U.S. Department of Education

2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Thomas Bensi Reardon, Ed.D
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Voorheesville Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 129 Maple Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Voorheesville State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 12186-9773

County Albany County State School Code Number* 011003060001

Telephone 518-765-2382 Fax 518-765-3842

Web site/URL http://vcsdk12.org E-mail treardon@voorheesville.org

Twitter Handle @VoorheesvilleES

Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/VoorheesvilleCentralSchools

Google+ N/A

YouTube/URL N/A

Blog N/A

Other Social Media Link N/A

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

Date
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Teresa Snyder E-mail: tsnyder@voorheesville.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Voorheesville Central School District Tel. 518-765-3313

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

Date
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Timothy Blow
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school's application as page 2.

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) 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 configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) 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, a public school must meet the state's AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be 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.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.

6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.

7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.

8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

10. 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.

11. 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 (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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

   3 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [X] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

3. 5 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	48	18	66
1	44	50	94
2	33	31	64
3	48	56	104
4	46	40	86
5	33	48	81
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total Students	252	243	495

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
3 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
92 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 3%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	**Answer**
(1) Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	12
(2) Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	504
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.032
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
1 Total number ELL

Number of non-English languages represented: 1
Specify non-English languages: Hungarian

8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %

Total number students who qualify: 42

If this method is not 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.

9. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
45 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

4 Autism	2 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	14 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	10 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	14 Speech or Language Impairment
1 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
0 Mental Retardation	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0 Multiple Disabilities	0 Developmentally Delayed

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers	23
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	20
Paraprofessionals	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

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

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1991

PART III – SUMMARY

The mission statement of Voorheesville Elementary School is to be a learning environment that provides an interactive, engaging, rigorous academic and social learning environment for each of its over 500 students. It is not simply the role of VES to prepare students for their transition to the middle school, but the 21st Century world that is beyond the confines of our school environment. Our students and staff share a common passion for learning, and recognize the need for collaboration, corroboration, and the importance of participatory learning. Besides adapting the needs outlined via the Common Core Curriculum Standards, VES has recognized the need to have and implement a pedagogical philosophy. In order to effectively engage students and ensure that the content and concepts of the Common Core are retained, a balanced literacy and numeracy approach is used in the teaching of ELA and mathematics. An interdisciplinary approach is used to deliver content in science and social studies, and also pervades in our fine arts instructional programming.

Academics aside, VES is a spirited community that teaches character education through using touchstone texts as a means of teaching character themes and messages. Each year, a voluntary spirit committee selects a theme that recognizes the importance of thinking globally, despite the geographic rural location of our elementary school. This theme is taught via common texts, and exemplified through whole school assemblies and service projects that culminate with a communal contribution to the greater good.

We are an extremely traditional building. A large component of our staff lives in the community along-side our students. As a result, we frequently refer to VES as our school "family," in every sense of the word.

Our spirit and character work succeeds in recognition that besides preparing for the 21st Century world, it is important our students recognize that it is important to take care of one another. While our academic success can be found in tangible test scores and the fact that our students are successful in their secondary school years, the word "family" is assessed in our ability as a school community to unite during difficult circumstances. While a larger school, we ensure each one of our students has the opportunity to experience joyous, plentiful holidays, and are provided with the creature comforts they are entitled to (food, clothing, and school supplies). When crisis strikes a staff member or student, our community ensures their needs are met. Over the past few years, we have had students who have lost their homes, staff members who have undergone severe illness, and crisis that has stricken our world (natural disasters such as Hurricane Irene, atrocities such as the Sandy Hook tragedy), local and global problems only serve to bring us together as a school community to offer assistance, and most importantly, comfort.

Voorheesville Elementary School, plain and simple, is something special. The entire staff (from administration to support staff) works towards the aforementioned mission, never letting the constraints of a working agreement get in the way of doing what is best for students. This is illustrative in the fact that our families recognize our building's "no problem" attitude, and ability to adapt to an ever-changing world, regardless of new standards and ever-decreasing financial resources. Michael Fullan (2008) references in his text, The Six Secrets of Change those with a "yeah...but" attitude that gets in the way of progress by perpetually finding a reason not to embrace change, and instead, maintaining the status quo. As other schools frequently discuss the difficulties in getting communities "on board" with changes and initiatives, VES has recognized that we are in an ever-changing world, and spending time getting "on board" only negatively affects our students.

The "can do" attitude of VES has resulted in local school districts (even those schools within our district) to visit us, and ask our staff to do presentations on their best practices, and families to relocate from near and far due to the stellar induplicable reputation, spirit, and work ethic of our building.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

A) Over the years, there have been changes to the descriptors for the performance levels associated with New York's state assessments.

1999-2009
Level 1: Not Meeting Learning Standards: Student performance does not demonstrate an understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.
Level 2: Partially Meeting Learning Standards: Student performance demonstrates a partial understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.
Level 3: Meetings Learning Standards: Student performance demonstrates an understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.
Level 4: Meeting Learning Standards with Distinction: Student performance demonstrates a thorough understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.

2010-2012
Level 1: Below Standard: Student performance does not demonstrate an understanding of the English language arts knowledge and skills/ mathematics content expected at this grade level.
Level 2: Meets Basic Standard: Student performance demonstrates a partial understanding of the English language arts knowledge and skills/mathematics content expected at this grade level.
Level 3: Meeting Learning Standards: Student performance demonstrates an understanding of the English language arts knowledge and skills/mathematics content expected at this grade level.
Level 4: Meeting Learning Standards with Distinction: Student performance demonstrates a thorough understanding of the English language arts knowledge and skills/mathematics content expected at this grade level.

2013 (onset of Common Core assessment)
Level 1: Well Below Proficient:Students performing at this level are well below proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate limited knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy (or Mathematics) that are considered insufficient for the expectations at this grade.
Level 2: Below Proficient: Students performing at this level are below proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy (or mathematics) that are considered partial but insufficient for the expectations at this grade.
Level 3: Proficient: Students performing at this level are proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy that are considered sufficient for the expectations at this grade.
Level 4: Excels: Students performing at this level excel in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy (or mathematics) that are considered more than sufficient for the expectations at this grade.

In the years of the original New York State Testing Program (NYSTP), Voorheesville grew to expect a proficiency rate of 95% for all children, including students with free and reduced lunch status, students with disabilities and minority children. Because each new year since 2010 has brought another alteration to the test or scoring, the district has had to reevaluate student performance expectations. While still demanding high performance, expectations are now based upon comparisons to other districts as well as the overall state performance.

B) The Voorheesville Elementary School has always prided itself on outstanding results on the mandated standardized testing of NYS. In the past few years, the NYSTP has undergone many changes, including a

change in a proficiency "cut" score. In early years, the proficiency cut point was a scale score of 650. During that time (through 2010), the Voorheesville Elementary School produced "near school wide" proficiency rates for both English language arts and mathematics.

Since 2010, NYS increased these cut points in an attempt to begin a transition to new college and career readiness standards. The proficiency scores varied by grade level and ranged anywhere from 658 (ELA 8th grade) up to 684 (Math 3rd grade). As a result of raising the bar to reach proficiency, fewer New York State students met or exceeded the new Mathematics and English Proficiency standards in 2010 than in previous years. Across the state only a slight majority of students met or exceeded these standards: 53% in English and 61% in Math. By contrast, in 2009, 77% of Voorheesville Elementary School students met or exceeded standards in English and 86% of VES students did so in Math. This change shows a slight decline in many of VES's proficiency rates for the 2010-11 school year, but still illustrate high performing results.

In 2013, NYS introduced a new, more rigorous, assessment (created by Pearson) that tested student achievement in the new Common Core Learning Standards adopted by New York State in 2010. While only 31 % of NYS students in grades 3-5 met or exceeded proficiency standards for ELA, 56% of Voorheesville Elementary School children demonstrated proficiency. In mathematics, 33% of NYS elementary children qualified as reaching a level 3 in mathematics; Voorheesville almost doubled that number with 65% of the students reaching that same standard.

Because there have been four incarnations of the NYS test during this five year period, it is very difficult to look for rends in the data. It is interesting to note that the highest level of performance, level 4, has seen less variation than that of level 3. In two of three grade levels, VES's performance in ELA jumped in 2013, but prior to that all three grade level stayed fairly stable, usually having 8-12% of the population in that highest category. In math, an average of a third of the class met the state's highest level, with 34% in 2010 and 2011 and 29% in 2013.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Data from both standardized assessments, as well as local formative and summative assessments are used as means of informing and driving instruction. The recent implementation the New York State Annual Professional Performance Review process has resulted in a systematic approach to pre and post assessments in all subject areas, as a means of measuring student growth and achievement. After the administration of the pre assessments in all subject areas within the first few weeks of the school year, teachers, working collaboratively within grade levels and departments (as applicable in the special areas) meet with administration (the principal and curriculum coordinator) to analyze the results of the pre-assessment, and state assessment data (when such data is available).

Through the use of item analysis software, staff utilize this information to pinpoint areas of instructional focus, while also recognizing areas that do not necessarily require as much attention as previously planned for. Data from the previous school year (particularly in the analysis of state assessment results) assists staff in determining whether their instructional techniques were effective in the delivery of curriculum scope and sequence. Parents are informed of their children’s progress through formalized reports sent home outlining their progress on summative assessments, but also, through report cards that align to the Common Core Curriculum Standards, and frequent parent conference opportunities. Frequent reports are made to the Board of Education and public at large regarding school wide progress from school and district administration. Voorheesville Elementary School has also sought the assistance of outside professional development consultants, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy, to analyze summative data, and assist in the development of formative assessments that will lead to improved performance and immediate teacher recognition of learning gaps. The analysis of available data also spearheaded the exploration and adoption of our hands-on balanced literacy and numeracy instructional approaches, in that the data supported that such differentiated, small group center instruction had a direct correlation to greater student understanding of concepts taught.

The performance of students measured via the analysis of data, using a "team approach" (teachers, administrators, and outside consultants when appropriate) has been instrumental in the building's creation of viable, ever-changing curriculum maps, which are not simply two-dimensional documents, but living, breathing sources of curriculum scope and sequence that reflect the concept that learning is multi-dimensional, and should change based on the immediate needs of one's current students.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Based upon our induplicable spirit and ability quickly adapt to the ever-changing curriculum needs of the Common Core while simultaneously implementing best research based effective instructional practices, the staff of VES has been asked to facilitate workshops for the District at large during Superintendent Conference Days, sharing our successes with our secondary counterparts. In addition, our staff as individuals and teams has been asked to present at local conferences, and during work sessions with other teachers working within our council. The administration of VES has been contacted by local principals who have not achieved desired assessment results, or success in the adoption of new instructional practices (21st Century Learning Skills, Balanced Literacy and Numeracy, and even our approach to the teaching of the fine arts). As a result of our authentic "buy in" and implementation of best practices, administration and teachers from local schools have requested to visit the VES campus and its classrooms, as a means of inspiring their respective staff to implement the same.

As a result of our ability to share best practices, the staff has been asked to provide workshops on such topics as: creating appropriate math and literacy centers, game-based learning, the implementation of a S.T.E.M. 21st Century approach to the teaching of math and science, and even, the use of student cardiovascular performance data as a means of determining physical fitness performance. Our physical education teacher has been invited to speak at National conferences regarding his use of data in his instructional program, while also working with schools in Kansas and Florida.

In regards to our spirit and character education programming, VES has been asked to apply for the State School of Character distinction, based upon the work of our spirit committee as observed by a local representative from the Academy for Character Education. VES submitted this 22 page application, and has been designated as an Emerging School of Character (the first level one can be nominated for in this three year continuous improvement process). VES plans to continue to pursue this model and receive State and National status in subsequent years.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

Voorheesville Elementary School has an overwhelming level of community involvement. Open house programs are attended by over 95% of our families, and a similar statistic exists for parents who elect to participate in our parent conference opportunities in the Fall and Spring. Despite such percentages, with such involvement comes the responsibility of the institution to ensure families have the opportunity to feel vested in their school community.

Parental involvement has evolved greatly as the needs of our families have changed. While our families are vested in their school community, our community demographic has changed greatly within a short period of time. What was once a community that was predominantly affluent, with one parent home to exclusively raise children is now a community that is more representative of our society at large. VES has diverse families in a variety of forms and economic backgrounds. Very often, parental involvement was associated simply with participation in the Parent Teacher Organization, and parent volunteerism in classrooms assisting the teacher with clerical tasks. Not only are these representative of limited opportunities but also, reflect a narrow profile of parental involvement (the assumption that all families have the ability to participate in these areas). VES has welcomed families to offer suggestions as to how they would like to be involved outside of what was previously mentioned. As a result of soliciting families for ideas (which in and of itself is symbolic of the culture of our building), parental involvement has evolved from simply being a product of the archetypal PTA to a building in which families offer after school programming for our students that allows for enrichment, exposure to a hobby, or career exploration.

Our Go Beyond Series,which provides parents a forum for working in our schools with students after school and on weekends is not only convenient to parental work schedules, but recognizes the greater role parents can play in a school community other than simply “assisting” the school, but rather, shaping the programming of our building. Our families have collaborated to create an organic garden, and in turn, allow students the opportunity to share in the maintenance and harvesting of its products. Parents also serve as advisers to organizations such as Odyssey of the Mind and Lego League. Rather than telling parents how they can help under strict dated confines, allowing open conversations and parental input has resulted in productive student programming.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Voorheesville Elementary School has fully adapted to the mandates of the Common Core Curriculum Standards in ELA and Mathematics. With social studies standards recently released in draft form, VES has utilized curriculum planning time in order to assess current New York State Learning Standards in social studies, and the shifts necessary to meet Common Core demands. Currently, VES abides by the New York State science standards, which are assessed using a fourth grade cumulative science assessment. Art, music, physical education, and library/media literacy studies are currently taught using the New York State Learning Standards. Curriculum mapping has been used to ensure compliance with applicable standards, with lesson plans also rooted in these expectations. Instruction in all content areas is built around a common building philosophy of providing an engaging, hands-on, interactive learning process, so that content is not simply delivered, but absorbed, retained, and applied across content areas. This is particularly evident in VES classrooms, in which subjects are not taught in a silo approach, but instead, represents an interdisciplinary approach to learning. For example, current Common Core and New York State social studies standards represent the importance of teaching local history in grade four. Teachers, using this as an underlying theme, use primary and secondary source documents in during small group literacy instruction as a means of authentically delivering content, in addition to the use of a traditional textbook. In music, traditional colonial songs are studied and performing. During art instruction, students look at the depiction of Revolutionary War battles via painting, and attempt to replicate the work of those artists. A local "walking tour," led by the village historian, allows students the opportunity to authentically engage in the history of Voorheesville. The conclusion of the year represents student creation of a "living" New York State Museum, which features technology as a platform for presenting audio and visual information regarding local New York State trades. A final singing and dancing performance, under the common direction of the fourth grade teachers and the music department, allows for the performance of authentic pieces by students. This is one microcosmic example of interdisciplinary learning in practice.

In addition to a student schedule that allows for solid uninterrupted instructional time blocks for interdisciplinary instruction (with an accentuation on literacy and numeracy), we are pleased to offer a wide variety of supplemental programming that, in other many other schools, has been eliminated as a result of budgetary cuts and/or a lack of staff/community support. VES students operate using a six-day rotating schedule. Within that rotation, students experience two physical education units, two music units, one art unit, and one library media skills unit, each lasting 45 minutes, over the course of the rotation. Students also receive a supplemental science lab experience once per cycle for 45 minutes. During this time, students have the opportunity to work with a science lab teacher, engaging in a participatory lab activity that, due to equipment and space requirements, cannot occur in the regular classroom.

VES has developed a K-5 science lab curriculum, which supplements the New York State science standards. Students also receive computer lab formal instruction once per cycle, which is also in addition the vast availability of technology in each classroom (computers in the classroom, laptop and IPAD carts). VES is pleased to provide students with a supplemental exploratory special each quarter, thus ensuring that students receive supplemental time at the conclusion of the day in visual arts, physical education, theater arts, and media literacy. It should be underscored that these are non-mandated programs, but instead, allow students to have a deeper appreciation for these subject areas. A strong Humanities program maintained through District and community support allows students to experience a variety of art forms (opera, live music performance, artists in residence, and authors) that easily relate to grade-level curriculum standards.

2. Reading/English:

Voorheesville Elementary School has universally adopted a Balanced Literacy approach to teaching reading and writing. After extensive faculty-driven research that included book clubs, outside professional development opportunities, a District-hired literacy consultant, it was determined that students would benefit from tailored guided reading instruction, that harvested the data made available via running records , would ultimately ensure all students were showing growth and achievement each year. Extensive research was

also conducted regarding the appropriate use of literacy centers, and productive literacy centers in which students could acquire and practice both foundation-building literacy and applied literacy skills when not working with the teacher in small group instruction. While this commenced as a K-2 initiative, it has since ensconced the entire building, with primary grades using this model to build phonemic awareness and foundation building skills, while the intermediate grades take advantage of this data-driven small group model to work with students on inference, author's purpose, and theme.

In visiting any VES classroom in the morning (when all literacy instruction occurs), one would find students working throughout the classroom, participating in a variety of interactive centers that utilize technological web resources, as well as manipulative tools. Other students within the classroom would be working with the teacher, grouped according to the data derived from running records. Such a model not only allows our teachers to work with students who are below their respective grade-level, but also, to ensure that those who are reading on or above grade-level are appropriately challenged. For those students significantly below grade-level, as per the data, two full-time remedial reading teachers are permanently assigned to the building, in order to provide succinct, intense service in order to ameliorate reading issues. As per research, an investment has been made to heavily assist the primary grades, as early intervention tends to lead to the greatest success.

VES has invested significantly in a K-5 book room, thus allowing the teacher to pull from an extensive selection of texts that represent student interest and ability. VES has also subscribed to software that allows students, based upon individual reading level and interest, to select and read picture and full length books online. Our library media specialist, as a testament to our interdisciplinary approach to learning, works closely with our classroom teachers and students to keep them abreast of the latest high interest texts.

3. Mathematics:

Voorheesville Elementary School has universally adopted a Balanced numeracy approach to teaching mathematics, one that is modeled after a philosophy originally adapted to meet the needs of our literacy program. After extensive faculty-driven research that included book clubs, outside professional development opportunities, and a District-hired math specialist, it was determined that students would benefit from tailored guided math instruction, that harvested the data made available via standards-driven formative and summative assessments, would ultimately ensure all students were showing growth and achievement each year. Extensive research was also conducted regarding the appropriate use of centers, and productive numeracy centers in which students could acquire and practice both foundational and applied math skills when not working with the teacher in small group instruction. While this commenced as a K-2 initiative, it has since ensconced the entire building, with primary grades using this model to build early number sense, while the intermediate grades take advantage of this data-driven small group model to work with students in applying number sense to carry out algorithms and solve word problems.

In visiting any VES classroom in the afternoon (when all math instruction occurs), one would find students working throughout the classroom, participating in a variety of interactive centers that utilize technological web resources, as well as manipulative tools. Other students within the classroom would be working with the teacher, grouped according to the data derived from grade-level developed assessments, and materials made available through a textbook series that is aligned to the Common Core. It should be noted that the series is simply used to ensure standards alignment. Most materials for centers and guided math instruction are teacher made, as created through attendance at conferences and working collaboratively as a grade-level. Students are not simply completing a series of assigned rote worksheets, but are truly interacting with their mathematics.

A small group model not only allows our teachers to work with students who are below their respective grade-level, but also, to ensure that those who are working on or above grade-level are appropriately challenged. For those students significantly below grade-level, as per the data, one full-time remedial math teacher is permanently assigned to the building, in order to provide succinct, intense service in order to ameliorate difficulties. Both a push-in and pull-out model is used to deliver service to students. As per

research, an investment has been made to heavily assist the primary grades, as early intervention tends to lead to the greatest success.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Visual/Performing Arts: In a time when the performing arts have been cut due to budgetary constraints and an increased emphasis upon preparing students for the rigors of the Common Core, VES has not only maintained its visual and performing arts programming (providing well over the minimum mandate), but also, ensuring that this area provides an interdisciplinary connection to other subject areas. All students K-5 receive two "units" per six day cycle of general music, and one "unit" of visual art. Each unit is 45 minutes in length. In addition to this programming, each student receives a comprehensive K-5 supplemental art class which means once a week per quarter each school year, as well as a class in theater arts (which also meets once a week per quarter). By the conclusion of a child's career at VES, they have received the equivalent of one extra year of art, and one year of performing arts, which accentuates the terms and technique of theater performance. Additional elements not covered during the regular class time are covered during these sessions. In grade five, students have the option of taking band and/or chorus. It is a testament to the strength and interest of our music program in that well over 95% of our fifth grade students, based upon the interest garnered during their study of general music and the performing arts. These teachers, through departmental and grade-level curriculum mapping, have developed curriculum that intertwines wonderfully with content area, taking advantage of historical units of study as a means of direct connection.

VES also possesses a hearty Humanities budget, complete with a coordinator. The coordinator, working with a volunteer committee consisting of representatives from throughout the building, has one mission: to utilize Humanities funding (as provided by the District and PTA) as a means of providing "art for art sake." Such funds are not used for character education or anything other than providing students with an exposure to the performing arts. As a result, this committee has been successful at bringing opera, symphonic orchestras, jugglers, jazz musicians, poets, storytellers, and authors to the stage of VES. Students conclude their career at VES not only with an extensive understanding and appreciation of the elements of the performing and visual arts, but also, a recognition of how these elements can manifest themselves in the culmination of beautiful art, in visual, oral, and aural form.

5. Instructional Methods:

An appreciation of the importance of differentiated instruction can be found in our successful implementation of a balanced literacy and numeracy program, which recognizes the need for teacher driven small group instruction which utilizes data to formulate appropriate groupings. VES also recognizes the importance and necessity for embedding 21st Century Learning Skills in all aspects of instruction, particularly in science and social studies, in which a collaborative, project-based approach is frequently used to deliver content. Such means ensures students in all disciplines are not simply using a "one size fits all" textbook with teacher lecture as the main source of information, but instead, are provided with the opportunity to pursue content topics at a pace that is individually appropriate for each student. For example, our fifth grade science course has recently been renamed S.T.E.M., in order to represent the science, technology, engineering, and mathematical components to science. Prior to this reconstruction over the past five years, science concepts were taught in a very traditional fashion (textbook driven information with chapter assessments to determine concept retention).

The program has since been reinvented so that the same concepts (scientific method, recognizing properties of density, properties of sound, etc.) are taught using a collaborative project based approach as a means of applying the information. In lieu of simply memorizing terms for an assessment, students are designing items and determining whether they will "sink of float." Rather than determining the malleability of materials, students are provided the opportunity to create a toy, and simulate the process one would use to build, market, and sell this toy, forming a company with a budget, sales pitch, and product for display and one that can safely tested by their counterparts.

Besides explicit technology instruction through computer lab time, students are provided the opportunity to use both hard and software as a means of pursuing learning at their own appropriate pace. In the previously mentioned project, students are given access to digital cameras and iPADs to create their product. Such access allows students on all ends of the learning spectrum to be successful, while also working to maximum capacity. The building has also invested in reading and math software that allows students to create an individual account and, based upon prior success or performance, practice literacy and numeracy skills via online activities that are differentiated and academically appropriate for each individual student.

6. Professional Development:

Voorheesville Elementary School offers comprehensive professional development opportunities that exist in a variety of differentiated formats. Regardless of the economic climate, significant financial resources have been allotted exclusively for professional development, including but not limited to the donation from the teachers' union of their right to take a sabbatical and instead, putting the cost of a sabbatical into a professional development fund. Each teacher is allowed the opportunity to attend one conference of their choice, as long as it pertains to the District goals and vision of maintaining an engaged Common Core Standards based instructional program. The District also invests in literacy and numeracy consultants to work with teachers directly in their classrooms and in team meetings. In all cases, the work accomplished during these sessions is reported out during faculty meetings which are used to share best practices, rather than simply reporting basic school management information. In order to advance the notion of authentic use of technology in the classroom, the elementary school, along with its technology specialist, offer Technology Tuesdays, which are classes which provide a direct instruction in the implementation of hard and soft ware into the elementary classroom.

VES is a strong proponent of the concept of "teachers teaching teachers." In order to maximize resources, small groups or pairs of teachers will attend workshops that relate to the improvement of pedagogy and forwarding Common Core Curriculum, and return to the building in the capacity as a "turn-key trainer." Teachers are provided ample release time in order to impart information gleaned from conferences and professional development experiences to their colleagues.

Administration is also extremely supportive of staff led professional learning communities, typically through the use of touchstone teacher texts. Most recently, in the building's overhaul of its math program, the staff had the opportunity to read two texts pertaining to mathematics instruction in the 21st Century, and, through book discussions, peer observation/critique, and reporting out on their findings via faculty meetings was instrumental in the building's math program success. Other book groups pertaining to social issues (poverty, teaching digital natives, and parenting) have also been conducted outside of school, which serve to enhance the academic and social climate for students.

7. School Leadership

The leadership of VES consists of one full-time principal, who oversees over 500 students and approximately 100 staff. The building also has access to a K-12 Director of Curriculum, and a K-12 Director of Special Education, who at times assist building administration in the management and implementation of curriculum initiatives. The principal of VES is a strong believer in the importance of visibility throughout the building, particularly in the visitation of classrooms, the cafeteria, recess, and areas of high student traffic throughout the entire day. Through frequent, authentic visibility, the principal has formed a cohesive relationship with all students, knowing their names, learning style, and families. This leadership style has also allowed the principal to form a trusting relationship with the teachers, diagnosing and ameliorating issues immediately, before such issues have long-term detrimental effects.

Morale at VES is extremely high, with the building frequently recognized by a local survey group as one of the Top Places to Work in the New York State Capital Region. Because of the high level of morale, trust, and collegiality within the building, previously mentioned academic initiatives and the implementation of best practices are exponentially easier, as a result of a common desire to do what is best for students, and assist one another in the process. Such a positive climate as a result of leadership's investment in remaining

"in touch" with the pulse of the building is noticed by families, and manifested in their desire to volunteer their services within the building. Families feel very comfortable and safe as a result of a positive climate. Teacher and staff, in turn, as a result of feeling supported, understood, and safe, are more so willing to take academic and social risks.

District leadership is extremely supportive of the endeavors of the building principal. The Superintendent is also visible and accessible to staff, and shares a common vision of what constructs successful teaching and learning. This unified approach from the "top down" is palpable to the VES community, and is what allows the building to communally pursue excellence, as evidenced in the building's ability to easy adapt and adopt new practices, without wasting precious learning time attempting to get staff members "on board."

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: New York State Testing Program Mathematics Grade 3; NYS Common Core Mathematics Test Grade 3

All Students Tested/Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: CTB- McGraw Hill (2009-2012); Pearson (2013)

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	May	May	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	74	76	83	100	99
% Level 4	36	15	21	31	27
Number of students tested	80	86	86	91	88
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	1
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	10
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					

% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	76	61	83	100	99
% Level 4	36	21	21	31	26
Number of students tested	71	83	86	91	80
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: In the 2011-2012 school year, New York State changed the assessment by increasing the amount of questions for students to answer. For the 2012-13 school year, an entirely new assessment, based on the Common Core Standards and including field questions, was developed by Pearson.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: NYS Testing Program Mathematics Test Grade 4; NYS Common Core Mathematics Test Grade 4

All Students Tested/Grade: 4

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: CTB McGraw- Hill (2009-20012); Pearson (2013)

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	May	May	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	68	85	81	93	97
% Level 4	29	40	34	34	2
Number of students tested	78	87	90	91	90
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment				1	
% of students tested with alternative assessment				1	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or					

Alaska Native Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	67	86	81	94	99
% Level 4	30	43	33	37	52
Number of students tested	76	80	89	82	87
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: NYS Mathematics Test Grade 5; NYS Common Core Mathematics Test Grade 5

All Students Tested/Grade: 5

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill (2009-2012); Pearson (2013)

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	May	Apr	May	May	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	54	88	76	98	100
% Level 4	23	12	22	30	62
Number of students tested	90	93	94	94	98
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment			1		
% of students tested with alternative assessment			1		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					

% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	58	88	76	99	100
% Level 4	25	52	22	30	62
Number of students tested	83	90	83	91	97
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: NYS English Language Arts Test Grade 3; NYS Common Core Test Grade 3

All Students Tested/Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill (2009-2012); Pearson (2013)

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	59	80	88	77	83
% Level 4	6	12	12	20	13
Number of students tested	80	86	86	91	88
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					1
% of students tested with alternative assessment					1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					

% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	57	81	90	76	82
% Level 4	5	12	12	20	15
Number of students tested	71	83	81	90	80
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: NYS English Language Arts Test Grade 4; NYS Common Core English Language Arts Test Grade 4

All Students Tested/Grade: 4

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill (2009-2012); Pearson (2013)

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	50	77	78	93	97
% Level 4	17	8	2	8	16
Number of students tested	78	88	90	91	90
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment				1	
% of students tested with alternative assessment				1	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	50	77	77	93	97
% Level 4	17	8	2	6	15
Number of students tested	76	81	89	82	90
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: NYS English Language Arts Test Grade 5; NYS Common Core English Language Arts Test Grade 5

All Students Tested/Grade: 5

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill (2009-2012); Pearson (2013)

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	60	82	67	95	98
% Level 4	26	10	6	22	39
Number of students tested	90	93	94	94	98
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment			1		
% of students tested with alternative assessment			1		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4	61	82	66	95	98
% Level 4	27	10	7	23	39
Number of students tested	83	90	84	91	97
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Level 3 plus % Level 4					
% Level 4					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: