



Valley Heights News & Notes

November 2010

www.valleyheights.org

Blue Rapids/Waterville, Kansas

Striving to Improve

John Bergkamp | Superintendent

A great deal of attention has recently been focused on public schools at the national level. The perception is that the majority of them are failing miserably. News reports and even movies are portraying the worst aspects of our nation's public schools. The fact of the matter is that as with all things, there are good and bad. There are bad schools as well as good schools.

The data shows that for the most part Valley Heights schools fall in the good category and that we provide a quality education for our children. This is evidenced with the Standard of Excellence awards earned on 12 state assessments this year. This includes building wide Standards of Excellence in Math and Reading at both the elementary and secondary levels. In addition, our most recent set of ACT scores average 23.8 as opposed to the state average of 22. There are certainly things on which we can focus to improve. One of those areas is our secondary level math program. For the past six years, we have been implementing the Core Math program. Core Math utilizes a broad approach to high school math. This approach attempts to incorporate a wider focus on the core math areas each year as opposed to stand alone specific traditional courses like Algebra I, II, and Geometry and so on. The theory here is that students receive instruction in all core areas every year at a deeper level instead of just a one-time attempt at a specific course. The early research aligned this approach with the method used by other countries that were achieving high levels of success in Math. The criticism of the traditional American approach to math has been a "mile wide but an inch deep" curriculum. Core Math was developed to address this weakness. Over the recent years, the data does not support this approach as being as effective as they had hoped. Therefore, starting next school year, Valley Heights will return to a more traditional approach to teaching math at the secondary level. We will return to specific courses such as Algebra I and II as well as Geometry, Trigonometry, Calculus etc.

Although we are returning to a more traditional approach, we will also need to be mindful in our preparations of the ensuing change at the national level. Kansas is one of 37 states to formally adopt the Common Core Standards that will take effect in 2014. These common core standards are in Math and Language Arts. When aligning the curriculum, we will need to make sure our resources correlate with the national standards and that we provide students with the highest level of instruction possible to meet those standards. The 2015 state assessments will reflect the new common core standards.

Even though the national, state and even local media can portray a negative spin on public schools, it helps to point out some of the positives occurring locally as well. The above example of our success on state and national assessments indicates we are always striving to improve. Research is always used to guide decisions in regard to curriculum changes. We truly have the best interest of students in mind when making important choices impacting their future.

In this Issue

- 2 State Assessments
- 4 2010 Hall of Fame
- 5 School Site Council Winter Events
- 6 Halloween Pics

Stop School Violence

Call 1-877-626-8203

This is the toll-free hotline number to anonymously report potential school violence

USD #498 Board of Education's

Mission is to provide an education system that will develop the highest level of achievement for all students, educators, and patrons by managing district policies and efficient use of resources.

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State Assessments/SOE Report

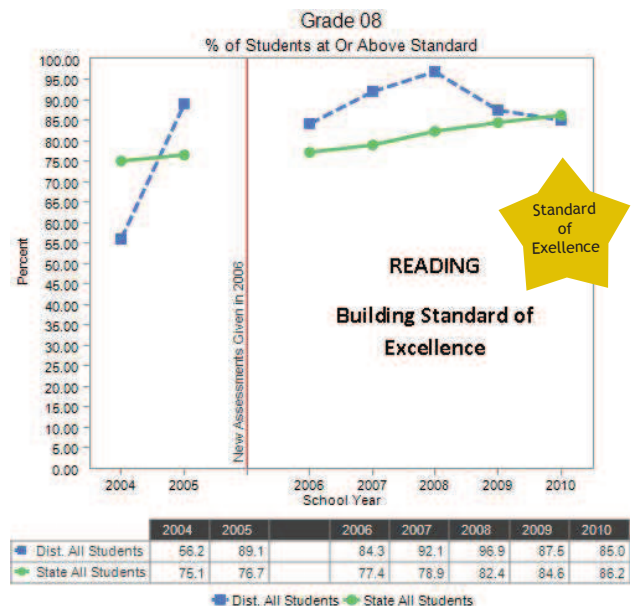
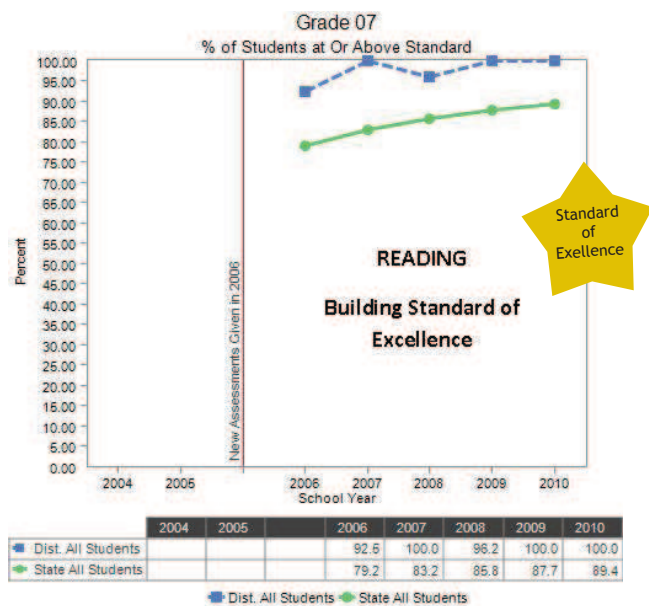
Don Potter | Junior/Senior High Principal

As always, for the November newsletter I share our recent test scores. Once again state assessment scores across the district have exceeded standards and we are very proud of our accomplishments. Included in this article are graphs that represent our growth over the past few years in Reading, Math and Science. These assessments are tied to AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) which is tied to NCLB (No Child Left Behind) and also Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) monitored by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE).

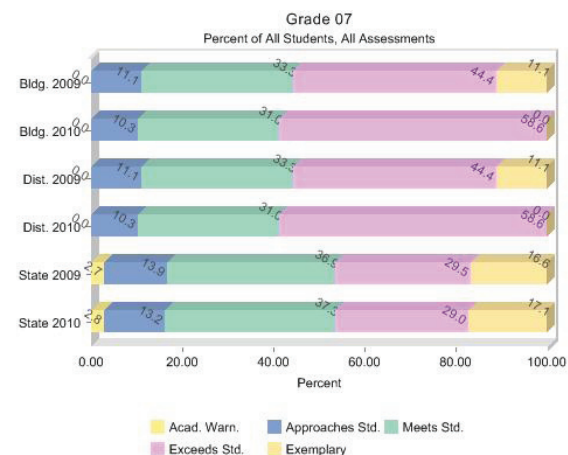
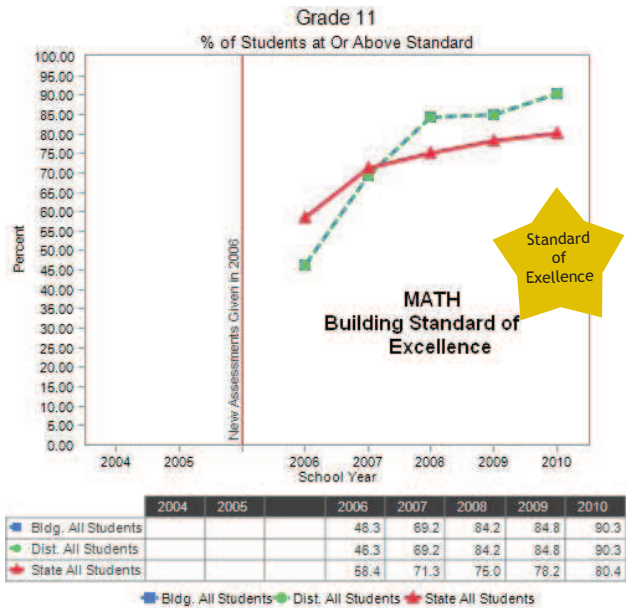
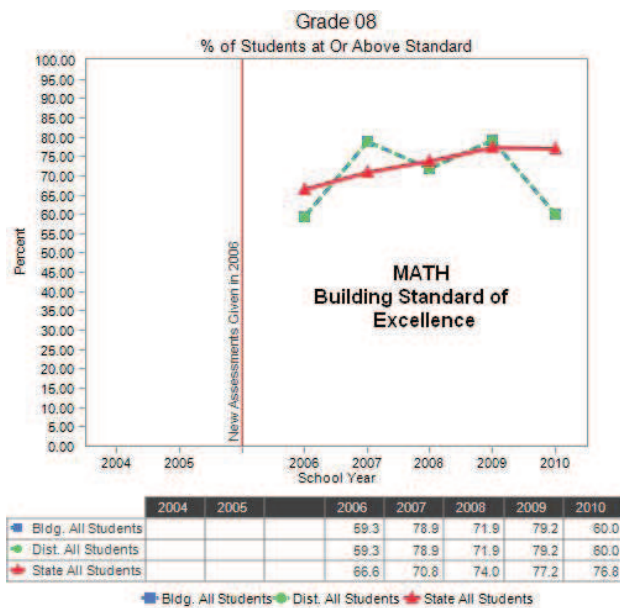
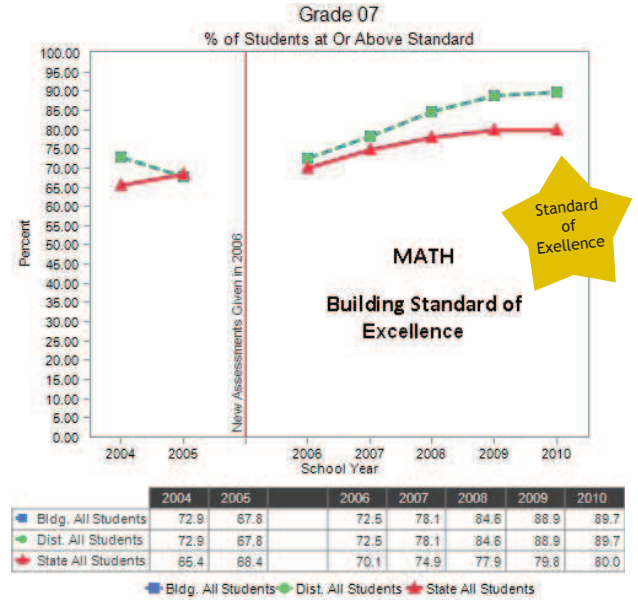
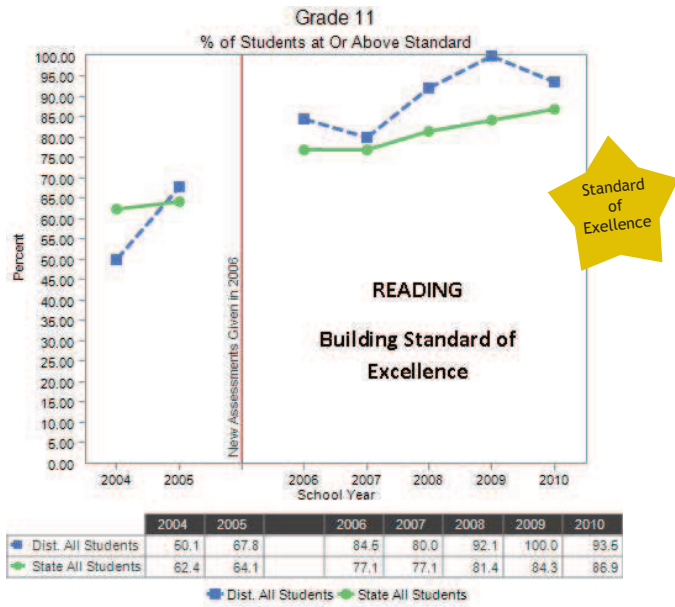
In a snapshot, Valley Heights Jr./Sr. High took a total of 8 assessments and met the standard of excellence criteria established by KSDE in 6 areas as denoted by a star beside each graph. Also, VHHS was awarded a standard of excellence in both reading and math as a building. In addition, the Confidence in Public Education Task Force recognized our school by awarding us the challenge award in 7th grade reading for “uncommon accomplishment”.

We understand that these accomplishments are possible due to the partnership between students, teachers and parents. We encourage all stakeholders to continue the push of higher achievement. It is certain that we are not satisfied and we must continue to improve.

For additional information regarding our progress please visit www.valleyheights.org and navigate to Valley Heights Jr./Sr. High School then click on building report card. I am proud of our students and staff who work extremely hard. We will continue to look for ways to improve upon our successes and prepare for challenges ahead. Thank you for your continued support of Valley Heights Jr./Sr. High School. As always, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to call.



State Assessments/SOE Report...continued



SCIENCE



We Are Listening.....

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please send your comments to:

Superintendent John Bergkamp
Box 89
Waterville, KS 66548

Optional:

Name: _____

Address: _____

2010 Hall of Fame

The Valley Heights Hall of Fame nominating committee has chosen the following five individuals as this year's inductees into the VH Hall of Fame:

Student Hall of Fame:

Norman Winslow

Service Hall of Fame:

Beverly Hedke

Student Athlete Hall of Fame:

Lacey Palmateer Richey and Terry Roepke

Teacher Hall of Fame:

Bessie Lindbloom

This year's induction ceremony will be held in the VHHS gym on Friday, December 17th at halftime of the boys' basketball game. Following the game, the Valley Heights Booster Club will host a reception in the high school library to allow family and friends an opportunity to extend personal congratulations to these inductees.

An Attitude of Gratitude

Barbara Buck | Counselor, VH Jr/Sr High

We are all, it seems, in the pursuit of happiness. I could list here all the roadblocks to happiness as each of us experience plenty. Instead, however, I would like to let you in on the secret to happiness – GRATITUDE. According to Robert Emmons, editor of Psychology, gratitude is one of the key positive emotions to having a happy and fulfilling life. Women have been shown to benefit more than men, but the positive effects apply to all age groups.

Gratitude is complex, but the physical and emotional benefits are clear. Science shows that having a discipline of gratitude has far reaching health benefits. Gratitude counters anxiety, depression, and pessimism with optimism, energy, and a feeling of well being. People who practice gratitude sleep better and are more active.

In a 2003 study conducted by UCLA, participants who kept a gratitude list reported less feelings of stress. In addition, it created a boost in their immune systems.

Thanksgiving is the time of gratitude, and I've seen a number of people post on Facebook a daily gratitude entry. I suddenly discovered that I am stopping to read these while skimming the "gripes" posted by others. It has inspired me to make an early New Year's resolution. I will be keeping my own daily gratitude journal. My first entry is "I am grateful for all the students and families I have the privilege of working with each day. I have the best job in the world!"

I wish all of you a happy holiday season, and I hope 2011 is a year of peace, happiness, and gratitude for you and your family.

School Site Council

Rhonda Trimble | Elementary Principal

What is the School Site Council?

Both Valley Heights Jr./Sr. High and Valley Heights Elementary have School Site Councils. The site council is a committee composed of school personnel, students, parents and/or other community members. It provides a forum for the school community to come together to review student data, identify common goals, and to establish a plan to achieve these goals. The ultimate goal of site-based management is to improve the teaching and learning environment for all students.

What are the responsibilities of the School Site Council?

The school site council has many responsibilities. One responsibility would be accessing information and making suggestions on the educational needs of students and staff. The council may also assist in setting and prioritizing goals for the learning process. Having a hand on continuously reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of the school environment is extremely important. The site council may also provide advisement over the annual school budget and additional funds for special programs.

Responsibilities of Site Council Members

Members' roles are to advise the school in evaluating school and district goals and objectives; serve as liaison between the school, school organizations, the community and the Board of Education; and provide other assistance which the school may request. Council agendas include discussion of student learning, educational programs, school improvement planning, and accreditation issues. The chair, in consultation with the building principal or his or her designee(s), establishes agendas, conducts meetings, and communicates site council advisement. School site council members are NOT a contact (such as a teacher, administrator, board of education member would be) for an individual parent issue or student concern.

The Valley Heights Elementary Site Council consists of:

- Kelly Smith, Blue Rapids Parent (Chair)
- Sarah Toerber, Blue Rapids Parent (Secretary)
- Alan Yungeberg, Blue Rapids Parent
- Amanda Parker, Waterville Parent
- Tony Yungeberg, Waterville Parent
- Sue Toomey, Teacher
- Mona Musil, Teacher & Parent
- Amber Borgerding, Blue Rapids Secretary and Parent
- Rhonda Trimble, Principal and Parent



Winter Events

November 24-26

No School-Thanksgiving Break

December 9

Santa's Gift Sop @ Blue Rapids Comm. Center

December 11

ACT Testing @ VH - 8am

December 13

Board of Education meeting 6pm

December 15

Elementary Christmas Program - BR Gym 7pm

December 17

Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony - Half-Time Boys BB game

December 20

Jr/Sr High Christmas Concert 7pm

December 21

End of Semester - Christmas Break begins for Students

December 22

1/2 Day Staff Professional Development

January 3

Staff Building Level Workday

January 4

Classes resume

January 10

Board of Education meeting 6pm

January 28

KANSAS DAY activities @ both elementary schools

February 5

KAY Winter Formal 8-11pm

February 14

Staff Professional Development - No School for Students

February 17

KU Honors dinner @ Blue Rapids 6:30pm

February 19

NHS Carnival @ BR Gym 7-8:30pm

February 21

Elementary Site Council @ BR; HS Site Council 6pm



Sammie Chartier, 3rd grader: And you thought witches were scary...not this one.



Brenden Lyhane, 1st grader: I can't see, but who cares: It's Halloween!



Shyanne Carder, 2nd grader: A happy princess bride.



Angie Reed, BR kitchen supervisor: Holy Cow! Is she having fun!



Mason Shoptese and Trever Cooney, 2nd graders: Nice Smile, Mason.