: Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic.

Students scoring Advanced or Proficient are considered to have mastered the standards. While Valley Park High School examines group and individual data from all eight tests, only the Algebra I and English II EOC assessments are utilized to determine Adequate Yearly Progress status.

In both mathematics and English language arts, VPHS students have consistently outperformed the state average, and we annually exceed the state requirements of a graduation rate above 85% and at least 95% participation in the state assessments. Our expectation of continuous improvement requires us to reflect upon current instruction, make changes based on research/ best practices, and work as a cohesive team to improve our support of student learning. Positive data trends in student achievement reflect this effort.

For example, our English language arts AYP score was only 35% in 2007. Unhappy with these results, the English department made a collaborative effort to raise student performance. The next year, 2008, our percent of students demonstrating mastery grew to 55%. In 2009, student performance improved to 79%.

We saw a slight dip in achievement in 2010 with a 72% score. We theorized the decrease may have been partially due to the actual testing situation. That year, students completed the assessment on-line in the computer lab. Scheduling resulted in testing late in the day which may not have been conducive to the best performance of students. The team debriefed the situation and made adjustments the following year. In 2011, with focused instruction throughout the year, and a revised testing schedule, our students showed their best performance to date with 89% scoring proficient or advanced. In five years we increased our student achievement score in English language arts by an impressive 54%.

Our student achievement in mathematics also shows upward trending. In 2007, 58% of our students scored proficient or advanced on the state MAP test. Like our English department, our math department worked collaboratively and diligently to understand standards, analyze student work, and align instruction. By 2008, our score had grown to 69%. The 2008-2009 year saw a change of several staff within our math department. The process of rebuilding our team most likely caused a drop in student scores that year to 34%. During the 2009-2010 school year, with staffing issues resolved and the team back on target with collaborative planning and instruction, our student achievement scores rose to 72%. Our most recent scores in 2011 showed a continued increase to 80%. Over the past five years, our scores in mathematics have increased by 22%.

Our most recent 2011 data shows VPHS accountable for two subgroup scores as well as the scores of our total population of students. In both English language arts and mathematics, our white subgroup and our free and reduced lunch subgroup had a testing cell size of over 30. There is not an achievement gap of over 10 points between the subgroups and the total population scores. In English language arts, the white subgroup scored 92%, the free and reduced lunch subgroup scored 87% and the total population scored 89%. In mathematics, the white subgroup scored 81%, the free and reduced lunch subgroup scored 75%, and the total population scored 80%. Even though our black and IEP subgroups were small, positive gains over the past five years have been made in their scores. Our black subgroup scores grew from 21% to 77% in English language arts and from 21% to 66% in mathematics. Our IEP subgroups' scores grew from 0% to 75% in English language arts and from 10% to 50% in mathematics.

Many of the previously mentioned efforts have helped us make strides in increasing student achievement; however, probably the most significant factor is the ability of the staff to focus upon each and every student in the program, working as a united team to assure that each student is making significant progress to college and career readiness.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Valley Park High School (VPHS) teachers routinely review and analyze student assessment data as they strive to improve instruction and achievement. Because administration places a great importance on data, teachers are allowed time to consider results and have the assessment data drive curriculum and instruction. While we strongly consider Kuder Career Tests, EXPLORE and PLAN scores in raising student achievement, our two primary assessments are the state End Of Course (EOC) exams and the ACT results.

Our state test scores, or EOC's, are used by staff in student placement, course offerings, and curriculum design. VPHS staff reviews data to identify areas needing improvement. Then, staff members meet in grade level teams. They discuss individual students and also interpret where the data shows general areas of need. Also, vertical teams meet to streamline subjects and course sequencing. Teachers can then provide additional instruction to meet the needs of our students. One example of data driving instruction is our pull-out groups for math. Teachers identify specific gaps in learning for students, pull these students into defined tutoring sessions, and review concepts needed to reach the next level of achievement. Another example is our Students with After School Tutor (SWAT) program which focuses on after-school, one-on-one assistance. Using several areas of identification, but primarily EOC scores, students in need are identified and encouraged to attend subject-specific tutoring after school. Transportation is provided for these students.

At VPHS, ACT scores are strongly considered in forming a student's learning environment. Our goal at VPHS is for every student to graduate college-ready. We use ACT's college readiness benchmarks to help us measure our success. Recently, we have contracted with Cambridge Educational Services to provide two full-length practice tests for all our sophomores and juniors. We use the detailed results and error analysis to create lesson plans and teacher strategies designed to emphasize core skills to address areas of weakness. Since VPHS has concentrated so much energy on ACT assessment, our average ACT score has consistently exceeded the state and national averages.

In addition, we hold ourselves responsible for closing the achievement gap with such groups as free and reduced lunch and black subgroup students. By using data from EOC, ACT, and Benchmark exams, we created target-specific tutoring groups geared toward raising each student's achievement. One such group, "I Choose Success", provides free after-school tutoring, study skills, and assistance for St. Louis City students who attend VPHS through the voluntary transfer program (VICC). These students show a marked improvement in grades and attendance.

Using assessment data is crucial to our recent success. Our students clearly understand that all the assessments we provide are an important piece of their academic record.

Valley Park's staff is extremely proud of their school. Part of that pride carries the responsibility of informing our community about the tremendous achievements occurring in their district so that they, too, can be proud of their school. One of our top priorities is to maintain our high level of parental involvement. We believe that parental involvement is one of the most important factors in determining whether our students reach the goal of college readiness. VPHS uses every means available to assure that assessment results are easily and readily available to parents. We send home monthly newsletters recapping our achievements and informing parents of future opportunities. We re-design and update our school's website so parents can quickly and easily access information. VPHS provides training and time for teachers to communicate through websites, e-mail, and phone updates.

We also offer eight parent-teacher conference nights to welcome parents into our classrooms to meet teachers, discuss their child's progress, and encourage their support. We reward and show appreciation to our hard working students with picnics, Renaissance Club memberships, assemblies, Honor Roll recognition, and student appreciation days. Finally, we also include our assessment scores on our progress reports and our report cards.

While all of the above communication makes it easy for our students and staff to gain information on their assessments, our new Parent Portal (linked through our school's website) is the best way for parents to keep up with their child's complete academic record. Parents can actively monitor their child's daily grades and progress.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Valley Park High School (VPHS) believes that education should not be limited to our building. Teachers in each subject area meet routinely as vertical teams with teachers in the middle and elementary schools to discuss students' strengths and weaknesses, allowing us to better plan for the needs of our diverse student body. This effort and cross-curricular planning has resulted in recent years in several students who have completed our college preparatory classes achieving National Merit Scholar recognition.

Teachers and administrators are encouraged to attend education conferences and have, on several occasions, served as presenters. For instance, several history teachers work within the Teaching American History: Charters of Freedom Grant in which they join with other educators to study with historians and share lessons learned with educators abroad via uploaded lessons that they write and construct. In addition, our alternative school director serves on the executive committee of the Missouri Alternative Education Network and collaborates to plan the annual Missouri Alternative Education Conference. Our science teachers have presented at the Interface Math and Science Conference and at the National Science Teachers Association Convention. Our health teacher and students have presented our Character Fitness recognition to local administrators and teachers at the Character Plus conference and at two special seminars at the St. Louis Rams Russell Training Center. After attending a workshop or conference, teachers return to campus and share new ideas with vertical teams, departments, as well as the entire teaching staff.

Valley Park is proud to welcome visitors on a regular basis. Because we consistently achieve AYP, area high schools have invested time observing our teachers in order to improve their student achievement. Additionally, several of our faculty have met with teachers from other area schools to implement standards-based grading methods, an approach that we see as important as districts move away from antiquated assessment policies and forward to establishing authentic reflections of student achievement.

Finally, Valley Park High School is a preferred destination for student teachers of many area universities. It is common to see pre-service interns in a high percentage of classrooms. We feel there are few things more rewarding than having the opportunity to help train those who will work alongside us in the future.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

The Valley Park High School (VPHS) staff is extremely diligent about communicating with parents. The school year begins with an open house, the day before school starts. Parents have the opportunity to meet all of their children's teachers, the principal and the counselor. They can learn the expectations of each class for the coming school year and become familiar with all of the services provided by the counseling office. This is especially important because it gives parents a chance to put a name with a face, and it gives teachers an opportunity to explain ways for parents to be involved in their child's educational program.

Technology-based as well as traditional communication plays a large role in fostering student success. During the school year, all families have access to the Parent Portal. This computerized record-keeping system allows teachers to enter absences and most importantly, grades. Parents and students set up an account which allows them to view all student data in real time. Parents can see grades, and also see missing assignments. The high school teachers and counselor maintain their own websites which provide additional information about their courses, enrichment resources and counseling services. A growing number of teacher websites contain all assignments and resources or links to materials that a student needs to successfully complete the tasks.

Also, a quarterly newsletter to parents provides useful information about academic and extra-curricular activities. All high school staff classrooms are equipped with phones with voicemail and with laptops with web-based e-mail accessible from school or home in order to ensure and promote convenient venues of communication. Every six weeks, progress reports are mailed to parents. Each semester, parent-teacher conferences are held and report cards are mailed home.

Parents are informed about the standardized testing of their children during the year. The counseling office administers several standardized tests throughout the school year. The ACT is given twice per year to all sophomores and juniors. The PSAT, Explore and PLAN are also given. The results of all tests are mailed home, providing parents with valuable college entrance information. All results of Advanced Placement (AP) Tests and End Of Course (EOC's) exams are also sent home.

High school and local community members collaborate on several fundraising/scholarship events throughout the year to ensure post graduation higher education student success. Valleypalooza (a music festival), Casey Williamson Memorial Run/Walk, an annual teacher-funded scholarship, and several trivia nights raise money for student organizations and scholarships. Several local citizens and businesses also contribute to award high school scholarships.

Finally, we recognize that some students and some families need extra help. Student success is not only defined by G.P.A, but encompasses social, physical, mental/emotional well being. VPHS utilizes a variety of community resources to assist students and families needing additional support. These resources include free outsourced family counseling services, an on campus full time Youth in Need social worker, and income sensitive free dental services. We also team with our local food pantry, Circle of Concern, in helping families in our community. VPHS staff attend community Crisis Response Team meetings where local agencies come together to proactively address community concerns regarding mental health and economic issues, as well as, provide resource referrals.

1. Curriculum:

Valley Park High School (VPHS) offers a rigorous, diverse curriculum based on grade level expectations (GLE) and course level expectations (CLE) standards determined by the state of Missouri, ACT College Readiness Standards, and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as well as organizational standards for various disciplines.

The goal of the Communication Arts Department is to help our students become adept readers and effective writers and speakers equipped with successful literacy strategies. Two levels of instruction in each of the core English classes allow more advanced students to take College Preparatory English 9 and 10, or American Literature. Elective offerings include Advanced Communications, Advanced Language, Advanced Composition, Medieval and World Literature.

Math instruction is offered at every level enabling students to meet the requirements of state colleges and post-secondary educational endeavors. Courses range from a basic Algebra class for students who have demonstrated gaps in their mastery of basic math concepts and operations to AP Calculus. Other offerings include Algebra I and II, and College Algebra and Trigonometry which carries dual credit with Missouri Baptist University.

The science curriculum is designed using hands-on methodology, to teach the scientific method of inquiry, to teach the daily effects of science on our everyday lives, and to teach current trends and work-related science applications. College preparatory sections are offered in Biology, Physical Science, and Chemistry. Physics is offered as a one year course as well. Other science electives include Advanced Chemistry, Astronomy, and Forest and River Ecology. Human Anatomy and Physiology is intended for students interested in any medical field.

The Social Studies Department provides content covering the history of humanity and the systems of humankind. All 9th graders take World History and 10th graders take American History. College Preparatory American History and Advanced Placement American History offer two more tiers of analytical study of the history of this country. Other offerings include American Government, Law, World Geography, Psychology, Sociology and Cold War Era.

VPHS follows the Missouri recognized Business Career Education program. All students are urged to complete a career pathway which involves completing three units in a single Career Technical Education program. Each of these programs is articulated with a community college allowing students in this program to earn credits. Courses offered through our Business Department include Accounting, Computer Programming, and Business Communication.

The Fine Arts Department at Valley Park incorporates visual and performing arts in a well-rounded program. The Visual Art Department adheres to the Show-Me Standards provided by the state and offers a rich variety of studies in Art I-IV. The choral and instrumental music programs use the National Music Standards developed by the National Association of Music Education. The Art and Choral Music programs work in tandem to produce a musical each year. Music programs provide students with the opportunities to donate their time and talents to the community through concerts and performances at local events.

Health and physical education programs encourage positive personal health choices. Students use a wealth of technology to access information and produce health related materials, such as videos, presentations, and journals. The physical education and co-curricular sports programs include

golf, volleyball, cheerleading, soccer, basketball, baseball, softball and cross country. Both programs encourage students to assess their personal fitness level, and to strive for improvement.

Valley Park offers Spanish as its world language. The goal of the Spanish program is to produce students who are genuinely able to communicate in a major world language, making the language useful to them in settings outside of the classroom. We currently offer Spanish at two levels; and will offer dual credit Spanish III in 2013.

At-risk students have the opportunity to attend the Community School which provides tutorial web-based instruction. Along with courses required for graduation, job skills and workplace readiness are emphasized.

2. Reading/English:

The Communication Arts curriculum focuses on a study of literature and effective communication. The goal for our graduates is lifelong literacy. Marzano's thinking/learning strategies are utilized in all instruction.

Reading instruction strategies include guided reading, practice of listening skills, and silent sustained reading for independent practice. Guided reading and independent practice rely heavily upon key reading strategies (question, visualize, connect, infer, predict and conclude). Formative assessments focus on higher order thinking skills such as inference, prediction, drawing conclusions and evaluation.

The Reading and Writing Workshop is designed for students who read two or more grade levels below expectations and teaches students to be more independent readers. The English Language Learner's instructor teaches classes with special education teachers, and special education classes provide additional support for students with specific learning needs. After-school tutoring is required for students with a grade of D or F.

All classes require students to gather, process and construct ideas through written and oral expression and provides students an opportunity to use reflection to make connections and solve problems. Peer review and collaboration play an integral part of the learning process.

Public speaking gives students the opportunity to formally express what they have researched. The organizational skills developed in preparing a speech are helpful in all other disciplines as students learn to sift through information retaining only that which is important for the specific purpose of the speech. These same skills are transferred to writing essays, reports, study guides, and persuasive arguments in other classes. It is imperative that students learn through note-taking, listening tests, and by using technology to decipher and retain that information which is credible, relevant and persuasive.

Test preparation strategies applicable to Missouri's End of Course (EOC) exam, the ACT, and SAT are part of the curriculum. Vocabulary development is a key component, including teaching vocabulary roots to prepare for standardized testing.

College preparatory classes are available at all grade levels. Vertical teaming of ACT preparation and AP preparation are integrated into the curriculum, and ACT practice test data for sophomores and juniors is used to guide instruction. Advanced Language and Advanced Composition help increase students' college readiness. Our Advanced Placement Senior English course challenges the top students.

Elective courses (Creative Writing, Medieval Literature, World Literature, Film Study, Humor in Literature, and Mythology and Folklore) offer students an opportunity to study a specific area and offer teachers another opportunity to reinforce Language Arts curriculum.

3. Mathematics:

The Mathematics Department at Valley Park High School (VPHS) implements a curriculum that is aligned with the Course-Level Expectations (CLEs) developed by Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The teachers are currently transitioning from a curriculum aligned with Missouri's CLEs to alignment with the new Common Core State Standards. We focus classroom instruction on "best practices" guided primarily by assessment-for-learning strategies and Marzano's research on effective instructional practices, all leading towards Standards Based Grading.

The objectives that correlate with the curriculum are carried out through a variety of instructional methods including direct instruction, cooperative learning strategies, and investigative lessons that encourage discovery and exploration of concepts. All classrooms are equipped with state-of-the-art technology including SMART Boards, a student interactive response system, Texas Instrument graphing calculators, and laptops for student use. Our mathematics teachers assess students' learning needs and use their own teaching strengths to provide optimal learning opportunities.

The course offerings at Valley Park High School follow a traditional mathematics track that spans to meet the needs of both high performing and struggling students. For the higher achieving math students, we offer a track that is fast paced, rigorous, and develops a deeper understanding of the material while reaching a higher level of mathematics. This path includes honors classes consisting of College Preparatory Geometry and Algebra II, dual credit College Algebra, Trigonometry and AP Calculus. We also provide formal ACT review courses throughout the year to improve the scores of these college-bound students.

For our struggling math students, we offer a pace that meets their learning needs while still setting high expectations, and maintaining the belief that all students can learn and be successful mathematically. Our small class sizes along with the multiple sections offer an exceptional support for these students. The courses offered for these students include Algebra I, Geometry, Intermediate Algebra, and Algebra II. In addition to our course offerings, our math teachers tutor students before and after school, as well as during our academic advisory period. We also offer Students with After School Tutor (SWAT) which is available for any student who is seeking additional assistance, but is required for students who are not meeting set goals.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

In Valley Park's Social Studies Department, teachers develop learning targets based on Missouri's Common Core State Standards and the National Council for Social Studies guidelines. To achieve these targets and to help students reach their full potential in accordance with our mission, teachers strive to teach beyond the textbook and become true experts in their content.

Teachers encourage students to look deeper than basic facts by bringing life to historical events. We limit our use of textbooks by bringing in primary sources, document-based questions, Supreme Court cases and other outside sources. We use these to help students appreciate, dissect and evaluate the trends throughout history and show how they have shaped the modern world. For example, to look past the facts and appreciate different points of view, our American and World History classes require students to analyze the past from multiple perspectives by weaving documents into their learning. In American Government, students take roles in mock trials, often playing the parts of attorneys, witnesses and justices. This deeper look into our subjects stimulates an interest and passion for learning that students carry with them far beyond the classroom.

Social Studies teachers in Valley Park also pride themselves on being content experts. Our teachers are dedicated to developing content knowledge and instructional methods by seeking advanced degrees and professional development opportunities. Each teacher has the opportunity to teach the courses about which he or she is most passionate. This passion quickly spreads to students, creating an inspiring

curiosity and motivation to learn more. Our required classes build a foundation with World History. This leads into American History and concludes with a year-long examination of the United States Government. In addition to our required classes, Valley Park High School offers a variety of elective courses across the Social Studies curriculum. These include AP American History, AP Government, Sociology, Law, Psychology, Geography and Cold War Era.

Students in Valley Park are expected to achieve at high levels. The unique advantage of a small school allows us to provide differentiated instruction and develop stronger relationships with students. We use these relationships to push students not only to reach our high expectations, but also to provide numerous supports when they struggle. We never give up on students or allow them to choose anything but success. Ultimately, the Valley Park Social Studies Department creates a comprehensive program providing students with skills and knowledge enabling them to exceed their own expectations and become engaged, successful citizens.

5. Instructional Methods:

Valley Park seeks to treat every student as a prized individual. Our instructional methods are designed to address the specific needs of each individual. By focusing on techniques such as visual aids, graphic organizers, peer groupings, extra assistance during academic advisory, and subject-specific pullout groups, teachers can seize every possible moment to enrich a student's learning experience and ensure success for any level of student. Also, students are offered or required to take advantage of instructional opportunities beyond the regular school day. After-school tutoring, teacher websites that offer extra help or guidance, screenshots of a day's lesson, and/or example problems or models demonstrated through video -- these parameters assist students in accessing extra instruction to help reinforce and reiterate concepts and skills students need.

In addition, programs such as "I Choose Success" and Students with After School Tutoring (SWAT) provide opportunities for enrichment and content mastery. Our small school allows disciplines to increase student exposure to material by combining curriculum goals in multiple content areas. Collaborations between teachers challenge gifted students, extends the vocabulary and support for ELL students and provides additional practice and support for struggling students.

As multi-faceted learners, students encounter a wide variety of instructional techniques from laboratory experiments and kinesthetic activities to video logs and peer teaching, in addition to the traditional instruction in academic disciplines. Use of formative assessments such as diagnostic quizzes, PollEverywhere.com, Google forms and surveys, teacher/student conferences and back-channel chats permit teachers to assess student progress. These formative assessments and others help teachers and students themselves identify weaknesses or misunderstandings. Such assessments also help teachers to personalize lessons to reach each student.

By teachers approaching the learning process as a joint effort, students are intimately involved in the entire process, from the creation of rubrics for assignments designed from viewing model/sample work to utilizing pre-tests to create student-specific assessments. Many teachers at Valley Park are involved in a standards based grading pilot, requiring participating teachers to establish high standards of expectation aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and state course level expectations (CLE) for all students to meet. Through these efforts, students are encouraged to obtain mastery in a topic or concept rather than settling for partial comprehension or a lower score.

6. Professional Development:

Professional development at Valley Park High School (VPHS) is based on the premise that each child can learn, progress and thrive. The channel to achieve that goal -- and the school's core responsibility -- is exemplary teaching. Scheduled yearly professional development includes four full days and three half days dedicated to improving teacher efficacy through effective and innovative instruction, all directed at

improving student learning and academic performance. We work to make this on-going professional development an obsession of our teachers and staff. A team of teachers, district, and administrative leaders plan the course that professional development will take based on data analysis. This includes ACT scores, Missouri End-of-Course Exam data, student success in regular and advanced courses, curriculum needs, and cultural and behavioral needs which affect student success.

- Collaboration is evident through the variety of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) that co-exist within our school.
- Curricular based vertical teams K-12 meet regularly to ensure that curriculum is focused, sequential, and succinct, and uses common language.
- Grade level teams meet monthly and are cross-curricular focusing on identifying students who are not exhibiting success.
- In order to reach all students, a group of instructional leaders are facilitating a PLC focusing on implementing formative assessments based on the work of Anne Davies.
- Book studies are being led on the work of Ken O’Conner and other experts in standards-based grading. As a natural result of this study, grading and reporting methods will be evaluated and adjusted in the coming years.
- Differentiated instructional strategies are being explored through book studies focusing on Marzano’s teaching methods.
- The faculty has received training in ACT preparation, teen suicide signs, and personal health and wellness.
- All staff members are revising curriculum to support the Common Core State Standards and state Course Level Expectations, and meet on the half-days to support each other in that endeavor.

This year-round focus on professional development is based on a continuum of opportunities that supports teachers as they work to create a rigorous curriculum. To keep current on new and innovative technology and teaching methodologies, teachers are encouraged to participate in their own professional development as it relates to their field by attending state conferences and workshops.

Individual teacher interests and needs are met through the availability of off-site seminars, webinars and educational coursework. On-site summer workshops are available to assist teachers with integrating technology into teaching and learning based on their own personal knowledge and skill level. New teachers are immersed in learning current teaching methods and technology integration; and are paired with master-teacher mentors for two years.

7. School Leadership:

Valley Park’s instructional leadership has been modeled after the recommendations of some of the most research-tested experts in the field, incorporating their successful practices and findings for school achievement and student academic success. The work of experts such as Spencer Kagan, Larry Bell, Doug Reeves, Rick Stiggins, Robert Marzano and Anne Davies have been instrumental in the foundation of the vision for improving student achievement.

The leadership at Valley Park has aligned its curriculum and resources focusing on improving student achievement by incorporating key strategies used by Spencer Kagan on cooperative learning, which holds learners responsible for not only learning what is taught, but helping teammates learn.

Our assessments incorporate Larry Bell's techniques in using powerful words to increase standardized test scores and closing the achievement gap eliminating the intimidation and confusion students often find when answering a question incorrectly, when they know the answer.

We follow Doug Reeves' researched grading practices in our assessments by emphasizing that when student failure decreases, student behavior improves, faculty morale is better, resources allocated to remedial courses and course repetition is reduced, and resources invested in electives and advanced courses increase.

Rick Stiggins has led us to believe that for a school to maximize student achievement in the classroom, its teachers must focus on assessments for learning, which has become one of our keys to motivation and achievement in our assessments. The Valley Park staff focuses on objectives, learning outcomes, and testing practices that maximize student achievement.

We have studied and embedded Robert Marzano's 10 research-based strategies for improving classroom instruction into our teachers' planning and teaching designs.

Anne Davies has led us to involve students in the assessment process. We solicit student input for specific and descriptive feedback to be used during the learning practices and assessments. This process and practice has been adopted and implemented by a growing majority of teachers in helping students assess their way to success.

Overall, we have studied and selected these experts' approaches and contributions carefully to fit with our own priorities. We lead from and through our entire staff, with significant direction coming from our district's director of instruction and from the high school principal, but also drawing from staff-initiated inquiry as well. We expect, rely on, and value teachers as leaders.

Together, we have all helped create the fabric of individual and team leadership that sets the tone for what happens from the moment the first bell rings. Our hope and our goal is to provide the opportunity for the Valley Park High School faculty to make use of policies, programs, resources, and relationships that empower student achievement and success while creating an atmosphere in which all students will learn.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 10 Test: MAP/EOC

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2008/2009-2011 Publisher: McGraw Hill/Riverside

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	89	72	79	55	35
Advanced	34	23	20	31	15
Number of students tested	74	65	53	58	52
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	87	50	74	27	28
Advanced	13	7	7	13	4
Number of students tested	31	24	27	15	25
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	77	33	65	31	21
Advanced	8	6	11	15	7
Number of students tested	13	15	17	13	14
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	5	2	1	3	1
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	75	64	42		0
Advanced	8	9	0		0
Number of students tested	12	11	12	9	15
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	1				1
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12MO9

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 9 Test: MAP/EOC

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2008/2009-2011 Publisher: McGraw Hill/Riverside

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	80	72	34	69	58
Advanced	34	25	0	23	19
Number of students tested	77	67	41	49	62
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	75	63	29	53	33
Advanced	24	20	0	5	6
Number of students tested	36	27	17	19	18
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	67	57	20	42	21
Advanced	13	13	0	0	0
Number of students tested	15	14	10	12	14
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	4	2	1		2
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced		47		37	10
Advanced		0		10	0
Number of students tested	8	15	5	19	10
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested		1		1	1
6.					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12MO9

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	80	72	34	69	58
Advanced	34	25	0	23	19
Number of students tested	77	67	41	49	62
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	75	63	29	53	33
Advanced	24	20	0	5	6
Number of students tested	36	27	17	19	18
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	67	57	20	42	21
Advanced	13	13	0	0	0
Number of students tested	15	14	10	12	14
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	4	2	1	0	2
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced		47		37	10
Advanced		0		10	0
Number of students tested	8	15	5	19	10
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	1	0	1	1
6.					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12MO9

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient/Advanced	89	72	79	55	35
Advanced	34	23	20	31	15
Number of students tested	74	65	53	58	52
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient/Advanced	87	50	74	27	28
Advanced	13	7	7	13	4
Number of students tested	31	24	27	15	25
2. African American Students					
Proficient/Advanced	77	33	65	31	21
Advanced	8	6	11	15	7
Number of students tested	13	15	17	13	14
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	5	2	1	3	1
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient/Advanced	75	64	42		0
Advanced	8	9	0		0
Number of students tested	12	11	12	9	15
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	0	0	0	1
6.					
Proficient/Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12MO9