

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Pleasant Valley High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 604 Belmont Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bettendorf State IA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 52722-5623

County Scott County

Telephone (563) 332-5151 Fax (563) 823-1950

Web site/URL https://www.pleasval.org/ E-mail ericksondarren@pleasval.org

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* Mr. Brian Strusz E-mail struszbrrian@pleasval.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pleasant Valley Community School District Tel. (563) 332-5550

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 Dr. Nikhil Wagle
(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

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

Data should be provided for the 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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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 | 227 | 200 | 427 |
| 10 | 208 | 188 | 396 |
| 11 | 184 | 185 | 369 |
| 12 or higher | 184 | 181 | 365 |
| Total Students | 803 | 754 | 1557 |

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % White
 - 21 % 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: 5%

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.

| Steps For Determining Mobility Rate | Answer |
|--|---------------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year | 35 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year | 44 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 79 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019 | 1557 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.05 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 5 |

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

Arabic, Brazilian, Portuguese, Chinese, French, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Malayam, Maranao, Nepali, Punjabi, Swahili, Telugu, Urdu

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22 %

Total number students who qualify: 343

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %

85 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.

10 Autism

3 Multiple Disabilities

0 Deafness

3 Orthopedic Impairment

0 Deaf-Blindness

60 Other Health Impaired

1 Developmental Delay

26 Specific Learning Disability

29 Emotional Disturbance

12 Speech or Language Impairment

2 Hearing Impairment

2 Traumatic Brain Injury

6 Intellectual Disability

15 Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

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.

| | Number of Staff |
|--|------------------------|
| Administrators | 4 |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 82 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 14 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 20 |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 7 |

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 25:1

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

| Required Information | 2019-2020 | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | 2016-2017 | 2015-2016 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 96% | 96% | 96% | 96% | 96% |
| High school graduation rate | 97% | 96% | 95% | 97% | 93% |

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.

| Post-Secondary Status | |
|---|-----|
| Graduating class size | 346 |
| Enrolled in a 4-year college or university | 65% |
| Enrolled in a community college | 23% |
| Enrolled in career/technical training program | 2% |
| Found employment | 6% |
| Joined the military or other public service | 2% |
| Other | 2% |

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.

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

It is the vision of the Pleasant Valley Community School District that we shall provide the finest academic and extra-curricular programs in the state - not in some things, but in everything; not for some students, but for every student.

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.

August 2020 - Hybrid model and Online Option

January 2021 - 100% back in school with Online Streaming for those choosing to stay online

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

Pleasant Valley High School is located in Bettendorf, Iowa, and is made up of families from Bettendorf, Pleasant Valley, and LeClaire. Pleasant Valley continues to be one of the fastest growing districts in the state of Iowa, with a projected enrollment of over 1,600 students for the 2021-22 school year. Our community continues to grow, in large part due to our quality schools, excellent community support, and strong businesses in our area. The influx of new families has strengthened our schools, adding new culture and diversity to strong Midwestern values, allowing Pleasant Valley to not only increase in our number of students but also the growth that each student experiences by being a part of our school community.

Some of the biggest gains in closing our achievement gap came in our work with the National Postsecondary Strategy Institute. In looking at our student performance data, we were achieving at a high level, with about 70% of our students attending either a 2 or 4 year college. But in looking at our 2 year and 6 year survey data, we were finding that about a third of these students had to take a remedial level math course in college. This brought us back to our curriculum and how we were serving our students through the math progression. We then began realigning both our college track and support track math courses to work on the same standards with the end in mind. We rewrote the curriculum for our support track math courses, intensifying the amount of time spent on the standards our students were not meeting proficiency, better aligning these courses to our college track offerings. Within a 4 year stretch, the number of students needing a math required course in college reduced in half, from 32% to 16%. This is indicative of the targeted strategies and data we are trying to implement at Pleasant Valley. Our students perform well, but we continually challenge ourselves to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities we offer our students to best prepare them for success after high school.

Beyond our academic performance, our students set Pleasant Valley High School apart from other schools. Our students take an active role in our school and have been integral in our continued success. The Sparkle Effect, a program getting special needs students involved in extracurricular activities, began a decade ago at Pleasant Valley as one of our service learning projects. This student-led initiative began in our school and has since spread to schools across the nation. Our student council, Spartan Assembly, works with administration on everything from assemblies, award recognitions, to building design, allowing the students ownership in the school. This continued empowerment of our students creates active involvement and better culture within our school. We host Town Hall meetings in our theater periodically to allow students to ask questions and get clarification on new rules and initiatives. We want our students to understand and be a part of creating our community, and truly becoming part of Spartan Nation.

Our school adapted and overcame many challenges due to the COVID-19 closures and restrictions placed on our school. In a matter of a few weeks, we were able to work with our staff and create an online school. We were able to provide students an education over the final few months of school last year, and knowing the challenges that would be facing us for the 2020-21 school year, we spent our summer taking this to the next level. Each staff member spent a minimum of 20 professional development hours not only refining their online classrooms, but we also spent the time and resources to make all of our classes available online as well. We set up Live Streaming with the video and audio equipment to make this a good experience for our online learners. We were able to operate in a Hybrid Learning model while still allowing students to be part of some or all of their classes on their online learning days and provide the structure and support they needed to be successful.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

To graduate from Pleasant Valley High School, a student needs 23 credits, with a credit being defined as 1 full year in the course. One semester courses are worth .5 credits. There are credit requirements in the following subjects/departments:

English/Language Arts- 4 credits

Mathematics- 3 credits

Science- 3 credits

Social Studies- 3 credits

Career & Technical Education- .5 credits

Expressive or Technical Arts- .5 credits

Health- .5 credits

Wellness- 1 credit (every other day all 4 years or .125 credits/semester)

Career/College Readiness- .5 credits (1 quarter, or .125 credits/year)

Service Learning- 1 credit

For our Mathematics department, our offerings range from Introduction to Algebra through AP and College Calculus. In order to ensure Career and College Readiness for all our students, our minimum capstone course in Math is Intermediate Math, which uses the ALEKS program to work with students on content covered through Algebra 2, the typical minimum requirement of most degree and certificate programs. The vast majority of our students complete Algebra 2 or higher, which has reduced the number of students failing to meet the math requirements for college and certificate programs by half over the past 6 years. Additionally, we traditionally have 60-80 students complete our AP Calculus course, along with 40-50 taking MAT:210 (Calc.1) for college credit here in our building. We also offer MAT:156 (Statistics) in our building, which around 100 students take each year, allowing them to have an often required and difficult course on their transcript before leaving our campus.

Our Science Department spent the summer of 2018 updating their curriculum in conjunction with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). This is in addition to the 3 credits of Science required for graduation which must be in each of the three areas of Science (Physical, Life, and Earth & Space). Over 70% of our students take four or more years of science, despite the four year graduation requirement. Over 100 students each year enroll in AP Chemistry, AP Physics 1, or AP Physics 2.

Across their Social Studies requirements, students must take one year of US History, one year of World History, and one semester each of Economics and American Government. The department has several elective offerings as well, including AP Human Geography, AP US History, AP US Government, and AP Macroeconomics. Four college courses are also available that are taught by Pleasant Valley staff, including Sociology, Psychology, and two Western Civilization courses. These courses, like all of our college offerings, are chosen due to the wide variety of requirements they meet in various degree and certificate programs. Our goal is to get students as close to their destination as possible, reducing not only the time they will need after high school to attain their capstone but also to defer some of the cost these courses will have on our students and families.

Our English/Language Arts department offers English 9 and English 10 to all 9th and 10th graders. These

courses address all areas of the Iowa Core ELA standards, with units of Literature, Composition, Speech across these two years. As 11th graders, most students take a semester of American Literature and a semester of College Writing. Senior year offers the most opportunity for electives, including a variety of literature and writing courses, including Journalism and Creative Writing. Some students take advantage of the two AP courses, AP Literature and AP Language and Composition. Additionally, we offer SPC:112 Public Speaking and HUM: 135 & 136 Humanities courses.

Our Social Studies Department and English Department have worked together to create an Academy course that focuses on improving reading skills. They work to build on skills together to help our at risk population improve their skills in a meaningful way. We also offer Honors level courses for most of our required courses in the core areas, allowing students choice in the best fit for their needs.

Pleasant Valley has worked hard in providing our teachers time and training to align the curriculum with the Iowa Core Education Standards. This includes working with Mississippi Bend AEA in training our teachers to unwrap and unpack standards, using additional stipends to allow staff to work together to analyze their curriculum, work on standards based lessons and assessments, and align both vertically and horizontally a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

Beyond Iowa Core standards, our team has begun work into the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) work for each of the standards and looking at proficiency in a different manner. The catalyst of this was the discrepancy between “Meeting” standards on ITED/ISASP state testing and the correlating score for Career/College Readiness. In order to meet CCR requirements, students must move beyond simply meeting the standards, so our work has shifted from students simply getting the knowledge required to collecting data to better understand to what degree are they able to use and apply this knowledge. We found that assessing students at multiple levels of understanding/DOK, they often knew the content but were not able to use this knowledge to create or solve problems, or to apply it to new scenarios. We want students that can think independently and find new approaches to problems in order to be successful in the 21st century job force.

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

Pleasant Valley schools offer many opportunities supporting College and Career Readiness. We currently offer our students 17 different Advanced Placement courses. In conjunction with Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC), we also offer 26 dual credit courses within our building, and courses not available at PVHS but offered at Scott Community College are available to our students. We also work with EICC to offer a variety of Career and Technical programs in which students are able to attain a certificate by graduation. Some of these programs include Auto Repair and Services, Welding, Small Business Management, Marketing, and many more. We also employ a full time Career Coordinator to work with students to find job shadows, work experience opportunities, and other connections for student transition after high school. This year alone, we have set up 2 students with work experience that lead to a paid apprenticeship prior to graduation. One of these students is a leading candidate for a position with John Deere beginning this July. In our presentation to parents, we emphasize the “career” portion of CCR that we are focusing on, and that college is one of many paths that can lead to a successful transition after graduation.

Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, we have a new graduation requirement called “College and Career Readiness Seminar.” This course is required for all students each year and will focus on the steps required to successfully transition from high school. Skills such as filling out the FAFSA, Interest Inventories, Letters of Recommendation, and Scholarship opportunities are just some of the items in the course. This will allow our counselors to begin the transition conversations with all of our students earlier in their high school career, better preparing them for life after high school.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Pleasant Valley High School strongly supports a diverse learning experience for all students. This includes promoting and establishing expectations for all students to schedule a variety of non-core courses during their time in high school. The 23 credits required for graduation include: 8 semesters of Physical Education, 1 semester of Health, two semesters of Career and Technical Education, and 15 semesters of elective credit.

The wellness program at Pleasant Valley is a required component of each student's schedule. Our students choose between traditional physical education and weight lifting. The weight training program is designed to fit the needs of all physical ability levels and strives to train each student as they progress. This program includes: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Weight Training. Early Bird and 8th Period options for P.E. and weight training are provided through the master schedule to allow each student to fit this requirement into their day.

The World Language program at PVHS continues to be a focus of rigorous learning for students. Spanish, French, and Japanese are offered as options, and each provides our students with a blend of learning opportunities in the 4 language modalities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Many PVHS students take the required 2 years of World Language to gain acceptance into 4 year universities, while others challenge themselves through the offered Advanced Placement courses. Over 80% of PV World Language students elect to take the Seal of Biliteracy Exam, with roughly 94% of all students earning a proficient score.

Career and Technical Education interest has continued to build momentum in the last several years for our students. In an effort to grow our students into being college and career ready, a heavy emphasis has been placed on building options for students in this branch of education. Students have the opportunity to gain experience in foundational level courses in construction, automotive, welding, robotics, culinary, early childhood education, finance, and computer programming. Pleasant Valley's partnership with Eastern Iowa Community Colleges then provides many students the opportunity to extend their learning in these departments through numerous dual enrollment course options. Students have the ability to earn a number of professional certificates before their high school graduation as they proceed directly into the working world.

Finally, Pleasant Valley's performing and visual arts continue to be a focal point in the community. Approximately 524 PV students are active in band, vocal music, and orchestra. These students are provided group and individual instruction during the school day in order to grow their skills in any capacity they choose. In addition, the PVHS theatre department provides students opportunities in the visual arts. Students participate in a variety of plays, musicals, and Improv nights throughout the school year.

3. Academic Supports:

Pleasant Valley High School is dedicated to the success of all students. The most impactful method used to identify and address the majority of student needs is through the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Teachers are provided common planning time each day with teachers who teach the same course. The teachers use this time to align, curriculum, assessments, and determine academic interventions.

Pleasant Valley students who are reading below grade level would have their needs met in a targeted reading class course titled, Read to Succeed. The course is taught by a teacher specially trained in teaching reading skills and designed to address the deficits in reading skills in order to get each student to grade level proficiency.

Students who are receiving special education services benefit from co-teaching and a Skills course. The course is taught by a certified teacher with the support of a full time academic interventionist. Students work on his or her deficit areas in the course while also receiving support for success in all of their other classes. Pleasant Valley also prioritizes the transition of these students and has a full time work coordinator. The work coordinator lines up the job experience with a local business or organization and pairs each student with a job coach.

The school also utilizes a Student Assistance Team (SAT) to identify and address students' needs. The team meets each week and reviews a list of students based on an at-risk score that accounts for academic, attendance, and behavior concerns. The team works through the list by assigning interventions to each of the students. The team then tracks the success of the interventions and makes changes as needed.

Students who consistently struggle with organizational skills and motivation are identified for our Flex program. The program includes a credit bearing course where a certified teacher works with students on organizational skills, motivation, and other soft skills needed to be successful. The classes are kept at small numbers so the teacher is able to strengthen relationships with each student and provide one on one support.

Academic Study Hall is a temporary intervention for students who may fall behind in a course and have several missing assignments. The student works with an academic interventionist in a smaller setting to get caught up. Once the student has caught up in the course then they would return to an open study hall.

We have two dedicated teachers to our students who are English Language Learners (ELL). The ELL teachers provide a combination of push-in and pull-out services throughout each day so students are able access the curriculum.

Pleasant Valley partners with our county to provide a Juvenile Court Liaison in the building at all times. The liaison works with students through diversion programs to keep students out of the criminal justice system and in school. She also works one-on-one with the students each day to ensure the student is being successful in academics, attendance, and behavior. The liaison and our homeless coordinator serve on the County Provider Panel to make sure our students are connected to the services they need.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

It is difficult to gauge the impact of COVID and the disruptions it caused in our lives. While we spent a lot of our time designing curriculum and moving to an online learning model to allow students to continue their academics, we also devoted energy and training into meeting students' social and emotional well being. At Pleasant Valley, we formed a Socio Emotional Behavior Committee to not only collect data on how students were doing outside of school, but also to research and develop strategies to support our staff in helping students through this situation and allowing us to be a calming presence in their lives. This committee played a big role in the development of our staff training as we created our online learning platform for staff. Training included strategies for whole class activities that tied curricular items to a wellness check-in as well as ways to structure individual conversations with students. We scheduled individual "office hours" virtually with students through the classes in which they were enrolled, and while the check in was related to their academics, it was also to see how kids were doing. Staff were able to incorporate strategies from our SEBH training into their lessons and interactions with students to help meet their needs. We also set up communications with our school counselors, At Risk staff, Special Education case managers, and other personnel for additional support when needed. The SEBH committee has continued to meet and work on ways to add this training to our staff to be part of our everyday curriculum.

We have also continued our working in growing our Diversity Committee. One of the benefits of our growth over the past few years is the increase in diversity we've added to our community. As our school adds new families from different backgrounds and circumstances, we want to ensure that our school continues to grow and reflect elements of everyone that is a part of "Spartan Nation." We have added several students to our committee to share ideas they have for opportunities to celebrate this diversity through student recognition events, the education of our students and staff, the decor and environment of our building, and other opportunities to make us a more welcoming and inviting school community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Pleasant Valley High School continues to look for new ways to increase the engagement and participation of our community. Our most valuable resources are the people with whom we have the honor to work alongside in educating our future leaders. We take the "career" part of College and Career Readiness very seriously and continually share the message with our students and families that their transition beyond high school can look many different ways. Through working with a panel of local businesses, we used the data to expand our tracks for students in high paying, professional employment opportunities that aren't necessarily tied to a degree program from colleges but in a certificate program. This is often half or less of the required courses needed for our students to become qualified in their respective fields. This year alone, working with Arconic (formerly Alcoa), one of our areas largest employers, we received a grant for \$100,000 to purchase new machines to expand our Industrial Tech program. The equipment and training upgraded our facilities to allow us to teach some of these college courses on our campus at no cost to our students.

This year presented us with our first paid internships through John Deere in their Welding program as well. Two students will be working this summer at a paid internship while simultaneously gathering the 2,000 hours required for certification in Welding. These opportunities wouldn't exist without the support of our community and the input of our businesses in helping guide our vision to create opportunities for all.

COVID-19 placed a new level of stress on families in many ways. Our district has reached out to mental health providers in our community and established "satellite" offices in our building to allow their therapists to work with students in our school. This eliminates the barriers of scheduling and transportation while reducing the overall time students are out of school. Our Spartan Assembly organized a school supply drive that made folders, paper, pens, and other items available to any student that wanted or needed it, no questions asked. Our Parent-Teacher Association was more active than ever, providing treats for staff and students, organizing activities such as our "Right After Prom" for our students, providing these experiences for kids safely.

We look forward to continuing to offer great opportunities to our students while working with our local businesses to help keep the Quad Cities a vibrant and growing community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Pleasant Valley School District prides itself on the communication and relationships between our staff and administration. One of the pieces we consider a foundational pillar of our district is our Interest-Based Problem Solving (IBPS) Committee. These meetings take place monthly, or more during contract negotiations, and allow us to discuss issues and concerns openly.

Additionally, each building has a Leadership Management Counsel (LMC) that meets twice a month to discuss issues and concerns from staff. This also allows administrators to be better informed of issues within the building and to work with staff on resolutions. We feel it is vital that staff feels heard and understands they have a voice in all aspects of the building.

An area in which we have made some of the biggest gains in overall buy in and effectiveness in Professional Development. Through our work with our Teacher Leadership Team, we merged the overall goals of the district with the individual needs of each staff member to create a new approach to PD. We work on training our Instructional Coaches and Building Leads in areas that match our Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, creating multiple opportunities for Professional Development with our own staff leading the training. This allows staff to choose which areas best meet their individual needs. By having our own staff become experts', they can follow up with teachers and build Individual Career Development Plans that meet the needs of each person. The feedback has been tremendous. The impact of the PD has grown because the ownership staff now has over their professional growth.

This was vital in the success we had this year in staff being able to offer both in person and virtual learning opportunities to our students. We had to create an online school and our staff went to work. We created opportunities ranging from basic technology training through much more advanced instructional strategies. We created a checklist that all teachers must be able to do, while still allowing opportunities for more advanced online teaching. Staff that could complete items moved to new aspects that best met their needs as well as most impacted their specific courses. And while there was a learning curve from the beginning of the school year to where we are now, we have provided our students a great educational experience.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of Pleasant Valley High School is to have the finest academic and extracurricular programs in the state, not in some things but in everything, not for some kids but for every kid.

When dissecting the philosophy of our high school administrative team, we believe it must begin with offering all students the finest academic experience to prepare them to be college or career ready after high school graduation. With that, we must also value the life lessons that students gain through our extracurricular programs. Within the academic arena and the extracurricular experience, we have a mindset of being committed to excellence. We must continually reflect on our practices to reach for excellence in all areas to ensure each student is provided the highest quality opportunity as if they were our own child.

With a student body of 1,500, we also value the importance of building a safe and supporting learning environment through positive relationships. Our principal, two assistant principals, Dean of Students, Activities Director, and five counselors strive to be visible and present for our students. We believe as a team students must continually see us and interact with us in the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, sporting events, and concerts. As our district and high school continues to grow, we must be there for our students to achieve our leadership philosophy.

Reflecting on this past 12 months, COVID as well as social injustice across our country has demonstrated how important our role is for providing a safe learning environment for our students and staff. Due to the emotional toll of these many life changing moments, as a leadership team we have increased our focus to

offer the social emotional support needed to feel safe and successful. This past year has not been easy but we have tried to model the importance of flexibility, resiliency, respect, dignity, and offering grace to all in an inclusive environment.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As a school, we are continually improving our collective cultural awareness and sensitivity and we are continually striving to provide equitable and inclusive classrooms, activities, and opportunities for all our students. We believe this to be an ongoing process involving constant reflection, action steps and re-evaluations, and refocusing of efforts. We also know that,

Our school has a standing diversity and equity team composed of administrator, teacher, student, and family input that meets bi-weekly. For professional development for our staff, we have partnered with United Way and community diversity roundtables to both provide in-services and teach and grow our faculty's understanding of microaggressions, inherent biases, and the need to seek to understand, not just tolerate. The team has instituted steps such as providing a pronunciation guide for all students' names in our student record system, providing both a virtual and in-person opportunity for students of diverse cultures, backgrounds, and lifestyles to meet and discuss issues, as well as recommend and effect change in our building. Our diversity team is currently reviewing and adapting building curricula to include inclusive and diverse voices and we are actively recruiting and seeking diversity within our faculty and staff.

As a district and building, we have worked to be ahead of state guidance in addressing needs, such as inclusive rest and locker rooms. When social and controversial issues have arisen, the diversity team, school board and administrators have provided guidance and encouragement for staff to discuss these issues with students, with a lens on including all viewpoints and perspectives as to seek to both understand and act with necessary. This year, we have created a district team that meets bi-monthly to adopt a framework and curricula that address all students' social and emotional behavioral health development, which is centered around SMARTIE goals--those which are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable. We aspire as a building to keep this always at the forefront as we maintain our student-centeredness as a school. We are working with our families of diverse backgrounds to interconnect them with our building, our events, and to create new events and venues to help us all learn and celebrate our growing diversity.

It is our belief that a school never arrives at saying 'now we are culturally responsive'; rather it is a constant process of reflection, actions, revisiting and taking new steps as we seek to understand and include all of our students within the walls and spirit of what it is to be a Spartan. As diversity in our building continues to grow with our district and the backgrounds, cultures, languages, and lifestyles of our students and families change, we seek to understand and include, be open to realizing when we have inadvertently created conflict rather than collaboration and move forward in truly being sensitive and responsive to the all of our students and families.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

March 16, 2020 will not be a forgotten date as our district was on Spring Break when everything closed. Like many schools across the country, PVHS was left scrambling to develop instructional strategies to address terms we had never used pertaining to synchronous and asynchronous learning. Through becoming a one-to-one device district for grades 7-12, learning about Google Hangouts and Zoom meetings, creating Google Classrooms, and infusing a plethora of virtual teaching tools, the most important instructional lesson learned was the value of human interaction.

As time progressed, it became evident that we are social creatures craving personal interaction that asynchronous learning approaches have difficulty providing. Regardless if the lesson was recorded or provided through a “blog,” students and teachers repeatedly expressed concerns about not being able to ask or provide immediate feedback. By Governor decree, school began with 50% in person instruction where half the students attended on M/W and the other half on T/TH with rotating Fridays. This attendance model allowed the personal connection expressed while maintaining the CDC social distancing recommendations. On February 16, 2021, Iowa legislators required that parents be given the option of their students attending full time everyday or remaining at home. With 85% of students returning everyday, staff utilized a “live” stream protocol requiring all students regardless of attendance location to attend class following their normal schedule.

The practice that allowed Pleasant Valley High School to not only continue to educate our students but also to do so with the excellence in which we’ve come to expect was the establishment and fidelity of our Professional Learning Communities. Fortunately for us, we had the groundwork of these established for the past 6 years, but their effectiveness was put to the test by COVID 19. We were able to distill our curriculum into our essential standards and learning in short order to finish the 2019-2020 school year 100% virtually. We were then able to work together over the summer on our curriculum, assessment, and instruction in preparation for only having each individual student in person 50% of the time. Determining what could be moved to independent practice, what essentials required direct instruction, and alterations to our assessments to determine if our students were truly growing in their learning in courses was able to be accomplished through the relationships of our staff. They were able to ensure clear and consistent expectations across courses and teachers in a completely new manner of teaching and learning. There were certainly bumps in the road and we learned so much as the year progressed, but we never would have been able to begin our year as effectively and grow so quickly if our PLC’s had not been in place.