

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Julie Marshall

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

Official School Name Timber Lake High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 500 Main Street PO Box 1000

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Timber Lake State SD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 57656-1000

County Dewey County State School Code Number\* \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone 605-865-3654 Fax 605-865-3294

Web site/URL http://www.timberlakeschool.org E-mail julie.marshall@k12.sd.us

Twitter Handle NA Facebook Page NA Google+ NA

YouTube/URL NA Blog NA Other Social Media Link NA

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Jarod Larson E-mail: jarod.larson@k12.sd.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Timber Lake School District 20-3 Tel. 605-865-3654

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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**Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.**

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

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

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

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☐ Urban or large central city
  - ☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - ☐ Suburban
  - ☒ Small city or town in a rural area
  - ☐ Rural
3. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	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	10	9	19
10	18	10	28
11	11	11	22
12	5	17	22
Total Students	44	47	91

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 59 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 41 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 11%

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, 2012 until the end of the school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	94
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.106
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL  
 Number of non-English languages represented: 0  
 Specify non-English languages:
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 41

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 14 %  
13 Total number of students served

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

1 Autism	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	4 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	7 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	0 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
1 Mental Retardation	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0 Multiple Disabilities	0 Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	9
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance 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 6:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	94%	94%	94%	94%	95%
High school graduation rate	92%	86%	95%	95%	100%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	24
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	38%
Enrolled in a community college	8%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	29%
Found employment	4%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	21%

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

Yes\_ No X

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

## PART III – SUMMARY

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“Timber Lake School provides a safe environment that empowers students to become critical thinkers and responsible lifelong learners in a changing society.” This is the goal that we strive for each day that we have the privilege of working with students in our district. We have high expectations for our students academically and behaviorally that lead them to be thinkers and problem solvers for the present and the future. Our hope is that when a student leaves us, they will have attained the skills and character to take on any challenge or career pathway they desire.

The achievement of this is attained as the result of many factors. We work to attract and attain high quality teachers while maintaining a low student teacher ratio. We are aware that our students will need to be globally competitive and strive to provide top notch technology resources and opportunities to enhance instruction while incorporating higher order thinking skills. Our comprehensive guidance program consists of two counselors who specialize in career readiness, behavior coaching, and weekly classroom lessons and activities.

We strive to provide a safe environment in keeping students physically and emotionally protected and prepared to make the best of their learning environment. This includes an initiative called Caring School Climate which includes the following components: promoting respect, giving students a sense of belonging, decreasing bullying behaviors, building developmental assets and developing service learning. Service learning has been enhanced with programs such as Operation Backpack and Panther Pals. High school students volunteer to put together "backpacks" of food each Friday to send home with elementary students who may not have food available to them over the weekend. Items for the backpack program and funds for it are provided by our community. The local grocery store posts signs that recommend certain food items for the program. Patrons may purchase the groceries at the store and drop them off there or bring them to the school. The Timber Lake community has been very supportive of this endeavor with several area groups conducting fundraisers to support the program. Panther Pals is a mentoring program that matches high school students with kindergarteners and first graders. Each week, the “pals” meet for 15-20 minutes and complete an art activity, read a story, do a math problem or just visit. We feel this builds leadership in our high school students and teaches them to be positive role models.

Each week, we require students to maintain a 2.0 GPA and have no F’s in subjects to remain eligible for extracurricular activities. We have recently implemented a program called ICU. Just as a hospital has intensive care for sick patients, we have ICU for students with "sick" grades. Each week, we run an eligibility report that identifies students who have a GPA below 2.0 or an F in any class. These students are first put on a warning list and after two weeks put on an ineligible list. At the beginning of the week, parents are informed and asked to help support their student. These students are required to stay after school at least two days during the school week to receive extra help in the class in which they are struggling. Parents willingly make transportation arrangements for their child to help them gain success. The teachers in our district are willing to come early in the morning, stay after school and sometimes give up their preparation periods to work with these students and improve their grades. This program has significantly decreased the number of at risk students.

Timber Lake is on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in northwestern South Dakota, but also serves students on the Standing Rock Reservation. Our town boasts a population of nearly 450 people, but we are surrounded by a largely rural farming and ranching community. Our district covers over 1200 square miles of area spanning from the Missouri to the Moreau Rivers. We attract students from not only Timber Lake, but Trail City, Glencross, Isabel, Firesteel, White Horse, Ridgeview, Little Eagle, Mobridge and Eagle Butte. Some students and their families choose to drive over 40 miles one-way daily to attend our school. Demographically, we are a mix of Native American and Caucasian families and nearly 50% of our students qualify for free and reduced lunches. Community and parent support is key to the success of Timber Lake School. They have celebrated with us in the accolades of being named an exemplary, high performing South Dakota High School, a National Title I Distinguished High School, as well as employing the South Dakota Teacher of the Year and State History Day Teacher of the Year. The school is the hub of our small town and there is pride taken in it by students, staff, alumni, parents, business owners, community members and many other stakeholders.

## PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

a) In South Dakota, students have taken a standardized assessment called the DSTEP (Dakota Standardized Test of Educational Progress). The basis of the DSTEP test are the SD Content Standards which were developed from 2007-2009. The results of this assessment, place students into one of four categories: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced. The major objective of our state and district is to place as many students in the Proficient and Advanced categories as possible. Students in the Proficient or Advanced categories have proven that they have met or exceeded the expectations for their grade level and can perform the expectations of the content standards fluently. At the high school level, students are tested at Grade 11 only and in the subject areas of math, ELA and science.

b) In analyzing our data over this five year trend, there are many significant observations. In both areas of ELA and math, we see few, if any, students placed into the advanced category until 2010-2011. As a high school staff, we struggled and were frustrated with the fact that students saw no motivation in taking the Dakota STEP test. Therefore, an incentive program was put into place for 11th graders that tied to privileges they would receive the next year as senior students. Students who scored proficient or advanced in two of the three categories tested (math, ELA and science) were allowed an extra semester of senior privileges. These privileges are a tradition at our school, but previously were only allowed during the second semester of the year. They are negotiated between a spokesman from the senior class and the principal and include such options as going to lunch five minutes early, open campus for study hall, and the use of iPods during study halls. These are all inexpensive, simple incentives, but were very important and motivational to our high school students. The data shows that this is a contributing factor in the rise of our scores over the past three years.

During the 2010-2011 school year, we were able to offer some additional course selections in math and science. These included Honors Physical Science and Honors Geometry. Over time, it seems that these classes are helping us to boost the amount of students who are in the proficient and advanced testing categories.

In the subgroup of socio-economically disadvantaged students, our scores show an increase from 2009-2013. We realize that many of our students come from economically disadvantaged home situations and we strive to provide ways to ensure success for these students. Breakfast and lunch programs are available for all students to ensure proper nutrition. We have also started to offer an afternoon snack of fruit during the afternoon as well. After school tutoring programs have also proven effective.

Our efforts in making data driven decisions have also focused on closing the achievement gap in our Native American population. If we compare the scores of Timber Lake Native American students to the state scores, we see that our students have historically scored significantly higher. For example, in 2013, approximately 73% of Timber Lake Native American students scored proficient or advanced in reading, while the state average was 49%. In math, similar results are shown in 2013. Seventy-three (73%) of our Native American students were in the proficient or advanced category, with the state scoring 37%. We have made efforts to infuse Native American cultural activities and events to our curriculum and calendar to celebrate and help students find pride in their culture and history.

A subgroup that is not highlighted in the reported data, but has received attention in our inservice and planning discussions is the achievement gap between males and females. We found that over time our male students were not scoring as well as our female students. Our attempts to improve this are merely anecdotal but include a search to find reading materials and books that appeal more to the male gender. Several male professionals have been guest speakers in classes and spoke about their postsecondary and career experiences in hope of bringing relevance and inspiration to our boys as they made plans for after high school.



Overall, we are encouraged by our data results, but know that we have to continue analyzing it and looking for areas to improve to continue to provide the best education possible for our students.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

Data driven decisions are essential in improving student achievement. Over the past three years, we have developed a team of teachers from across grade level and curriculum and dubbed them our Data Leadership Team. This team meets in the fall to analyze data from our Dakota STEP and ACT scores. With this information and expertise from the Data Leadership Team, we are able to formulate goals and a plan of action to achieve those goals for the district. The leadership team then conducts an inservice with the entire staff to get input on the goals. We are then able to focus our inservice times throughout the year around implementing the goals set by the leadership team based upon the data analysis. Services are also contracted through our local ESA (educational service agency) and state TIE (Technology and Innovations in Education) to bring in outside speakers to introduce strategies and resources to help us attain our goals. Our district has also conducted surveys of students, staff, parents, community members and alumni to get feedback on our instructional practices. In the classroom, teachers use formative and summative assessment to design their instruction and be reflective educators.

These results help us to make instructional decisions. Assessment results have been used to evaluate curriculum and changes that may be needed in subject areas. For example, we realized that informative text reading strategies needed to be implemented across the curriculum. Teachers have been making a concerted effort to model and practice common reading strategies throughout our high school. In staff meetings, multiple reading strategies have been introduced and modeled. Teachers are then able to implement these in their instructional practices.

Communication with parents, students and community takes on many forms. Parents are sent an individualized letter that summarizes their students' testing results along with an explanation of their meaning. Over the past two years, we have also sat down with students and shared the results with them. This has been powerful in that students now understand how they achieved in each subtest. Many were considered "bubble" students, which means they were very close to moving up a category or down a category. This look at the results gave them a more vivid realization of their performance. Administration reports to our school board our assessment results as well as the district goals for the upcoming year. Our local newspaper shares our data in their print and online newspaper editions as well as comparing Timber Lake to several other schools in the area and the change in our scores over time.

## **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

We have a variety of avenues in which we can share the resources of our school. One of our top resources is obviously our staff. Teachers Watching Teachers is a new program that has been implemented this past school year. Each teacher was required to choose two of their colleagues, one within their content area and one outside their area, and schedule a time to observe a lesson taught by another teacher. The goal of this assignment was for teachers to see different instructional styles and strategies to use in their own classrooms. We have many top notch teachers, including the South Dakota Teacher of the Year. It is vital to tap the valuable teacher resources that we have at our fingertips.

Inservice time has also been used to share within the district this year. Teachers work in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) and are broken into groups based upon content area and grade level. Within these groups, teachers can share effective instructional strategies with each other as well as have vertical teaming discussions to alleviate gaps between grade levels.

Other districts have also been able to benefit from the resources within our district. We have hosted teachers from neighboring districts and offered to allow them to come in and shadow our teachers. Our high school science teacher has presented to a variety of groups throughout South Dakota and the entire United States and shared her expertise in a curriculum called NMSI (National Math and Science Initiative). In the special education department, our resource room teacher will present at our state conference on Student Led IEPs

and how they can impact the education of students with disabilities. Our superintendent has presented information on several of the programs that our school and district utilizes on both a state-wide and national stage including the Lakota Education Conference and National Indian Impacted Schools Associations National Conference.

Our district is remotely located in north central South Dakota and we have to often think outside the box to discover ways to bring in expert speakers and resources through videoconferencing and internet resources. We are fortunate to have a school board that supports and understands the need to share successes and proven strategies with other educators and districts to improve the education of all children.

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

Family and community support is vital to the success of our district and we are fortunate to have this in our small town. Our school is the hub of the community and our facility is often used for community events and gatherings. Attendance at our extracurricular events is high and includes community members who no longer have students in school, but still wish to support our current student body.

We constantly strive to continue to look for ways to maintain and improve our relationships with parents. Quarterly newsletters are sent home with report cards to give information on specific happenings in the district. Our superintendent writes a quarterly column in the local newspaper and several other school staff serve as guest columnists as well. Our website is always changing and evolving to meet our patrons' needs. This includes weekly calendars, pictures, teacher lesson plans and newsletters, handbooks, policy books and many other useful links. Parents are able to access their students' grades through our website as well.

As a principal, a goal is to make phone contact with parents often in a positive fashion and to highlight students when they are making a difference in the school as well as when there are concerns. Our staff is encouraged to keep the lines of communication open with parents through email and phone calls. Our homework policy helps to ensure this. If a student does not have his or her homework done for a class, he/she is sent to the office to call or a letter is sent home to inform the parents. In this regard, we can work together to ensure the child completes assignments and stays on target for completing courses. Parents of students who are on the warning or ineligible list are contacted on the first day of each school week to encourage participation in our ICU program.

Student led conferences are a new initiative that has been implemented. With teacher direction and guidance, students prepare a script ahead of time that has them consider their strengths and areas of needed improvement within each class they are taking. When conferences arrive, the student is the guide in the conversation with the teacher and his/her parent. We have found this is a powerful tool to open up the lines of communication between all involved in the child's education. It also allows students to become more aware and invested in their own learning and achievement. The results of student led conferences have been phenomenal with a 10% jump in attendance at our most recent parent teacher event.

Twice per year, special school board meetings are set aside specifically for public input on our educational programs. During monthly school board meetings, principals and the superintendent give reports on the state of the school. As a school, we are always open to input from parents and community members to maintain and improve the district.

## **PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Curriculum:**

The curriculum for our high school provides a well-rounded venue of choices for students at all grade levels.

Our English Language Arts department consists of two instructors. At the freshmen level, we are able to offer two sections of ELA. One of these sections is a targeted assistance class that allows students who are reading below grade level and need to work on specific skills. A smaller group atmosphere and more one on one instruction to help them make gains early in their high school career. Sophomore level classes are focused on composition, literature, and speech skills and are also broken into two groups to allow a smaller student teacher ratio. At the junior and senior levels, instructors have designed a curriculum that offers a variety of choices that meet the writing and literature requirements of our district and state. As students make class choices, they can focus on specific classes that will help them in the college and career choice of their future. These include AP (Advanced Placement) courses.

Our math class selection ranges from Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, PreCalculus/Trigonometry, College Algebra, and Calculus. We have three instructors that are math teachers, but two of them also work in the science department. Honors sections of several of these classes are available to push those students who have accelerated abilities. Smaller sections again allow for a smaller student teacher ratio. College Algebra is offered as a dual credit class with student choice of an online program or a teacher driven course. Advanced Placement Courses in Calculus have also been taken by students through state grant opportunities. Students take these classes online through a university instructor and are given the assistance of a school proctor. Several students over the years have taken advantage of upper level classes and have received college credit for them.

Science instruction in the high school is shared by two instructors who also teach some math classes. Required classes within the district are Physical Science and Biology, Chemistry and/or Physics. Honors sections of both Physical Science and Biology are available to students who are on a college readiness path. In addition, we offer a class called Applied Physics. The intended student audience for this class is students who are planning to attend a technical institute. For college bound students, AP Biology and Biology II are offered in alternating years to meet the needs of juniors and seniors.

Social science is covered by one instructor and includes classes in World History, American History, American Government, Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice and World Geography. Several of these classes are rotated every other year to offer more variety and specialization. Our hope is to eventually include an AP American History class.

Fine arts classes are offered in art, band, and chorus through two instructors. One of our English teachers also teaches Spanish I and Spanish II and we have one student taking a French class online this year.

Health and physical education are a requirement for our freshmen students and Outdoor Recreation is P.E. class offered as an elective to juniors and seniors.

The Timber Lake district also requires students to complete 1.5 credits of technology education in their freshman and sophomore years. We have recently hired a new technology instructor who is opening up opportunities for us to offer more certified business classes in the future.

Online learning has opened up many opportunities for students to seek out electives directly related to their interests.

Unique to our district is the availability of traveling career and technical education classes and instructors. These are offered by our local educational service agency and include such courses as Building Trades, Welding, Small Engine Repair, Hospitality and Tourism, Health Occupations, Graphic Design, Computer Assisted Drawing and Design, and Electronics. These are offered on a semester basis through mobile units

that are rotated between schools in our area. Several of the units offer special certification that students can take with them to college, technical schools or the workforce.

Our guidance counselor is able to help each student plan and register for classes each spring. She is able to discuss postsecondary plans and allow students to design a schedule that best helps them prepare for their postsecondary aspirations.

## **2. Reading/English:**

Our English Language Arts program attempts to strike a balance between grammar skills and usage, text analysis, as well as many venues of writing skills. With two English instructors, we are able to keep our class sizes small and individualize them to the needs of our students. Our freshman are split into two groups, with one being recognized as those who have struggled with reading and writing skills in middle school. The small group setting allows them to receive more individualized instruction and helps remediate skills and build strategies to help ensure a more successful journey through the remainder of high school. Junior and senior level courses are able to be differentiated for students who plan to attend technical school versus those who are attending a four year college. Examples of courses that are designed and offered by our instructors for upper classmen are Research and Technical Writing, American Literature, British Literature, Creative Writing, World Literature, Multicultural Literature, Literary Analysis, and Forms of Fiction. There is a semiannual rotation so that all students have the optimal choice of electives.

Instructional strategies are varied to meet learning styles. All high school classrooms are equipped with promethean boards and teachers use flip charts and interactive lessons and games. Each teacher also has a mobile cart of laptops for student use for research and writing purposes. Blogging and online publishing resources are utilized as a way to vary the writing menu and expose students to other forms of writing. Our hallways are often decorated with posters and other samples of student work from their ELA classes. Skits, drama performances, speeches and debates are also formative and summative assessments of student learning. Traditional methods of lecture, note taking, tests and quizzes still have their place as well. Daily vocabulary and grammar exercises provide structure, stability and needed skills.

Our state requires us to participate in a computerized program called Write to Learn. This program provides a writing prompt for students to follow and once submitted a computer assesses the writing piece based upon the six traits of writing. Students in our Advanced Placement course take a test to determine if they are eligible for college credit for the class.

With the adoption and implementation of Common Core Standards, it has become evident that ELA standards must be shared across the curriculum and this has been a focus of our Professional Learning Communities during professional development time.

## **3. Mathematics:**

Small class sizes and differentiation based on students' needs help drive the design of our math classes. As freshman, students who have been targeted as needing extra assistance are placed in a prealgebra class to help remediate missing skills and build confidence in a small class setting. Other freshmen are able to take on Algebra I which is offered in two sections with the same instructor. State graduation standards require that students must complete Geometry and Algebra II in addition to Algebra I. Geometry is offered in two sections with one being an honors section. We also offer two sections of Algebra II in order to reduce class sizes. Students who are on a college bound track can also expand their math skills with PreCalculus/Trigonometry, Calculus, College Algebra and online AP classes. Students must take and pass the AP test to attain college credit.

With the adoption of Common Core Standards, the focus of our math curriculum and instruction has revolved around the Eight Standards of Mathematical Practice. Instructors within the math PLC group have honed in on problem solving and application of math concepts as well as correctly using math algorithms and procedures. Our PLC facilitator is trained in a curriculum supplement called NMSI (National Math and Science Initiative). The goal and practices of NMSI are to provide hands-on exploration based activities that

deepen number sense and understanding of math concepts. Students are asked to use higher level thinking skills to justify and defend their answers and processes. This is a process that we have seen results with and correlate with Common Core Standards and the Eight Standards of Mathematical Practice.

Math teachers use journal writing as a formative assessment. If students can explain how to solve a problem and explain their answer, then they have truly learned a concept. Our teachers received training in a critical thinking writing strategy approach called Writing to Win. This curriculum offers a variety of writing prompts that fit all subject areas. Writing to Win is implemented across the curriculum.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Social Sciences is an essential piece to our curriculum. Class offerings in this area also rotate from year to year to give students a variety of class offerings. Instructional strategies in our social studies area are very project oriented. Students create simulations, posters, presentations and models to prove their understanding of a topic. For example, during our state's legislative session, our students are asked to choose two bills to track and follow throughout the session. This way they are given a first-hand look into the law making process. In addition, students visit the legislature to see it in action and participate in a mock legislature with area schools. This type of multisensory approach is typical in the unit design of our social science classes. Reading and understanding informational text is an essential skill in these subject areas. Students are exposed to a variety of text including primary and secondary sources. Reading strategies to help students better understand informational text are implemented.

Our district is fortunate to have an art teacher on staff who has designed a school wide art curriculum. High school students are able to place art in their schedule as a fine arts credit. Many of our students have found a vested talent in art as well as a creative outlet particularly our Native American students. The outcomes of this class are also project based, but include art history and analysis and application of famous artists' techniques. Higher order thinking skills are implemented with a method called visual thinking strategies. This technique requires students to make observations about a piece of artwork and inferences about the theme and message that the artist was trying to portray. Self-reflection at the completion of units requires students to focus on the strengths of their project as well as areas they would change. Modeling and providing effective feedback and guidance are successful methods used in the art classroom.

Science is another highlight of our school. Hands on learning and labs are common place in both of our science classrooms. Reading strategies to better understand informational text and journal writing are implemented in science. The NMSI (National Math and Science Initiative) strategies that are used in math are also used in science classrooms. These encourage higher level thinking skills and a deeper understanding of scientific concepts. Physical science is divided into two sections with one being an honors class. Biology is separated into two sections to ensure a smaller student teacher ratio. Our state requires that students complete Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry and/or Physics to receive a high school diploma. Students can choose electives to meet their postsecondary needs with Applied Physics, Biology II, or Advanced Placement classes offered both in house and online.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

The instructional methods implemented in our district vary among teachers and grade levels. We are fortunate to have a high school computer lab, four mobile lab carts and two mobile iPad carts to provide technology opportunities for our students. Teachers use interactive programs, word processing, spreadsheets and desktop publishing to complete research and assignments. The promethean boards located in high school classrooms also allow technology to be incorporated into lessons daily.

Multisensory learning is a method that many teachers use in order to reach all learning styles and needs. Questioning techniques are essential in promoting higher order thinking. Teachers strive to ask questions that are open ended and require students to elaborate and expand. Chunking classes into sections to maintain student focus and attention is also used by several teachers. Teachers incorporate reading and writing skills across the curriculum to show how content areas connect. The program Writing to Win offers specific strategies to incorporate writing in all subject areas.

Several of our teachers have received summer training with the NMSI initiative which implements specific, higher order thinking instructional methods. Teachers who teach AP classes have had training in the teaching methods that are required to prepare students to do well on the Advanced Placement test. Teachers often attend workshops and trainings throughout the year and willingly come back to share these with their colleagues.

## **6. Professional Development:**

This year our professional development activities have hinged on a concept called Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Teachers were divided into grade level and content area teams with a teacher facilitating each group. We have four full day inservices and five 1/2 day inservices in which our PLC groups can focus on improving student achievement within their teams. There are three big ideas of the PLC concept. First, groups must focus on learning. The fundamental purpose of schools is to ensure all students learn at high levels. Second, there must be focus on collaborative teamwork. Ensuring that all students learn requires us to work together to meet their needs and find the best ways to educate our children. Thirdly, we must focus on student achievement. We all want students to be successful. PLC's are no different and the focus must be work to increase student achievement. Engaged students are learning students, learning students are achieving students.

After each inservice, a meeting was held with PLC facilitators. Administration asked for feedback and suggestions on the PLC process and what they needed for support. Notes from each PLC session were submitted to principals to increase accountability. In addition, an end of year presentation on for the whole staff on what goals they set, how these goals were accomplished, the instructional strategies gained, and vertical teaming decisions that were made.

Each spring, administration works collaboratively to define the needs and priorities of the coming years' professional development and design the district's strategic development plan. Objectives are written as well as strategies to meet the objectives created. PLC's will continue to be the driving force in our professional development plan. Our goal is to create a collaborative environment that allows teachers the ability to build one another's professional capacity and proactively address challenges faced. The PLC process allows us to increase professional capacity through positive collaboration and to support the important work of improving instructional strategies and curriculum tools.

## **7. School Leadership**

School leadership encompasses many pieces. Our overall vision for school leadership is focused, driven and collaborative. We are focused on student achievement and improved performance in all areas, driven to succeed no matter the obstacles, and collaborative in nature to instill shared leadership. The superintendent and principal have visible leadership roles within the district, but teacher leaders are an important piece to implementing a leadership vision. Our teachers rise to this occasion by being on our data leadership team and serving as PLC facilitators.

Administratively, we attempt to meet weekly to discuss issues and celebrations within the district. At this time, we are able to share ideas to deal with concerns and communicate with one another. The decisions that are made in regard to policies and programs all relate to student safety and achievement.

The principal's role in being an effective leader includes many pieces. One is being visible and available to students, teachers and parents. It is important to listen to feedback and opinions and support educators in their efforts to provide the best educational opportunities possible. Enforcing and reviewing policies and programs for effectiveness is important to maintaining student safety and well-being. Our school is always and evolving and changing and our policies need to reflect that. School climate makes a difference in how our students learn and achieve. Our principal works to maintain an orderly, but positive environment to ensure that students feel that they belong in school. Instilling student pride in their building and school adds to the motivation of keeping our school the best it can be.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

**Subject:** Math

**All Students Tested/Grade:** 11

**Publisher:** Pearson

**Test:** Dakota STEP

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2009

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% Proficient	71	43	53	52	44
% Advanced	24	26	6	0	0
Number of students tested	22	23	18	23	18
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient	70	8		57	40
% Advanced	30	62		0	0
Number of students tested	10				
<b>2. Students receiving Special Education</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. African- American Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Asian Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>7. American Indian or</b>					

<b>Alaska Native Students</b>					
% Proficient		57		43	30
% Advanced		21		0	0
Number of students tested		14		16	12
<b>8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>9. White Students</b>					
% Proficient	69				
% Advanced	31				
Number of students tested	14				
<b>10. Two or More Races identified Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>11. Other 1: Other 1</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>12. Other 2: Other 2</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>13. Other 3: Other 3</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:** In 2009 and 2010, we did not have enough students for subgroups in the White category or Students with Disabilities category. In 2011, we did not have enough students for qualifying subgroups in the White category, Native American category, economically disadvantaged category, or students with disabilities category. In 2012, we did not have enough students in the White and Students with Disabilities subgroups. In 2013, we did not have enough students in the American Indian subgroup and Students with Disabilities subgroup. Data for the number of economically disadvantaged students who tested in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school year was not available.



# STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**All Students Tested/Grade:** 11  
**Publisher:** Pearson

**Test:** Dakota STEP  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2009

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% Proficient	52	43	41	39	62
% Advanced	48	26	18	0	6
Number of students tested	22	23	18	23	18
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient	40	54		36	60
% Advanced	60	8		0	10
Number of students tested	10				
<b>2. Students receiving Special Education</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. African- American Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Asian Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students</b>					
% Proficient		57		31	60
% Advanced		21		0	0

Number of students tested		14		16	12
<b>8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>9. White Students</b>					
% Proficient	38				
% Advanced	62				
Number of students tested	14				
<b>10. Two or More Races identified Students</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>11. Other 1: Other 1</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>12. Other 2: Other 2</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>13. Other 3: Other 3</b>					
% Proficient					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:** In 2009 and 2010, nonqualifying subgroups were as follows: White and Students with Disabilities. In 2011, nonqualifying subgroups included White, Native American and Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged. In 2012, nonqualifying subgroups were White and Students with Disabilities. In 2013, nonqualifying subgroups were Native American and Students with Disabilities. Data for the number of students tested in the economically disadvantaged subgroup was not available for 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.