

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Valor Christian High School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3775 Grace Boulevard  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Highlands Ranch State CO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 80126-8123

County Douglas

Telephone (303) 471-3000 Fax (303) 471-3001

Web site/URL https://govalor.com E-mail info@valorchristian.com

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Gary Fisher E-mail gary.fisher@valorchristian.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Christian High School Tel. (303) 471-3000

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Scott Pomeroy  
(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, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave .blank*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature 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 and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
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

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Data should be provided for current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

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

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	150	131	281
10	151	157	308
11	152	140	292
12 or higher	156	155	311
<b>Total Students</b>	609	583	1192

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 2.4 % Black or African American
  - 4.3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.8 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 82.3 % White
  - 6 % 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.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	13
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	1187
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Chinese, Spanish

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %

Total number students who qualify: 12

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %

120 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 conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>64</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>2</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>134</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>17</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	18
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	86
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	47

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 14:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	89%	91%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	257
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	92%
Enrolled in a community college	1%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	1%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	4%

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

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2015

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

In partnership with parents, we provide a purpose-driven college preparatory program, within a Christ-centered environment that empowers students to discover their passions and gifts.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

In August 2020, Valor returned to school full-time, in-person. We provided the opportunity for families to select a remote option. We had 10 students select this modality. Throughout the semester, we conducted targeted contract tracing that required specific students, when necessary, to be on a short-term quarantine. During this time, those students engaged in remote learning. We had invested in technology to make all classrooms Zoom enabled. Long-term and short-term remote students are able to log-in and passively observe class. For the eight days prior to Thanksgiving break, a COVID spike in our community required a school-wide shift to remote learning. After Thanksgiving, we returned to full-time, in-person learning.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Valor Christian High School is a faith-based, college preparatory high school that strives for excellence in all aspects of the school. We have nearly 1200 high school students from all across the Denver-metro area. Over 20% of our students receive tuition assistance, and we have a racial make-up that reflects the diversity of our surrounding school district.

Since inception, Valor's motto has been "Influence through Excellence." This standard has guided a concerted effort throughout the school to advance education and pursue excellence at the local and national level.

The school is organized around the four pillars of academics, arts, athletics, and service. We believe that each pillar serves a vital role in the development of students.

Valor's academic program offers 21 Advanced Placement (AP) courses along with 14 dual credit courses and 11 honors courses. Valor students regularly excel in the annual AP exams. In 2020, Valor had a schoolwide pass rate of 84%. The class of 2020 graduates were accepted into 229 different colleges and universities and matriculated to 103 different institutions.

As our enrollment has grown, we have introduced programmatic distinctives to allow students to immerse themselves in their passions and be better prepared for the next step in their education. Within academics, this has taken the form of endorsement tracks in STEM and Rhetoric. Students can choose to engage in "major" or "minor" requirements in these two disciplines. Approximately 10% of the student body is involved annually in these programs.

In the arts, students have the option of pursuing the Performing Arts or Visual Arts Conservatory program. The Conservatory program allows students to shape a six-credit course sequence that is tailored to their area of emphasis. They also receive personalized training and coaching. Twenty students in the class of 2020 went on to specialized arts programs in college. Outside of the Conservatory, 83% of students are involved in arts courses and productions.

Valor's athletic programming has reached the height of competitive success in the state of Colorado over the past ten years. Since 2010 Valor has won 33 state championships in fourteen different sports. Eight sports have been awarded multiple state titles during this period. Each year, approximately 20% of Valor graduates go on to play college athletics. In the class of 2020, 44 students committed to play in college in 16 different sports. Of those students, 22 are playing at NCAA Division I schools.

Valor's service program, aptly named "Discovery," is structured to provide students with local, national, and international experiential service opportunities. Over the past decade, Discovery has facilitated 196 trips to 47 different countries and nearly 250,000 hours of service. Discovery is an essential educational tool of the school to help students expand their understanding of an increasingly complex global community. Some of these trips partner with academic courses to provide course credits and others have specific areas of emphasis like medical service. Through all of these programs, we deeply desire that students will see themselves as uniquely created by God and capable of growing in their passions. While we understand that a student is unlikely to be excellent in every aspect of their life, we trust that when they find a program where they can connect and thrive, positive ripple effects will enhance all aspects of their personal growth. Because we believe each student is wonderfully made by God, our goal is to provide opportunities that meet a wide spectrum of students and abilities. Through these efforts, students develop an intrinsic motivation and are better prepared for the next phase of life.

In March 2020, Valor, like many other schools, was called on to respond to the challenges of the COVID outbreak. From mid-March through the end of the school year, Valor transitioned to fully remote learning. We made the decision to hold synchronous classes three times per week, and we chose to maintain grades. We believe these were the correct decisions for our community. We found that our choices helped to maintain student engagement and learning during this period. For fall 2020, we chose to return to in-person

learning. We have invested in advanced safety features for our school and have worked with the local health department so that we can continue vibrant academic, arts, athletics and local service opportunities.

Valor was a previous recipient of the Blue Ribbon School award in 2015. Rather than just leveraging this honor for our own purposes, we share resources and best practices with local schools and have presented at the National Blue Ribbon Conference.

In 2014, we were a school of 877 and have experienced significant growth since. We have expanded our classroom faculty, added a specialized arts building, and increased areas of academic concentration so that we can maintain a tight-knit community while fulfilling our goals, mission and vision.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

The curriculum at Valor Christian High School is designed to fulfill our vision to prepare tomorrow's leaders to transform the world for Christ. Our curriculum and instruction have been designed to equip students for future academic challenges and career goals. All courses meet the very best educational standards and are taught in a manner that does not jeopardize the importance of a Biblical worldview.

Our Valor Expected Student Outcomes target spiritual formation, college preparedness and cultural engagement, providing a framework for curriculum planning and development. College and career readiness are measured objectively by standardized tests, AP exams and ACT college readiness benchmarks. In combination with longitudinal parent and student surveys. These measures provide data that guides the backwards planning of pedagogy.

Valor's English Language Arts curriculum is designed to ensure that graduates are college ready, by demonstrating an ability to think critically, explore various perspectives, utilize skills in information literacy and research, communicate effectively, and consider their readings in light of a Biblical Worldview. A required four-year curriculum exposes students to a variety of texts, authors, and genres, which incorporate varying themes to ensure exposure to alternative perspectives, and worldviews at the AP, dual-credit, honors, and college prep levels.

Valor offers a robust math curriculum beginning with Algebra I and including dual-credit Precalculus, AP Statistics, AP Calculus AB and BC, and Multivariable Calculus. Students are required to complete four years of mathematics. The math curriculum has been crafted in order to foster growth in students both academically and spiritually by developing students' understanding of an orderly, patterned universe, established and maintained by God as one piece of an overall Biblical worldview.

In addition to the core science courses, Valor offers a wide variety of electives including dual-credit Anatomy and Physiology, Biotech Engineering, Marine Biology, Robotics, and Forensics as well as AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics 1 and C. Students are required to complete three years of science. The curriculum has been developed to demonstrate the beauty and majesty of the created world and the scientific laws that govern it through an integrated understanding of science alongside scripture.

The Valor history curriculum equips students with necessary historical knowledge, communication skills, and analytical abilities to examine multiple perspectives in history, including historical study in light of a biblical worldview with both understanding and application. Three years of coursework are required, including World History, U.S. History, Government, and Economics. Students have the flexibility to dive into areas of interest and can choose from honors and AP courses as well as unique elective offerings.

Across the curriculum, external standards have been used to guide the scope and sequence of each course. Standards outlined through Advanced Placement, the ACT, Common Core, Colorado Academic Standards, and Generation Science Standards have been consulted to create learning objectives and bi-annually aligned for each course. Valor's expected student outcomes integrate key soft skills like leadership, communication, and team building into the curriculum to help students prepare to engage a world that necessitates critical thinking and problem solving.

In the transition to remote learning in the spring 2020, faculty maintained an approach to instruction deeply rooted in student-centric activities through a remote learning platform. Classes met synchronously and student engagement remained an integral part of daily classroom routines. Relevant technology tools were integrated to enhance learning whenever possible.

During remote learning, assessment is focused on an open-ended style of questioning, allowing students to utilize resources and to require higher order thinking and problem solving. The focus is on feedback to students rather than merely grades, although grades were maintained and measured throughout remote learning. Students are frequently provided corrective and redemptive opportunities to ensure they fully grasp

content and build upon their understanding.

Valor stands by the adage that “what matters should be measured.” In order to gauge progress and mastery, teachers implement a variety of assessments. Formative assessments are used to glean feedback on student progress and modify daily lessons. Rubrics for assessment are created and used by each course team to calibrate for consistency. While traditional and standardized tests are one method of assessment, we evaluate learning with summative oral, practical, and project/lab based assessments as well. Data analysis of summative assessments is used to refine each course and review alignment to standards every two years. Additionally, analysis of standardized testing is completed on a regular basis.

The use of third-party online tools extends student learning beyond the classroom. Collaboration is frequently used to help support student growth; this is accomplished through in-class and remote platforms. Teacher-created videos and additional teacher-created digital resources are available for each lesson.

### **1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

Valor provides an academically rigorous program that prepares students for the highest levels of academic performance and leadership in college and beyond. Classes are designed to be college preparatory and intellectually challenging to students. Honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual Credit classes provide college-level content and requirements that promote student engagement and allow students to thrive. A wide variety of elective courses are offered to support long-term interests and goals. Many of these courses are taught by industry professionals rather than traditionally trained teachers.

Valor offers one diploma, but students may receive a distinguished endorsement for specialized areas of study in support of college and career readiness. The endorsement programs offer a cross-discipline course of study enabling students to pursue individual interests. Valor’s endorsement programs are designed to matriculate students who have combined rigorous academic coursework with hands-on experience. These students know what they want to study and are eager to use their knowledge and experience.

Currently, Valor offers the opportunity for students to engage in concentrated areas of study in the visual or performing arts through the Valor Arts Conservatory; in Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Engineering through the Applied STEM endorsement; or participation in integrated humanities curriculum through the Rhetoric endorsement. All endorsements are built around four core requirements: academic courses, experiential engagement, service activities, and a capstone project. In addition to receiving teaching and mentoring through their classes and requirements, Valor also provides students with opportunities to engage with various industry leaders.

Student leadership at Valor goes beyond typical student-council models to provide students with meaningful opportunities for leadership mentoring and experience. Our program pairs student leaders with faculty and staff in their areas of expertise. All students are encouraged throughout their high school experience to develop in five core areas: character, courage, influence, discipline and service.

### **1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Valor offers in-depth opportunity in a host of arts and media offerings, allowing students to pursue high-level college and career relevant creative training. Approximately 80% of Valor students are involved in arts, participating in multiple art classes and co-curricular programs. With 42 different offerings, the Arts Department is one of the largest and most developed programs on campus. Students can pursue their unique passions and can specialize a number of career relevant tracks through a six-credit major in the Valor Conservatory for the Arts.

The focus in athletics is spiritual formation, character development, work habits, and academic success

brought about through deep coaching relationships. Approximately 80% of Valor students participate in the total of 25 different sports, many that offer multiple levels of playing experience. A performance program and training sessions are available to everyone and are designed to create lifelong habits that promote emotional, physical and spiritual health.

A true distinctive of Valor is its local, national and global service program called Discovery. Discovery has a transformational impact on students' lives and gives students an opportunity to share and live the gospel through serving others. Students leave their comfort zones and participate in intercultural experiences, enhancing their holistic development while transforming lives with the gospel and love of Christ. Thousands of students have served through Discovery in 47 countries around the world. Valor Discovery is paramount in students' spiritual formation, social/emotional, character, and leadership development.

The World Language department focuses on providing students with the opportunity to be functionally fluent in a second language. While students are required to take two years of World Language, most engage in three or four years. The program utilizes the comprehensible input methodology as the primary instructional method. Included in the World Language programming are immersion trips to Guatemala, Spain, and French Canada.

Through our Technology, Library, and Media programs, Valor students have the opportunity to engage in a wide variety of technology-based courses, clubs, and experiential opportunities. Beginning with 9th grade, students in all classes are taught information literacy skills and best practices for research using scholarly databases and other online tools. Through these experiences, students are able to hone their skills and complete independent projects such as building the Valor Eagles Application, coding competition robots, and releasing personal LPs.

Valor also offers a variety of relevant and rigorous business, marketing, and communication electives. The effective communication skills taught in these courses and club environment equips students to think critically, reason rationally, and present their ideas eloquently. Students are provided with unique opportunities to potentially create, develop, and manage a successful business.

Each spring, Valor hosts a Practicum week which is designed to enhance students' educational experience through unique classes, service, and/or trips. Students enjoy learning non-traditional skills like cooking, basic automotive repair, rock climbing, scuba diving, 3-D modeling and printing, fly fishing, nutrition, hiking, internships in career specific fields, domestic and international service trips.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

We care deeply that every student be intentionally embraced for their unique abilities, and taught methods that will motivate them to be effective learners with the ability to adapt to a variety of instructional styles and learning environments. In an effort to care for all students academically, we provide many layers of support as they are first accepted to Valor.

Prior to the start of 9th grade, students can enroll in preparatory classes, access online curriculum, and meet with academic counselors. Ninth Grade Seminar is a required class for all 9th grade students as it supports the transition to Valor academics and school culture. Students are empowered to advocate for themselves as learners, establish vision and direction, and move into leadership roles based upon the information learned through the course.

Valor follows a tiered instructional approach, offering courses that provide additional reading and acquisition support in addition to Honors, AP, and Dual Credit courses. Students at the 9th and 10th grade level who have additional needs within the classroom may be placed in English classes with slightly slower pacing and instructional support, pushing toward preparing students to join their peers in CP level courses at grades 11 and 12. Honors, AP English Language, AP English Literature, and DC English 12 courses provide more rigorous challenges for those students who are

advanced in their language development and thinking. These courses place higher expectations for students, including extended readings, lengthier and nuanced writing, and more sophisticated class participation.

Prior to enrollment, all students complete a standardized admissions test and a math placement test. The scores from these assessments plus a teacher recommendation help determine the best possible math placement. Differentiation between standard and honors level courses has been established by determining the higher-level questioning and rigor that provide further challenges. Students are able to change between standard and honors level courses annually to best fit their strengths. Valor offers a supplemental math lab for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. Math lab courses correspond with the core math course and provide reinforcement of students' skills.

Two team members are specifically focused on socio-emotional health and work to protect the most vulnerable. Additionally, a focus has been placed on equipping members of the Valor team with protective factors such as mental health awareness training, suicide prevention, and social-emotional learning. The MAP (Measurable, Attainable, Practical) Team is a multi-department team that meets bi-weekly to discuss students who need additional support and determine appropriate ways to meet student needs.

While Valor does not offer a full slate of special education services, we do provide accommodations, small group courses with an emphasis on executive functioning, and on-site tutoring services. These additional academic supports are leveraged by students of all ability levels. Currently, 120 students have been approved for accommodations and receive extended testing time and other specialized support services.

A subgroup of school-based accommodations students scored lower than the schoolwide average on the math section of the ACT. As a result, the resources listed above are leveraged to help students remediate their math skills.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Students are the object of our affection. We make decisions based on two criteria: if the outcome honors Jesus and if it is in the best interest of students. We are committed, in everything we do, to help students succeed academically, artistically and athletically; to develop leadership skills; and to grow into a mature relationship with Jesus Christ. Being “student-centric” means we prioritize the student in making decisions about programs and policies that affect them.

Valor’s faculty provide the primary influence of a positive environment, motivation, and support for students. Our school culture is highly relational and fosters mentoring relationships with students. To motivate and support students, one must first know them. Students’ unique gifts and abilities are discerned and cultivated so that students will flourish while at Valor and into college and career. The success of this approach is realized in the high level of student participation in arts, athletics, and service.

Valor has developed a robust Student Experience department. This team is focused on maintaining a vibrant, God-honoring student culture that draws students into relationships and connections within the community. Faculty and staff are tasked with knowing the condition of the student body in order to lead and serve students.

Student Experience works closely with the Student Leadership students to create engaging student events, chapels, and club activities. We want all Valor students to exhibit five core characteristics of leadership: courage, character, influence, service, and discipline. We foster these characteristics by intentionally involving student voices in everyday activities.

Student leaders are making the most of an unusual school year. Among some of the activities they have planned are an outdoor fall festival (rather than Homecoming), remote viewing parties for football games in small groups, spirit and giving days, and t-shirts for the entire student body. In light of COVID-19, focus has been on more virtual events and use of social media platforms to promote student community and connection.

Chapels have been maintained through remote and in-person learning as an important opportunity to gather our students together in community and continue our focus on the spiritual development of the student body. Chapel has been combined with our Life Groups to allow for small group meetings. Life Groups of eight to ten students allow meaningful connection with each other and with an adult mentor. Chapel is live streamed to small groups of students within classrooms rather than the previous large gatherings in the auditorium.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Because we are stronger together, we passionately pursue partnership with parents, local churches, and ministry organizations. We like to describe community as ‘common-unity’ – aligned in one purpose, under God, to pursue the vision and mission He has given. Student success and school improvement are inseparable from stakeholder buy-in and community investment. Valor begins with the premise that parents are the primary educators of their children and have partnered with the school to provide excellent formal academic instruction, character and spiritual development, co-curricular opportunities, and leadership training for their teens.

Consistent and effective communication is provided through the school website, weekly newsletters and one-to-one conversations. Rather than parent-teacher conferences, where time is very limited, Valor offers parents rich opportunities to engage with teachers, meet with one another, and engage in a myriad of events based on common interests. Parents also give regular feedback and take part in a variety of opportunities for volunteer involvement in the life of the school.

The Valor Parents Association is a vibrant group of parents who work in various committees. Each class has

representatives on the VPA board who are a great point of reference to help other parents learn more about getting involved. Parent enrichment events provide parents' support in guiding their students towards owning their faith, excelling in academics, and nurturing individual potential. During this unusual season, steps have been taken to ensure parent connection and involvement through more online connections and smaller group settings.

Community partnerships also support school and student success. Valor has a partnership with Colorado Christian University to offer concurrent college credit courses. Students engage in internship opportunities across several industry sectors, as well as shadow and mentor opportunities. Valor Arts and Athletics departments engage the community in forming athletic camps, opportunities for acting and orchestral productions.

Finally, student success is seen through the lens of service to others. During their four years, each Valor student amasses over 100-service hours working in service organizations. A student-led emergency response team serves victims of natural disasters such as flood and hurricane damage. Focus is also given to serving within the local community as well as all of the service that is provided by the Discovery program where students have served in 47 countries. While these experiences have looked different during COVID-19, the heart of the program has been maintained. Students have focused on serving their families and local communities through intentional acts of service.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

We desire to attract, retain, develop and empower people who advance the vision and mission of Valor. Faculty and staff are our most valuable assets. We encourage intelligent, industrious employees who believe in the Valor educational ideals to join and stay with our organization. Because our people are critical, we make every effort to avoid turnover by offering competitive benefits and salaries and providing a stimulating working environment.

As teachability is the mark of a good student, it is also one of the most important characteristics we look for in Valor team members. Remaining teachable is critical to personal success and our school-wide success. Once employed, we expect every staff member to maintain a willingness to improve and to pursue excellence in all their personal and professional endeavors. Valor is committed to an intentional, strategic approach to professional development aligned with mission, vision, and operational goals.

All departments and leaders annually create strategic plans that inform professional development needed to achieve measurable goals. Department Strategic Plans contain goals, tactics, and metrics of academic success and student achievements. Likewise, the overall School Improvement Plan outlines training necessary to amplify competence in specific areas. The Cabinet leadership team annually reviews these documents, along with Parent and Student Surveys, annual performance review documents, standardized testing data, faculty/staff feedback and observations of best practices in order to develop an overall yearly and long-term plan. Intentional planning allows professional development to be married to budget planning and prioritized implementation.

Valor has dedicated significant resources towards a variety of learning opportunities. An annual "Pre-Season" of intense training occurs more than two weeks prior to every school year. During the year, a weekly Tuesday "late start" is utilized for job-imbedded professional development. At the course level, department heads take faculty through a cyclical process of curriculum development, instructional planning, analysis of student work, and refinement. Professional development via traditional in-services and summer curricular work are standard. Additionally, Valor is committed to offering and promoting external opportunities for growth and development such as continuing education classes, seminars, and school visits.

During the transition to remote learning, focus was placed on providing staff with the training and tools necessary to operate within a different environment. Not only was there a need for strong technology training and support, but also an emphasis on caring for the spiritual and socio-emotional needs of team members. It is our desire to maintain a close-knit community no matter the circumstances or limitations.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

Valor employs an entrepreneurial and performance-based model of leadership and governance. In Valor's model, the Board of Education is responsible for establishing the vision, mission, governance policies, and procedures and does so through managing the Head of School who is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the organization.

Reporting directly to the Head are ten leaders: Director of Finance and Operations, Dean of Academics, Dean of Academic Services, Director of Athletics, Director of Arts+Media, Director of Discovery and Outreach, Director of Student Experience, the Student Programs Manager, and the Campus Pastor. Through this primary leadership team, referred to as the Cabinet, all other curricular, co-curricular, operations and business activities are directed and supervised, and maintenance of an overall vision for excellence and quality across all facets is monitored. This model of leadership allows Valor to capture the best practices of business and education to truly make a focused and sound operating educational institution.

The Dean of Academics oversees the collaborative Academic Planning Team (APT) consisting of the Curriculum Lead and all the various faculty Department Chairs. Individual faculty members are guided by Department Chairs who facilitate weekly planning at department, grade, and course level planning sessions. The Dean of Academic Services supervises the Academic and College Counseling team (consisting of five college counselors, the registrar and specialized counselors for athletic college recruiting and arts programming) and an Academic Support team overseeing tutoring and unique programs for students who learn differently. All stakeholders focus on delivering clearly articulated student outcomes for graduates.

This system wide organization and interweaving team approach allows coordination of policies, programs, relationships and resources focused on student safety and achievement. A recent example of this is how we responded to a worldwide pandemic by rapidly adjusting to a system in the spring that allowed us to host daily remote, interactive classes and continue to engage students with a remote community in athletics, arts, student initiatives and local service projects.

In the fall, Valor was one of only a handful of schools in the state that successfully returned to full in-person education. This effort required administrators, teachers and staff to return to school weeks in advance to prepare for new technology, install advanced HVAC and safety equipment, and develop a protocol for interfacing with local health departments to provide proper health and safety training for the community.

#### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

We strive to intentionally support our faculty and students and promote a culture where the diverse needs of students are met. We recognize the necessity for empathetic dialogue and critical conversations. As a faculty and staff, we are committed to a strong culture where we engage with one another in a loving way that seeks first to understand and then be understood. Getting involved in a political debate about parties and platforms can be very divisive. Rather, we want a community built upon relationships and the ability to come together on the common ground of the person and saving grace of Jesus Christ. We do not want to allow political parties or a lack of cultural awareness to divide us.

In our classrooms, we are committed to a pedagogy that acknowledges and responds to differences and promotes the God-given dignity of every person. Our belief in the dignity of all humans means treating everyone with respect, even in the midst of supporting different viewpoints. We value each of the following: loving one's neighbor and one's enemy, being quick to hear and understand before criticizing, and the importance of celebrating that the Kingdom is made up of people of different cultures and color. We never want to lose sight of our unity in Christ.

Students are encouraged to think critically through all sides of any political, economic, or social

debate, compassionately listen to alternative viewpoints that reject their personally held beliefs, and look with empathy to all, regardless of viewpoints, with the understanding that we are all brothers and sisters within the body of Christ.

Valor's Diversity Committee has been working to support Valor's mission and vision related to Cultural Engagement by fostering an inclusive environment centered in Christ and biblically informed where students, faculty, and staff can engage in critical conversations with one another related to the unique experiences of individuals relevant to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The team is made up of people of a variety of different backgrounds and is committed to guiding reflective thinking, training, stewardship, and support towards a more culturally responsive approach in Valor's Four Pillars: Academics, Arts, Athletics, and Discovery. Some specific examples include: increased training and development of faculty and staff, intentionally planned chapel topics that promote an appreciation of differences but center on unity, student events and initiatives focused on supporting underrepresented populations, and the development of a student culture survey to better understand the needs of the students.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The week before Spring Break 2020, Valor was faced with new orders from Colorado's governor that mandated schools transition to remote learning. As we prepared for this challenge, our decision-making was guided by the priority of determining how best to keep students engaged. While we were unsure whether this would be for a month or for the balance of the semester, we believed that effectively engaging students would allow us to build upon the high level of relational equity that our teachers have with students.

In the spring, student engagement led us to two key conclusions: we developed a remote learning schedule that provided for synchronous online lessons and we maintained student grades. Each class met three times a week for 45 minutes via an online learning platform. While implementing this solution required substantial training for our teachers and our technology team to rapidly build out the infrastructure, we were convinced that figuring out how to provide live classes for students would help them stay engaged. As we reviewed the semester, this decision allowed us to track attendance and identify students who lacked internet access and computers at home. We were also able to continue monitoring students who were on safety plans or had other socioemotional difficulties during this time.

Prioritizing student engagement also influenced our decision to maintain student grades. All of the public schools around us switched to a pass-fail option and some of our families were frustrated that we did not join. However, as the weeks turned into months of remote learning, we were affirmed that we had made the correct choice for our community. Because most of our students are highly motivated, they had already committed significant time and effort into their coursework prior to the shift to remote learning. To change a student's grade to a pass at this point would have been demoralizing for the majority of our students. For those who struggled with the transition, our teachers effectively monitored and understood if they needed to extend grace and added support.

As we prepared for fall semester, student engagement again drove our decision-making. Some area public schools announced they would continue with remote learning, and others were pursuing a hybrid model. We made the decision to return to full-time, in-person learning. Our feedback from students and parents has affirmed that they value this decision and it has allowed us to serve our community well.

## **PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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1. Non-public school association(s): Christian

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No

3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$20362  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$10440

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      9%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      20%

## PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

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*Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (2019-2020)<sup>1</sup>. Each school must obtain grade level summary reports from the test publisher for students tested in reading and mathematics for each of these grades.*

These reports must include:

1. the number of students tested;
2. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for all students in each tested grade; and**
3. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for each sufficiently large subgroup<sup>2</sup> in each tested grade.**

Please make notations on these reports to explain results that represent fewer than 95 percent of the students enrolled at the time of testing (e.g., the number of students who took alternative assessments<sup>3</sup>).

A copy of these reports (in a PDF file) must be uploaded through the National Blue Ribbons Schools Portal.

Also, one hard copy of these reports must be submitted by mail to CAPE with two hard copies of this application.

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<sup>1</sup> Because of school closings due to COVID-19, schools may use test results obtained in the fall or spring of 2019 or the fall of 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Possible subgroups are those identified in Items 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Part II of this application (racial/ethnic groups, ELL students, students eligible for free or reduced meals, and students receiving special education services). A sufficiently large subgroup is one that represents at least 10 percent of the school enrollment as reported in these items.

<sup>3</sup> Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in a school's norm-referenced test (NRT) even with accommodations. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the NRT, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. (adapted from National Center on Educational Outcomes)