

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 1 Eagle Way
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Valley Mills State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 76689-0518

County McLennan County

Telephone (254) 932-5251 Fax (254) 932-6601

Web site/URL https://www.vmisd.net E-mail julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

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. Chris Dowdy E-mail chris.dowdy@vmisd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Valley Mills Independent School District Tel. (254) 932-5210

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. Mike Jones
(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 signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education 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 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	28	25	53
10	29	22	51
11	19	25	44
12 or higher	19	17	36
Total Students	95	89	184

*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 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.1 % Asian
 - 3.7 % Black or African American
 - 8.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 65.2 % White
 - 22.6 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 19%

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

When school began for the 2020-2021 school year, the Valley Mills Independent School District Covid-19 Policy allowed students to learn from home, virtually. However, many students struggled with the virtual learning model. When Valley Mills High School began to require struggling students to return to campus, many students decided to leave VMHS to enroll in online homeschool programs or attend other schools who allowed virtual learning.

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	31
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	34
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	175
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.19
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	19

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

Spanish, Tagalog

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 75 %

Total number students who qualify: 138

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 30 %
56 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>5</u> Autism | <u>9</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>30</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 12:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	96%	98%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	95%	93%	98%	88%	96%

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 2021.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	34
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	19%
Enrolled in a community college	26%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	9%
Found employment	40%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
Other	3%

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.

The mission of Valley Mills High School is to educate each student to the highest levels of academic achievement and enable students to become successful in a global society.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.vmsd.net/page/student-required-postings>

“The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the United States Department of Education requires that local education agencies (LEAs) provide career and technical education (CTE) programs, services, and activities in accordance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has regulatory responsibilities for CTE programs in Texas public secondary schools and is required to adopt a civil rights compliance program to identify, remedy, and/or prevent discrimination in the CTE programs operated by LEAs.”

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Valley Mills High School (VMHS) is located in Valley Mills, Texas, a rural community in central Texas. Nestled on the banks of the Bosque River, the town may be small in population but has a strong sense of community. Perseverance and teamwork have been core values of the town since it was founded in 1867. From the beginning, townsfolk have worked together to overcome adversity. In 1881 the Santa Fe railroad was built and bypassed the town by a mile. Together the community banded together and moved the town closer to the rails. They did this knowing that the railroad could bring an economic benefit to the whole town. Just a short year later, a tornado would destroy much of the new location. Not to be disheartened, the citizens of Valley Mills worked together to rebuild the town once again. While time may have changed many things in this rural town, it has not changed the spirit of the people who live here.

Valley Mills High School is a testament to the belief that teamwork, working hard and overcoming adversity can lead to success. This approach begins with community and campus leadership making these values a priority. By administration, staff, parents and community leaders modeling these principles, students understand and recognize their highest potentials.

These core values can be seen through the focus on College and Career readiness at VMHS. Future preparation and planning is a priority for the school. Not only does the campus offer the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSI) free of cost to students during a school day, continual college and career counseling for parents and students is also provided. The Career and Technical Education department is another priority for Valley Mills High School. VMHS provides seven different pathways for students which lead to industry based certifications and career preparation. Before students graduate, they have the opportunity to become certified or accumulate practicum hours in their field of study. Additionally, students have the opportunity to sign up for a work study program which allows them to work and obtain high school credit. By having a robust Career and Technical Education department, students can focus on obtainable goals that provide them purpose and applicable skills for their futures. With the help of community partners and dedicated stakeholders, we are proud that VMHS is able to deliver these opportunities for our students.

Another priority for VMHS is excelling academically in the classroom. The majority of students are involved in multiple activities across the campus. Together, the leadership and staff work collaboratively to support student needs for ultimate success. From the coaches and directors to the teachers and administration, the culture of teamwork is evident. If students begin to fall behind, there is a team of support behind them to help pick them up and lead them to success. Knowing how involved the students are, tutorial time is scheduled every morning at 7:30am. Teachers, coaches and students value this time. Students know that every morning they have the opportunity to gain assistance for work that may be behind or content that they may be struggling with. Having this time dedicated for teachers to work with students individually, or in a smaller group, holds students accountable and has closed many achievement gaps.

Valley Mills High School has implemented many programs that enhance the culture of community and teamwork. The largest program, which is made up of more than a quarter of the high school population, is the Interact Club. VMHS has partnered with the local Rotary Club and together created a high school chapter for the students. Locally, Interact students have helped host the district Food Drive, decorated the town for Homecoming and Christmas and has helped local families in need of assistance. The hours of community service students give is a testament to their character and the culture of Valley Mills.

Challenges will always be a part of life in any community, but Valley Mills is proof that challenges can be overcome when people come together to support each other in doing the work needed. Even when the unknown of Covid-19 was upon us, the support from the families was immense. Providing a quality education in the safest means possible was at the forefront of school and district leaders. Maintaining high expectations for students on and off campus was a difficult balancing act but through teamwork and perseverance Valley Mills High School was able to accomplish great success. VMHS strives to develop successful leaders and it is the spirit of the community to work together to build the future.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

The mission of Valley Mills High School is to educate each student to the highest levels of academic achievement and enable students to become successful in a global society. The goals of VMHS are that all students will achieve academic excellence and graduate prepared to transition into post-secondary education or careers. VMHS holds high expectations for all students in and out of the classroom. Whether students are sitting in a math classroom or working in the shop, students understand the expectations set before them. The value of building character and a strong work ethic is at the center of VMHS. School leaders and teachers model perseverance and teach students to learn from their mistakes and not simply give up. Valley Mills High School uses common language and the school's motto “Every Step, Eagle Pride” is used on a daily basis and displayed around campus. This motto symbolizes that no matter where Valley Mills High School students go, they will walk with character, no matter what challenges arise. The faculty and staff empower the students of VMHS to critically think and problem solve, but also support and scaffold students to help accomplish success. VMHS is able to achieve these accomplishments by recruiting, developing and retaining qualified and highly effective personnel. This can be done through the support and relationships built between campus leadership and the teachers and staff. By listening and knowing the teachers, administration can tailor support for individual needs, from professional development to curriculum supplies. By modeling this mission, the teachers feel valued. In return, a culture of positive relationships and collaboration is built in and out of the classroom. At Valley Mills High School, we strive to cultivate the potential in our students to be successful leaders and productive members of the future.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Valley Mills High School’s English Language Arts department utilizes the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as the foundation of the curriculum with scope and sequence coming in a state adopted curriculum. Using the Year at a Glance and the Instructional Focus Document, which is provided within the curriculum, teachers are able to plan using a backwards-designed instruction based on the TEKS and unit assessments. Formative assessments include, but are not limited to: entry/exit tickets, quizzes, summaries of learned information, essays, etc. For summative assessments, VMHS uses end of grading period exams through an online data and testing software, along with the student’s cumulative work and essays.

Teachers spend time getting to know their students in order to create buy-in. One way they do this is by utilizing student surveys to cover topics of interest to engage learners. Teachers use these surveys to find writings, books, essays, plays, etc. to build student interest. Teachers use culturally diverse pieces of literature to ensure inclusion to the demographics of the Valley Mills population and the world around them. VMHS English teachers also use texts that are cross curricular, including some items such as memoirs and historical fiction to help students better understand significant historical events like World War II and the integration of public schools. Instructors use multiple genres, not only because it is expected in the TEKS, but also to encourage learners to want to read quality literature.

When Covid-19 hit in March 2020, teachers were not prepared for a full online format. Since returning to school in August 2020, VMHS teachers have become more adept at using online capabilities. Teachers use multiple online resources to cover essential knowledge and skills, pulling from a variety of online resources. Teachers have utilized online student platforms to present lessons and assignments. Being able to use these platforms have helped tremendously when students are out of the classroom. Having the capabilities to record lessons or create PowerPoints and push them out to the students creates a seamless transition for students that have had to stay home due to illnesses like Covid-19.

VMHS English teachers use a variety of instructional approaches including direct and indirect instruction. Instructors use methods including explicit teaching, lecture, essays, discussions, novels, problem solving,

and inquiry to name a few. By using multiple ways of instruction teachers are creating an environment for all students to be able to grow and learn. Teachers have high expectations and the students at VMHS strive to reach those expectations.

Summative assessment data comes from a composite of standardized unit assessments, state standardized assessments, essays, and teacher created exams. The data is disaggregated and compiled so that teachers and administrators can see how the students are performing. Afterwards, teachers will take and use the data to create new lessons or to drive the review of TEKS not yet mastered by the students. Teachers will also use this data to form groups for intervention or tutoring in hopes of eliminating the learning gaps.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The Valley Mills High School math department uses a systematic K-12 curriculum model designed, maintained, and continuously developed by a collaborative of Education Service Center personnel and exemplary educators from Texas school districts. This curriculum model supports the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in which students are held responsible for learning throughout the school year. This resource provides countless support for teachers from pacing guides to assessment builders and high quality lesson ideas. Teachers use this curriculum resource to plan out units and to further develop and adapt their lesson plans. The math department holds students up with high expectations and rigor, but also allows failure. The teachers provide a safe environment for mistakes to be made, using errors as a learning opportunity to grow.

The math department at VMHS is a major proponent of gathering data. Both formative and summative assessment data are continuously used. This data is gathered by simply analyzing exit tickets and homework as well as quizzes, unit tests and benchmark assessments. Teachers use the data to structure small groups, adjust instruction and identify student areas of struggle. The majority of the lesson planning process comes from the student's data to ultimately determine what will be taught and how it will be taught. By using historical data, the campus administration has identified a need for support in the math curriculum. A priority for the math department, and the campus leadership team, is to structure class sizes according to class and student needs. In some cases classes are designed to have fewer students, allowing for more focused and differentiated instruction.

Technology is a huge advantage for the VMHS math department. The teachers utilize online classroom portals to post lesson videos and note guides. With the constant moving and building nature of math, utilizing technology allows for students to not fall behind. Prior to Covid-19, some teachers were beginning to use this technology. However, when the school had to shut down and teachers had to teach remotely, the math teachers collaborated on how to provide quality instruction to students who are not physically in the classroom. During this time, campus administration provided teachers with an additional conference period to develop innovative lessons and to remote conference with students. With this, the math teachers developed and organized lessons that included videos and notes for all content. This initiative not only proved to be successful during virtual learning, these lessons have become a powerful tool for our students. Students still get sick and travel a lot for activities, however they are able to stay up-to-date with their math lessons while they are away from the classroom. Outside of posting lessons, technology allows for assessment to move online as well. The math department utilizes both paper and technology for gathering data. Exit tickets, homework, quizzes and tests are still assessed on paper, in order for the teachers to examine errors more clearly. However, larger summative assessments are assessed through an online data and assessment portal to simulate state testing practices.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The Valley Mills High School science department provides innovative and engaging instruction to our high school students. The science teachers value real world application and it is evidently shown through their lessons. With brand new science labs and grant funding, our teachers are able to enhance student learning by delivering memorable instruction for students to take away. A few years ago, the science department wrote a grant and was awarded funding for a virtual lab for Anatomy and Physiology students to dissect the human body. Most recently, more funding was awarded to the science department to purchase an Earth and

Space Virtual reality simulation for students to have the opportunity to physically see and explore the world and the universe. Additionally, the science teachers utilize their labs by exploring experiments in Chemistry and Physics and dissecting animals in Biology. With the donation from a local farmer, the Advanced Animal Science students learned how to butcher a pig properly and got to keep the meat. If an experience cannot be done in the classroom, the teachers think outside of the box and take the students on field trips. These field trips include caves, science museums and cadaver labs.

By utilizing the district provided curriculum, science teachers are able to navigate the content that needs to be taught. Like the other departments, the science teachers use the curriculum guide and data to structure and design their lessons. The data is then used to reteach those who are struggling while the students who are mastering move on to enrichment.

Due to the abundance of technology and experience based learning, the science teachers struggled with providing engaging lessons during Covid-19. Field trips were canceled and virtual labs were provided to remote students. The student data showed the teachers and campus leaders the power of innovative learning.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Valley Mills High School uses a state provided curriculum as a guide for Social Studies and Civics curriculum and instruction. In addition to the aforementioned curriculum, the students examine the United States Civics and Citizenship Test review material and sample questions. A series of questions from the United States Civics and Citizenship Test are pulled and placed within the 11th Grade United States History State of Texas End of Course (EOC) exam. Through a multitude of available components, teachers design thorough and relevant lessons that drive student success. At Valley Mills High School, teachers follow each subject's scope and sequence, adjust and or modify student specific instruction as needed, and create classroom environments that are conducive to learning. Student success is derived from a variety of instructional techniques. Those techniques include activities like daily discussion questions, the implementation of theatrics through student role playing of historical events, the use of student created art in the form of political cartoons, and digital presentations developed by students through a variety of formats.

Student progress and achievement is reviewed and analyzed at Valley Mills High School in many different ways. Effective pedagogy by Valley Mills educators in the classroom is demonstrated through daily monitoring and adjusting. Assessing student progress can come in the form of class discussions, quizzes, kinesthetic activities, unit assessments and online formative assessments. STAAR testing is another example of an assessment that allows educators at Valley Mills High School the opportunity to evaluate student success and compare results with not only other schools in the area, but schools of varying sizes across the state of Texas. Valley Mills High School takes very seriously the task of providing the best possible opportunities for students to be successful through curriculum and instruction in the academic realms of Social Studies and Civics learning.

1f. For secondary schools:

Starting in eighth grade, Valley Mills students begin preparing for college and career readiness. Through a career study, students select endorsements and programs of study that address their interests and strengths and guide their course selections throughout high school.

VMHS has an excellent Career Technical Education (CTE) program. Due to current enrollment, only one program of study is required, however VMHS uses Local Labor Market data to create seven CTE programs of study which reflect the needs of the community, region, and state. These programs include Animal Science, Applied Agricultural Engineering, Exercise Science and Wellness, Nursing Science, Family and Community Services, Teaching and Training, and Design and Multimedia Arts. CTE pathways culminate in senior level practicums of real-world experience along with Industry Based Certifications for immediate job placement upon graduation. For example, the digital media students design online content and news features of the school's latest events; the family and community services students tutor elementary and middle school students as well as work with outside agencies. Students in the Applied Agricultural Engineering class

create an array of projects and can leave high school as certified welders. Next year, the inaugural class of Nursing science students will begin their practicum while earning their CNA certification.

VMHS also partners with the local community college to offer dual-credit classes in order to give students the opportunity to earn college credit and high school credit simultaneously. Dual Credit is offered to all high school students, beginning in 9th grade. Many VMHS students take advantage of this partnership. Students are enrolled in online courses and scheduled to work on them during the school day. VMHS teachers, administration and the counselor are all available to provide support for the Dual Credit students who need additional assistance.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Valley Mill High School has a diverse fine arts program with high quality facilities. These facilities provide the opportunity for innovative courses to be offered to our students for a creative outlet. The newly constructed band hall has multiple practice rooms which has allowed the creation of the class, applied music, to occur simultaneously with other music classes. The Valley Mills Eagle Band is a pride of the community. The band is a representation of hard work, high expectations and partnerships throughout the school. Student athletes, valedictorians and student body leaders can be seen marching at halftime. Many of these students take advantage of the applied music course for additional practice or sign up to assist the band directors with the beginner and Junior High bands. Outside of music, VMHS offers multiple art classes from beginner art to advanced art. The art classroom has a top of the line kiln and pottery wheel which has allowed for a ceramics class to be created. Additionally, Valley Mills High School offers floral design and theater to all high school students.

Health and wellness are important to Valley Mills High School. Traditional physical education courses are offered to all high school students. Students may also participate in athletics, outdoor education and marching band while enrolled at VMHS. Through these courses, students are taught grit, problem solving skills and teamwork. These values are modeled by the coaches and directors, to which they hold their students accountable in and out of the classroom.

Through granted funding and administrative support, Valley Mills High School is a one-to-one technology campus. Every student at VMHS is issued a Chromebook to use throughout the school year. These Chromebooks allow for differentiated learning and innovative teaching. The availability of student technology has also allowed VMHS to expand its partnerships outside of the school building. Even though VMHS only offers Spanish to be taught in person to students, the school provides an alternative option, allowing students to pursue other languages of interest. French, German, Latin and American Sign Language are offered through an online learning program. Additionally, Valley Mills High School has partnered with the local community college to provide a multitude of dual credit options for students to enroll. These courses are fully online and scheduled into the student's school day. Dual Credit courses are open for all high school students who qualify. They work closely with the school's guidance counselor, who monitors student progress and college and career planning.

Outside of fine arts, athletics and technology, Valley Mills High School prides itself in preparing students for life outside of high school. VMHS provides course pathways to certifications in the areas of nursing and welding, along with a work study program which allows for students to work during the school day. Furthermore, every senior is required to take Dave Ramsey's Personal Finance course. Students have a multitude of opportunities to express creativity and challenge themselves everyday.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

A more recent priority for Valley Mills High School is providing quality intervention and remediation for struggling students. Due to the structure of the daily schedule, VMHS currently lacks traditional intervention courses for students during the school day. However, intervention still remains a priority for VMHS and has forced the staff to think outside of the box. This year, the leadership team developed and organized a zero hour for morning tutorials. During this time, teachers are fully available for students to come in for additional support or simply to make-up missed assignments. Students and teachers honor this time and encourage all students to utilize zero hour for a tailored instruction from their teachers. Other student supports include the availability of Content Mastery, test corrections up to 70%, and specifically working with individual students in the front office and counselor's office. In addition to zero hour, a new course called STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) Prep was developed for students who did not pass the state assessments. These students are scheduled to work in the library, with the library aide, on an online remediation program. This time is utilized for students to close past gaps and to work together in small groups to further understand and master current assignments. Though further plans are being made to enhance this time, this intervention hour has currently shown success. Many students were able to pass the state assessment during winter retakes and overall student grades have risen. VMHS uses a variety of assessments to further clarify needs and skill gaps. Teachers and staff utilize this data for Response to Intervention (RTI) and specialty scheduling. The campus leadership team recognizes the challenges of providing quality intervention to high school students. But through collaboration and brainstorming, student intervention is ever changing and remains to be a priority when building the master schedule.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Many students are successful at Valley Mills High School. For the small size and limited personnel of the campus, VMHS is proud to offer a variety of courses that challenge advanced students. For high achieving students, there are an array of honors and advanced courses, dual credit opportunities, and diverse endorsement pathways which allow enriched learning experiences. VMHS is partnered with the local community college and offers many dual credit courses to any student who qualifies for the program. The courses available to students are not only the core subjects, but fine arts and foreign language as well. Students who begin the dual credit program early enough in high school can graduate high school with an associates degree or a program certification. All of dual credit programming is offered to VMHS students virtually. Enrolled students are scheduled time during the school day to work on their Dual Credit classes. This limits travel to the college and allows students to have full access to all of the courses and extracurriculars that VMHS offers.

VMHS students are also given the opportunity to take Advanced Placement (AP) classes and participate in the AP exams in May. Though VMHS does not have the personnel to teach these classes in person, the school values AP programming. In order to provide AP courses, VMHS has recently invested in an innovative online education platform that allows students to virtually take AP courses during the school day. Outside of Advanced Placement courses, the same online platform also offers additional regular courses that the master schedule may not accommodate. Through this program, we have had students enroll in Latin, German and multiple health science courses. By thinking outside of the box and not allowing infrastructural limitations, Valley Mills High School is able to provide a challenging and enriching learning experience for all students.

3c. Special education:

At Valley Mills High School, students that qualify for special education services are served in a variety of ways that meet their learning needs. The district takes part in a shared service arrangement to serve the students that are identified under special education. The special education teacher and diagnostician work together to determine the best instructional plan for the students and create an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The majority of VMHS special education students are mainstream with content mastery support, with a small percentage who receive resource classes. In addition, the few students who require a more restrictive environment travel to a neighboring district to receive services in a life-skills room. Students in both settings are provided with individualized instruction and a vast array of services to meet their educational needs.

Through the IEP team, special education students are scheduled for specialized instruction and intervention. Special education students who need modified and more targeted instruction are scheduled for small group intervention with an instructional support aide. This extra time in the day allows for personal attention to focus on study practices and help close educational gaps. With the support of the IEP team, special education students who need more support are also placed in smaller classes so they receive more concentrated support. Using historical and current data, the English I teacher and campus leadership team specially designed an English I class for struggling students. This small class allows the teacher to teach the necessary TEKS at a differentiated level. Since the creation of this class, data has shown growth in reading and writing levels with the struggling students, including those who are in special education. By working together as a collective team, special education students are provided with a multitude of supports. These supports close achievement gaps and create successful opportunities for student achievement.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

Valley Mills High School places a great emphasis on differentiating instruction to meet the unique needs of our English Language Learner (ELL) population. All teachers are provided professional development on instructional strategies at the beginning of each school year to help support ELL students. Some of these strategies include how to incorporate visuals, manipulatives, sentence stems, graphic organizers, scaffolding, wait time, and peer reteaching into their daily lessons. An additional attention to the differences between conversational and academic language supports is incorporated into training.

In addition to professional development, all English teachers are English as a Second Language (ESL) certified and employ a variety of strategies to help ELL students. Teachers understand the importance of using these strategies before lessons even begin. ELL students are pre-taught vocabulary and often receive a set of notes early, with crucial elements highlighted. Teachers check regularly for understanding, repeating, rephrasing, or reteaching as needed. Since the overwhelming majority of our ELLs are Spanish speaking, there are plenty of opportunities for teachers to pair a newcomer with a student who can explain concepts in their first language.

The Director of ESL at Valley Mills High School closely monitors the grades and progress of ELL students. Regular meetings with struggling or failing students are scheduled to provide additional educational support and even coordination with teachers. The ESL director meets with all of the ELL students in the spring semester in order to help them improve their listening and speaking skills on the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) test. During this time, she reinforces strategies and provides additional resources for language and academic growth. Additionally, the ESL director provides continual professional development and support to all of the teachers and staff at VMHS throughout the year.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:

Valley Mills High School believes in quality education for all students, no matter their background and home life. As a campus, the majority of VMHS students are classified as economically disadvantaged. Though the poverty rate may be high, the culture of the school and the community is not discouraged by the challenges that this may bring. Through support of district stakeholders and community partnerships, VMHS has been able to find ways to provide vast resources to all students. The school, and district, do not believe in limiting student opportunities due to a lack of family finances. Valley Mills High School is able to waive and help finance student educational fees, ranging from technology to programming.

As a one-to-one campus, technology plays a vital role in the educational lives of students. The campus has created many supports for students who cannot afford technology fees, allowing all students to have a school issued Chromebook. Additionally, students who do not have access to the internet are able to take home a free hotspot for the year. Outside of campus fees, VMHS is able to provide scholarships for career and technical education certification exams, dual credit courses and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, VMHS administers the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSI) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) free at cost for all VMHS students. No matter what a student's financial situation may be, Valley Mills High School refuses to restrict student futures.

On top of scholarships and financial aid, the campus leadership team believes in providing for the health and well-being for VMHS students. Nutritional breakfasts and lunches are provided to all students free of charge every day. Students are also provided with clean clothing, hygiene supplies and shoes when needed. Administrators also transport students to and from school when circumstances arise. Believing in all students and overcoming obstacles is the center of VMHS student success.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Valley Mills High School strives to engage and motivate students while providing positive environments that support academic, social, and emotional growth. Student engagement comes in a variety of formats in the classroom. Teachers create warm and inviting classroom environments that engage students without students feeling embarrassed or threatened to participate. Peer acknowledgment is a valuable tool that is used to encourage student success. The simple acts of positive affirmations after student participation, builds trust and support in the classroom. Academically, this drives students to perform at a higher level. Socially, positive peer acknowledgment fosters productive relationships. Emotionally, positive reinforcement allows students the opportunity to evaluate self-worth. Classroom success is more attainable when students have both camaraderie and a sense of community. The feeling of community also comes from the positive attitudes of the staff. Teachers make time each day to get to know students and inquire how they are doing as a whole. One way this is achieved is by taking just a few minutes each class to have time for questions, comments, and concerns. This is a great opportunity to answer classroom questions and address student concerns. Motivation for student success at VMHS also comes from the open lines of communication between teachers and parents/guardians. Valley Mills educators understand that, and use positive communication with parents/guardians as another tool that encourages and drives student achievement. Through phone calls, emails, and face to face interactions, guardians are constantly informed of the progress their children are making both academically and socially. These relationships build a foundation for the students to engage and succeed. The ultimate goal is to prepare students to have success as they enter into their postsecondary chapters. By engaging students, families and teachers, VMHS is able to guide students into focused areas of study. These pathways are designed for students to gain specific knowledge and skills that they can use after graduation. Valley Mills High School recognizes that it takes a team to educate and engage students to reach their potential. Even through the school closures and remote learning, VMHS had strategies in place to maintain student engagement. The use of technology and availability of student devices created a streamlined transition to digital and online learning without the sacrifice of quality instruction. This allowed for clear lines of communication and teacher availability. By using innovative programming, teachers, students and their families were able to remain engaged and connected to the learning community at VMHS.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Community residents, local businesses, and family members have always been a vital part of VMHS. Being a small town has great advantages because of the spirit of community. “It takes a village to raise a child”, and VMHS has the best “village” surrounding the students. Members of these committees assess needs of all stakeholders in order to provide the students with the most meaningful education possible. Community input is integral to the curriculum offered at VMHS. The Valley Mills Education Foundation and the CTE Advisory Board were created to bridge the gap between home, business and school. Students are not only prepared to immediately become successful members of the greater Valley Mills area upon graduation, but are also exceptionally prepared to further their post-secondary education.

Several businesses work directly with the high school students on a daily basis, whether it be in a Career Preparation class, volunteering with the Family and Community Services class, or as a business partner on the CTE Advisory board.

Opportunities abound when working with our community partners. Our Family and Community Services class tutors elementary students daily while also working with Habitat for Humanity to build houses. They have also partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to write a monthly business spotlight article to be published in the local newspaper. The Interact Club is new this year and students have already worked with the Chamber of Commerce to decorate for Christmas in the park, volunteered to feed the homeless through a local church organization, and have participated in multiple opportunities at the elementary school. The Outdoor club takes regular trips to fish or camp with local family landowners, while learning about nature and survival. Family, Career, Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) create projects for our local

community with hygiene bags for the local homeless. Lastly, VMHS held a Mother/Daughter Self-defense class, partnering with the local police department and a local church to teach combat strategies for common physical threats. VMHS Booster Clubs allow families to be a part of the school atmosphere and decision making. VMHS booster clubs range from Athletic Boosters, to FFA, and Band.

Parent communication is a key value at VMHS. Parents have several points of contact to learn what's happening at school between Social Media posts, the principal's weekly newsletter and Student-produced weekly news blasts recounting highlights of the last week and upcoming events.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Valley Mills High School creates a supportive environment for teachers and staff by prioritizing their humanity over them as a resource. Part of being supportive is caring about teachers' personal and family lives as well as their professional ones. Campus administrators love and trust the staff and show this love in a multitude of ways, some as simple as a smile and a positive thought expressed. The campus celebrates achievements like teacher of the month and incentivizes furthering education. VMHS also provides elements like, wedding and baby showers, snacks for a random treat, and the occasional lunch in order to show that they are not just employees, they are family.

Valley Mills High School promotes a supportive culture by providing a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers and staff. Due to the small size and nature of the school district, teachers are encouraged to travel to conferences, network and engage in their learning. Administration also brings in guest speakers and specializes professional development for staff as needed. Newly hired teachers are also assigned a mentor to help in any way needed. This mentor is available to guide new hires through the day to day business of the school, such as introducing them to people they may not know, the computers systems, policies and procedures, or just lend an ear to listen. Additionally, the frequent vertical and horizontal department meetings ensure a team effort making teachers feel supported and not so isolated, especially during remote learning.

VMHS teachers and staff take care of each other in many ways, with one of the biggest being classroom coverage. Since the development and spread of Covid-19, it has been difficult to get substitute teachers on a consistent basis. Teachers, staff, and administrators are always willing to pick up a class and cover it to help colleagues out so that they can take care of their own personal or family needs. This takes it back to seeing the human before the employee. Teachers are valued and actively involved in decision making by being able to express feedback and contribute in positive ways.

Modeling what is expected of VMHS learners, teachers and staff collaborate and communicate in positive practices, to create the critical thinking environment that has become essential for success. Having a passion for student growth has led to positive attitudes and an eagerness to flourish.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team at Valley Mills High School focuses on a servant leadership style. Developing and maintaining deep, positive relationships with teachers, students and community members are placed at the forefront of the campus administrators' philosophies. Administrators can be seen in the hallways talking to students and teachers during passing periods, in the cafeteria picking up trash and sitting with parents at extracurricular activities. The campus leadership team also steps up when there is a substitute shortage and drives transportation routes when no one else can. There is not a job administration will not do. There is a deep belief among the leadership team that VMHS is home. Leading with purpose and by example has allowed students, staff and stakeholders to develop a sense of trust. The administrative team on campus has also maintained an open door policy. Staff members are made to feel welcome to come visit at any time and students are encouraged to email or stop by the office for assistance. The leadership team believes that it is important to have a willingness to listen because of the value in knowing the students and staff; knowing who they are and what they need. By living this philosophy, the leadership team has been able to adapt and adjust according to teacher and student needs. An example of this is illustrated through the master schedule. Due to the nature and size of VMHS, administration has the capability to adapt the master schedule each

year. Different student groups have different needs and by listening to the teachers and looking at data, the leadership team designs the master schedule accordingly. This year the leadership team added the course Integrated Physics and Chemistry specifically for a group of our freshmen who may not be ready to take three End of Course graduation exams. Moreover, the leadership team is looking at adding a robotics and engineering course for a group of students that will be coming into high school over these next few years. Listening to the teachers and adapting for students, whether it is through intervention or enrichment, allows VMHS to differentiate and tailor instruction directly for the students. Communication and trust allow us to think outside of the box and provide different opportunities for our students. Being present, engaged and positive will always be a key priority for the leadership team at Valley Mills High School.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

With a significant Hispanic/African American population and very diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, VMHS is committed to making sure that every student receives not only a first rate education but also understands that they are a vital part of our community. Teachers encourage students to celebrate their unique heritage and also foster respect for cultural differences. In regard to current events, students are taught how to think critically, how to ask questions that consider alternative viewpoints, and most importantly, how to honor themselves and others in their speech.

Students whose families are struggling financially are often referred to the Valley Mills Food Pantry which provides staples as well as fresh fruits and vegetables for our community. If there are other issues going on as well, the counselor refers families to free family and adolescent mental health counseling and free drug and alcohol rehab.

The English as a Second Language (ESL) program seeks to help parents who speak a second language to feel included and comfortable playing a part in their child's education. Early in the school year, parents of ESL students were invited to attend a meeting that was geared toward promoting literacy and addressing mental health concerns. A counselor was brought in and held a discussion about anxiety in the age of a pandemic and any concerns parents had in general. VMHS bought and gave away books in English and Spanish for students and books with strategies for parents to help themselves and their children. Parents were also given an information sheet about important dates, who to contact if they had questions, etc. It included websites with helpful information for every age and stage of development and information about counseling services available in English and Spanish (some of which are online and free) if they need more support than the school can give. There will also be a family fun night this spring for families to get together, play games, and enjoy themselves.

Another way that VMHS works to ensure respect, cultural awareness and emotional and social health is through Wellness Wednesdays. The counselor and administration began this program this school year in which once a month during an Advisory period, students are led through a discussion about a relevant topic. Topics have included cultural diversity, substance abuse, suicide prevention, dealing with anxiety, the benefits and pitfalls of social media use, using gratitude to develop more positivity, and developing healthy habits and routines.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There are numerous strategies that the staff at Valley Mills High School strive to use for students to be successful. The main driving force behind each and every strategy is the desire to foster positive relationships with students and their families. The administration, teachers and staff members flourish on the philosophy of building relationships first.

Over the years, it has been a core value to make every one of the students feel special, to feel heard and to feel appreciated. Campus leaders take pride in knowing the names of every student on campus and can personally welcome and address each and every one. We firmly believe that this simple act creates deep value for the students and enhances their sense of identity. With a strong foundation of trust, students are encouraged to seek out the counselor if they need to talk about a problem or if they are feeling overwhelmed. The principal and assistant principal are just as available and welcoming to students who need a listening ear or helpful advice. The teachers, custodians, and support staff are just as student-centered and compassionate. Many can be found throughout the day mentoring and helping students with school work and life lessons. One way we connect with students each month is by observing Wellness Wednesday during Advisory. During which, the staff provides students with strategies to navigate their mental health and social dilemmas. Most importantly, this time provides an opportunity for students to speak on an emotional level with a trusted adult in a small group. Implementing Wellness Wednesday has allowed the staff at VMHS another chance to connect with students. By fostering connections with students, VMHS believes that they will rise to the expectations set before them.

Beyond student relationships, VMHS values students' families. Communication, home visits and encouraging parents to meet on campus is a significant way that the staff works together as a team. When a student and her mother were in a terrible car accident, students, teachers and campus leadership came together to ensure that the family was taken care of. Outside of email, many families have direct contact with the staff and administration, whether this is through social media or personal phone calls. This creates accessibility and connection outside of the school day. The relationship first mentality is the root of all success at VMHS.