



**Vista Heritage Global Academy**

**Charter Petition for a Five-Year Term  
(July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2025)**

**Submitted to the  
Orange County Department of Education**

**July 31, 2019**

**Dr. Donald S. Wilson,  
Superintendent/Lead Petitioner  
Vista Public Charter Schools**

## **ELEMENT 1 – THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

*“The educational program of the charter school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the charter school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(i).)*

*“The annual goals for the charter school for all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to Section 52052, to be achieved in the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those goals.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii).)*

*“If the proposed charter school will serve high school pupils, a description of the manner in which the charter school will inform parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements. Courses offered by the charter school that are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges may be considered transferable and courses approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the “A” to “G” admissions criteria may be considered to meet college entrance requirements.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(A).)*

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

| <b>General Information Table</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| • The contact person for Charter School is:  | <i>Dr. Don Wilson,<br/>Superintendent</i>                      |
| • The contact address for Charter School is:   | <i>2900 West Temple<br/>Street, Los Angeles CA<br/>90026</i>   |
| • The contact phone number for Charter School is:  | <i>(213) 201-4000</i>  |
| • The proposed address or ZIP Code of the target community to be served by Charter School is:  | <i>2609 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street<br/>Santa Ana, CA 92703</i> |
| • The grade configuration of Charter School is:  | <i>6-8</i>   |
| • The number of students in the first year will be:  | <i>300</i>   |
| • The grade level(s) of the students in the first year will be:  | <i>6-8</i>   |
| • Charter School’s scheduled first day of instruction in 2020-2021 is:   | <i>August 10, 2020</i>   |
| • The enrollment capacity is:<br>(Enrollment capacity is defined as the total number of students who may be enrolled in Charter School regardless of student residency.) | <i>450</i>   |
| • The type of instructional calendar (e.g. traditional/year-round, single track/multi-track, extended day/year) will be:   | <i>Traditional</i>   |
| • The bell schedule for Charter School will be:  | <i>8:00AM – 3:00PM</i>   |
| • The term of this Charter shall be from:  | <i>July 1, 2020 to June<br/>30, 2025</i>                       |

## **COMMUNITY NEED FOR PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL**

Vista Heritage Global Academy (VHGA) originally was founded in 2015 with the intention of transforming the school experience, meeting the evolving needs of students in Santa Ana, and ensuring that every child in attendance receives a rich, individualized, rigorous and joyous education that prepares him or her to be college and career-ready as a productive and successful global citizen rich in humanity. VHGA is one of four schools operated by Vista Charter Public Schools, Inc. (VCPS):

- **Vista Charter Middle School (VCMS)**, authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District (“LAUSD”), opened in September 2010; in 2018-19 served 406 students in grades 6-8: 93% Hispanic/Latino, 4% Filipino, 1% African American; 98% of students qualified for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL), 23% English Learners (EL), and 7% Students with Disabilities (SpEd).
- **Vista Heritage Global Academy (VHGA)**, authorized by the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), opened in 2015, and in 2018-19 served approximately 300 students in grades 6-8: 99% Hispanic/Latino; 100% FRPL, 33% EL, 9% SpEd and 2% foster/homeless youth.
- **Vista Condor Global Academy (Vista Condor)**, also authorized by OCDE, opened fall 2018 with 132 students in grades K-5 and enrollment demographics similar to Vista Heritage.
- **Vista Horizon Global Academy (Vista Horizon)**, authorized by LAUSD, will open in 2019 in the Koreatown neighborhood of Los Angeles and ultimately serve students in grades K-5, with demographics anticipated to be similar to VCMS.

Over the past four years, our schools collectively (Vista Schools) have garnered the following recognitions and success:

- While not required, both of our middle schools have full accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). VCMS received a full six-year accreditation in 2017/18, and VHGA earned a three-year accreditation in 2017/18, the highest accreditation possible for a first-time award.
- In 2016, VCPS hired Dr. Don Wilson to serve as our new Superintendent. Dr. Wilson has led our Board of Directors and stakeholders through comprehensive strategic planning and self-reflection, including a more focused vision and instructional focus, as detailed throughout this charter petition. As detailed in his biography just below, Dr. Wilson has been an exceptional leader with OCDE for more than 30 years, including leading one of the top-performing elementary schools in the state, Wonderland Elementary.
- VCPS has established collaborative partnerships to benefit our students and their families:
  - *Asia Society* and their *International Studies Schools Network*: As a part of this network, we are provided resources and opportunities to enrich the educational experience for our students through their framework of educating for global competence.

- *Ojai Foundation and Circle Ways*: Provides mentoring and coaching support for our Way of Council program.
- *CSU Long Beach School of Education*: Educational Affiliation Agreement to support CSULB's Early Fieldwork and Credentialing Program through student observers, student teachers, and the opportunity for Vista staff to guest lecture in certain CSU Long Beach courses.
- *CSU Fullerton Center for Economic Education*: CSU Fullerton students guest teach financial literacy concepts at VHGA, and for VHGA students participate in their annual Stock Market Olympiad and Titan Fast Pitch events.
- *Pepperdine Graduate School of Education*: VHGA hosts and mentors student teachers.
- *IFA-China*: Partnership agreement to create sister schools and educational exchanges with schools in China.
- *Easter Seals*: partners with our SpEd team to help prepare our students with workforce skills.
- *Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County*: provides dentists and dental services to VHGA students at the school site free of charge to their families.
- *Loaves & Fishes X10*: provides food bank with free food and basic supplies to families in need at Vista.
- *Olive Crest*: provides parenting classes for VHGA parents free of charge.
- *California Policy Center*: provides parents classes on how the educational system works, called the "Education Commandments."
- *Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce*: VHGA is a member of the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce, which provides a multitude of networking opportunities to local businesses and community organizations as VHGA establishes a greater presence in the Santa Ana community.
- **MTSS SWIFT FIT** – The SWIFT Center for Education at the University of Kansas, a partner with OCDE on their Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) Initiative, rated VHGA with a 90% composite overall score in just our second year of the program (2018-19), up from a 75% in our first year of MTSS implementation (2017-18). The SWIFT-FIT is a "Fidelity of Implementation" tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of MTSS programs. This assessment contains 51 features within 5 domains (Administrative Leadership, Multi-Tier Support, Integrated Education, Family Engagement, and Inclusive Policy).

### ***Leadership Team***

#### ***Donald S. Wilson, Ed.D., Superintendent***

Prior to joining Vista Public Charter Schools in 2016, Don Wilson worked for OCDE for almost 30 years. He most recently served as an Instructional Director in the Intensive Support and Innovation Center under Superintendent Tommy Chang and as Instructional Director for Linked Learning. In this role, he supervised 20 schools ranging from elementary to high school. Prior to that he served as the principal at Wonderland Avenue Elementary School, where he increased student achievement five years in a row, making Wonderland one of the highest ranking schools in the state. He also

served as APEIS at 3rd Street Elementary School, Administrative Coordinator at Santa Monica Blvd. Community Charter, and ELD/Title I Coordinator at Manchester Ave Elementary. He has 17 years of classroom experience as an elementary school teacher. Dr. Wilson completed a double Bachelor's Degree at Brigham Young University in English and Spanish Literature and received his Master's in Educational Leadership and Curriculum Design from Cal State Northridge. In 2011 he received the California Distinguished School Award for his work with Arts in Education and Way of Council, an innovative program that increases the social/emotional intelligence of students while focusing on oral language development. He also received the ACCIPIO Administrator of the Year Award for his work with diversity in education. In 2013 he was accepted into and completed the highly regarded SUPES Academy, a program designed to promote and train future superintendents.

#### Board of Directors

##### *Jose Rubio, Board President, Sixth Grade Teacher, Edison Middle School*

Mr. Rubio currently teaches sixth grade English, history, and art at Edison Middle School in OCDE. Following college, Mr. Rubio initially worked in the freight forwarding and logistics business for six years, then he left to pursue his true passion, teaching, which he discovered while working as a substitute teacher during college. Over the past 20 years, Mr. Rubio has taught grades one through eight, primarily in South Central Los Angeles. He is an advocate for the arts, especially theatre and drama, where he sees his students directly applying their listening, speaking, writing and reading skills. Mr. Rubio holds a Bachelor's in finance from the University of El Paso.

##### *Jody Molodow, Secretary, (Retired) Special Education Coordinator for Charter Schools, OCDE*

Ms. Molodow worked for over 40 years with OCDE, where her responsibilities included teaching special education students with challenges ranging from physical to severe educational needs. She also worked as a Coordinator for Gifted and Talented students and an Advisor in both the Early Education and Infant and Toddler programs. For the last six years of her administrative career with OCDE, she served as the Special Education Coordinator for Charter Schools. Starting when she was a teenager, Ms. Molodow has volunteered with groups such as Los Angeles Blind Children's Center and Special Olympics. Ms. Molodow is a graduate of the University of Southern California with a B.S in Social Science/English and an M.S. in Education/Special Education.

##### *Paul Vieyra, Residential Real Estate Agent*

Mr. Vieyra has been a Residential Real Estate agent serving Los Angeles, San Gabriel Valley, and North Orange County for the past 10 years. Prior to real estate, Mr. Vieyra worked in Middle Market Commercial Banking for more than 15 years, focused on relationship banking and contributing to a "Critical Thinking Group" that worked on improving core processing and compliance reporting for federal and state regulators. Mr. Vieyra earned an Associate's degree from East Los Angeles College.

*Mimi Kim, CEO, ChefDance LLC*

Ms. Kim is CEO of ChefDance, a world-class culinary event company that started in Park City in 2004 during the Sundance Film Festival. Prior to founding ChefDance, LLC, Ms. Kim financed and operated as a financier of various entertainment properties in Los Angeles, including the Highlands, Mint and Lure. She co-founded and served as the CEO of a software company, World Streaming Networks, which was sold in June 2001. Prior to World Streaming Networks, Ms. Kim founded Hunter Global Ventures in 1997; she currently facilitates both public and private investments in the technology, communications, retail and real estate sectors. Earlier in career, she worked as a strategic planner in the syndication and acquisition department for FX, a Fox cable network, and on Wall Street for six years as a corporate bond trader at Goldman, Sachs & Co.; as a vice president in corporate bond product management at Lehman Brothers; and as a corporate analyst at Merrill Lynch, all in New York. She has a B.A. in Economics and East Asian Studies from Barnard College and Master's in Finance and International Banking from Columbia University.

*Michele Bauer-Bean, Principal, Seaside Elementary School (Torrance)*

Ms. Bauer-Bean is a highly experienced educator who currently is the Principal of Seaside Elementary School in the Torrance Unified School District. She has been involved with education since her freshman year in college, when she was awarded a Graduate Fellowship as an undergraduate student for her work at the USC Nursery School. Ms. Bauer-Bean has worked in a variety of educational settings including a Korean community school, OCDE, The Buckley School, The Mirman School for Highly Gifted Students, Pomona Unified School District and the Torrance Unified School District.

Ms. Bauer-Bean briefly left education to attend Pepperdine University School of Law in the late 1990's. While there, she was awarded a Darling Foundation Scholarship for her work in public service. After earning her law degree and license, she returned to education as a school administrator. She has secured grants for building libraries, computer labs and music classes, secured free services by creating partnerships with local universities in the area of health screenings, counseling, and academic tutoring and helped sites implement intervention systems and gain Gold Ribbon Award recognition. Ms. Bauer-Bean holds a Bachelor's of Science in General Studies from the University of Southern California and a J.D. from Pepperdine.

**VHGA'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE CURRENT CHARTER TERM MEETS RENEWAL CRITERIA**

Based on its specific record of performance, VHGA has and will continue to meet the needs of the community it serves.

**ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE DATA AND OTHER ABSOLUTE AND COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**According to current California law and District policy, a charter school “shall” meet the following criteria set forth in Education Code section 47607(b)(4) prior to receiving a charter renewal: VHGA’s academic performance is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend, as well as the academic performance of the schools in the school district in which the charter school is located, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at the charter school.**

As noted in the Ed Code, “The determination made pursuant to this paragraph shall be based upon all of the following: (i) Documented and clear and convincing data; (ii) Pupil achievement data from assessments, including, but not limited to, the Standardized Testing and Reporting Program established by Article 4 (commencing with Section 60640) of Chapter 5 of Part 33 for demographically similar pupil populations in the comparison schools; (iii) Information submitted by the charter school.” (Cal. Ed. Code § 47607(b)(4)(B).

VHGA is located at 2609 W 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Santa Ana 92703. The following table lists the nearby traditional district schools our students would otherwise be required to attend (“Resident Schools”) along with the one charter school located nearby:

| School Name (grades served)               | Total 2018-19 Enrollment | % FRPL     | % EL             | % SpEd     | % H/L      |
|---|--------------------------|------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Vista Heritage (6-8)                      | 275                      | 100%       | 40% <sup>1</sup> | 7%         | 100%       |
| <i>Nearby Comparison Schools</i>          |                          |            |                  |            |            |
| Carr Intermediate (6-8)                   | 1,405                    | 94%        | 37%              | 15%        | 97%        |
| Spurgeon Intermediate (6-8)               | 829                      | 96%        | 43%              | 17%        | 96%        |
| Willard Intermediate (6-8)                | 708                      | 96%        | 43%              | 23%        | 98%        |
| <b>Comparison Schools Average</b>         | <b>981</b>               | <b>95%</b> | <b>40%</b>       | <b>18%</b> | <b>97%</b> |
| <i>Nearby Charter Schools</i>             |                          |            |                  |            |            |
| Magnolia Science Acad. - Santa Ana (K-12) | 674                      | 82%        | 36%              | 15%        | 89%        |

[\(http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/\)](http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/)

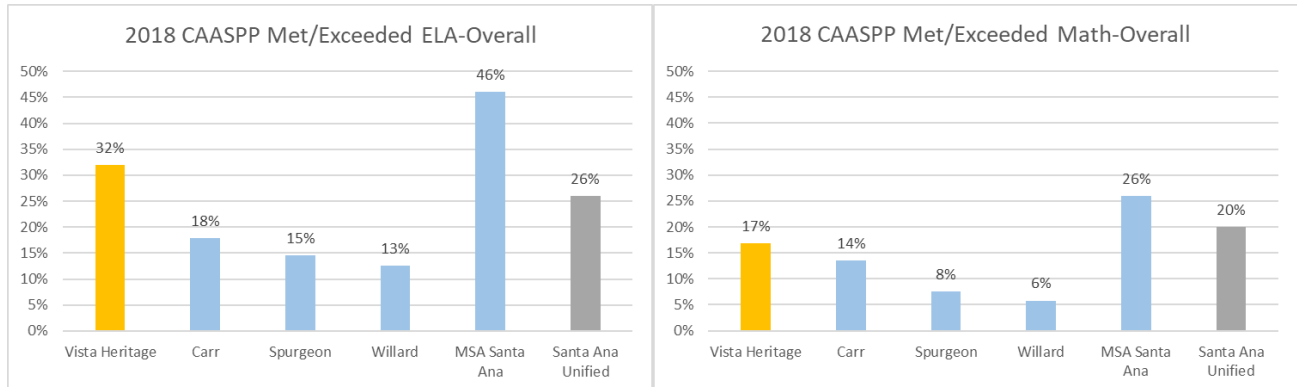
Like VHGA, these schools serve students who are predominantly low-income and Latino, with a significant EL population.

**California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”) Results**

On the 2018 CAASPP in English Language Arts (“ELA”), VHGA’s students outperformed all three Resident Schools by significant margins (32% Met/Exceeded standards at VHGA, compared to 13-18% at the three Resident Schools), and also

<sup>1</sup> EL enrollment increased to 40% in 2018-19, from 29% in 2017-18.

outperformed the local Santa Ana Unified District average for middle grades (26%), though our students were lower than the Magnolia charter school rates. In Math, with 17% Met/Exceeded, VHGA outperformed all three Resident Schools (6-14%), though fell short of the SAUSD and Magnolia proficiency rates (20-26%).

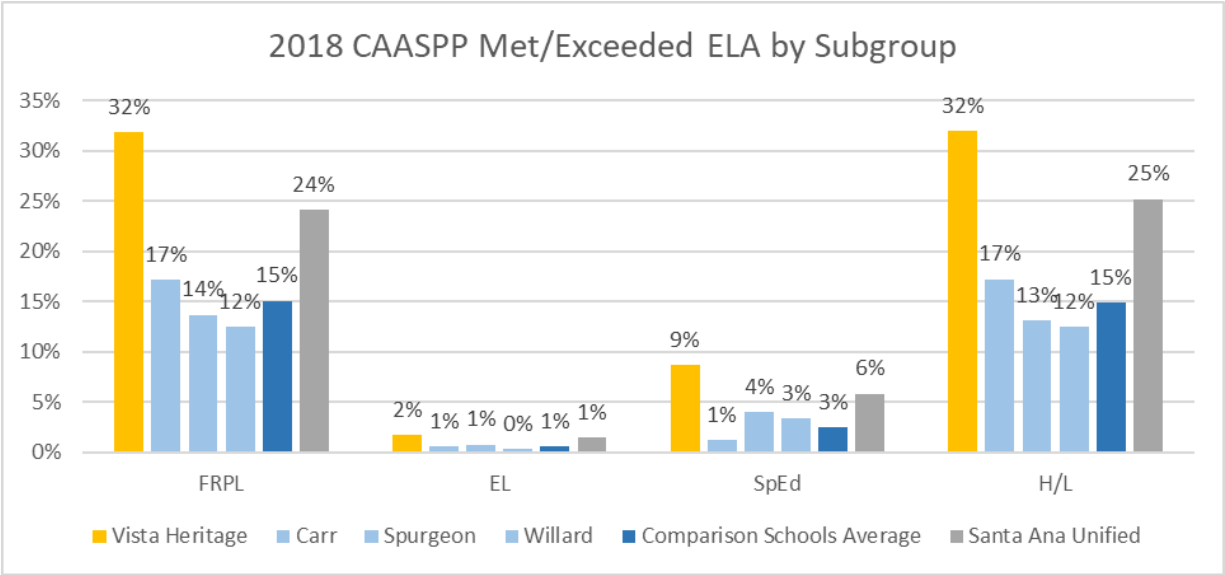


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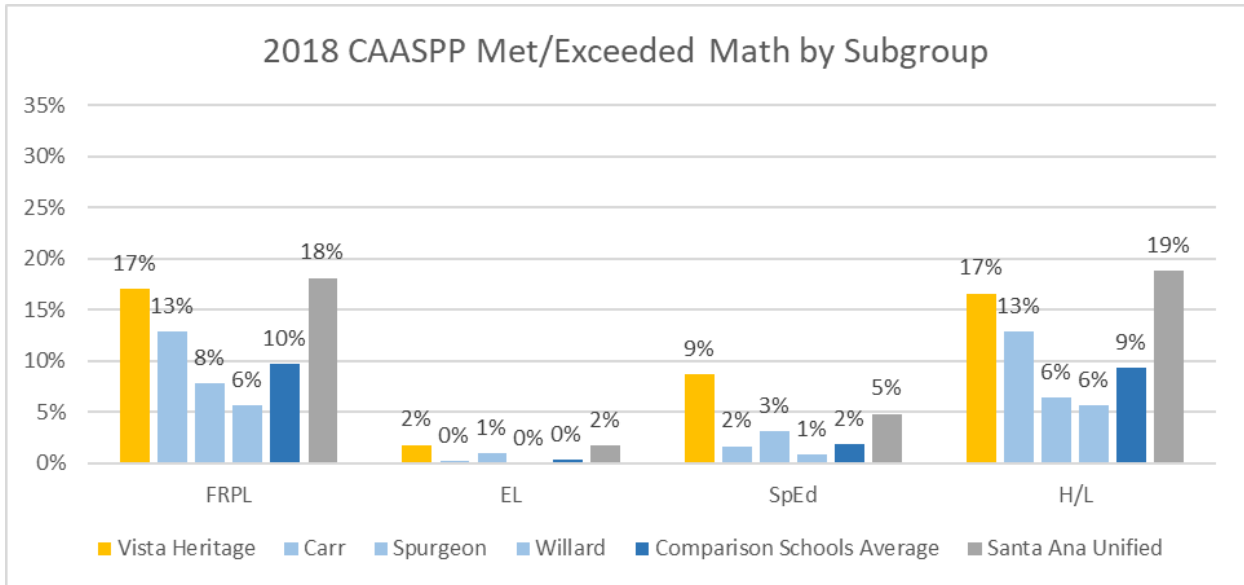
While not yet published, our preliminary results on the 2019 CAASPP again show growth, with a three percentage point gain to 35% Met/Exceeded in ELA, and a one percentage point gain in Math to 18% Met/Exceeded. While we have much more work to do, we are pleased with these results and the hard work our new school leader, our faculty and students have put in to strengthening students' performance on these assessments.

Our statistically significant subgroups' performance on the CAASPP has been stronger than our comparison Resident Schools as well. Our economically disadvantaged students (100% of enrollment) and Hispanic students (100% of enrollment) results are of course identical to the overall results. Our SpEd students are outperforming their peers at the nearby schools, with 9% Met/Exceeded in ELA (compared to 1-4% at the Resident Schools, 6% across SAUSD) and 9% Met/Exceeded in Math (compared to 1-2% at the Resident Schools, 5% across SAUSD). Our EL students (29% of enrollment in 2017-18, the year of the test data presented here), like their peers at the nearby schools, continue to struggle, with just 2% Met/Exceeded in ELA and Math (compared to 0-1% at the Resident Schools). We note that our high reclassification rates (discussed before) and performance of our reclassified students on the CAASPPs (41% Met/Exceeded in ELA, 21% Met/Exceeded in Math – higher than the overall schoolwide rates) indicate we are serving these students well.





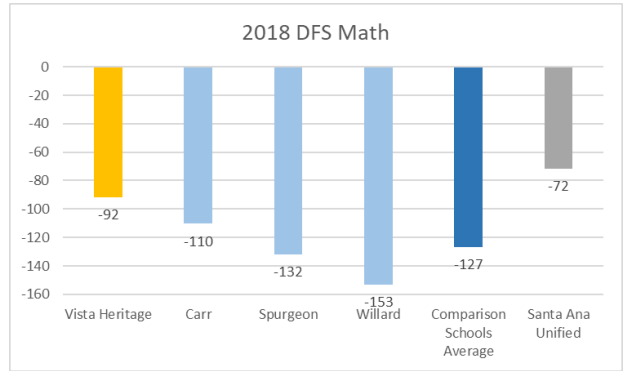
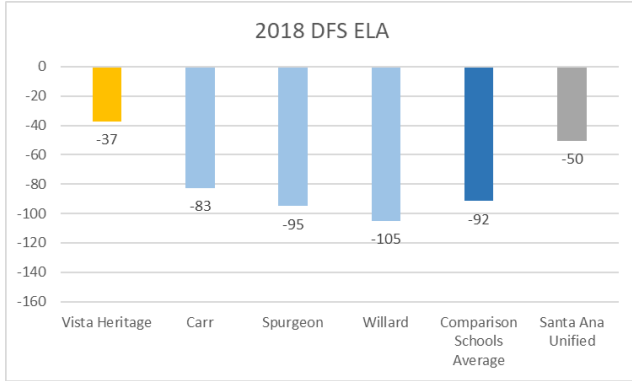
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**Distance from Standard (“DFS”)**

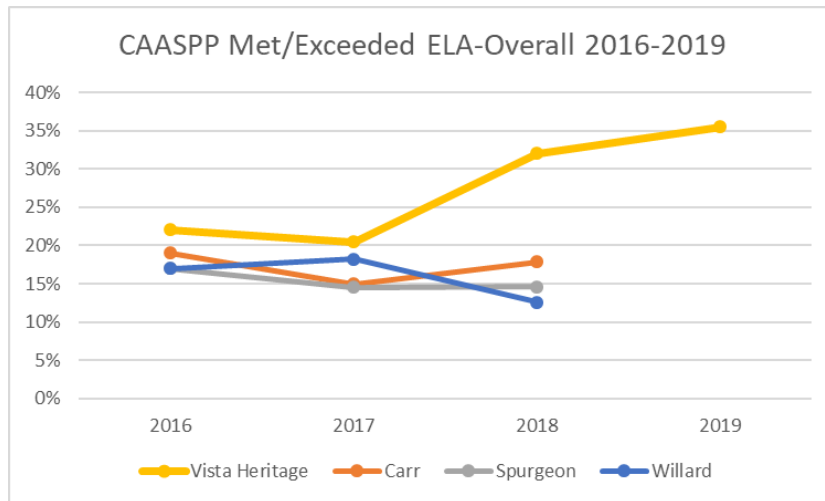
Under the new California Dashboard system, Distance from Standard measures how far the average student is from meeting the grade-level standard, or the “Distance from Level 3.” By this measure, VHGA outperformed the DFS of the three nearby Resident Schools in both ELA (-37 compared to -83 to -105) and Math (-92 compared to -110 to -153). In other words, overall, the average VHGA student is closer to meeting grade-level standards than their peers at the neighboring schools they otherwise would attend.

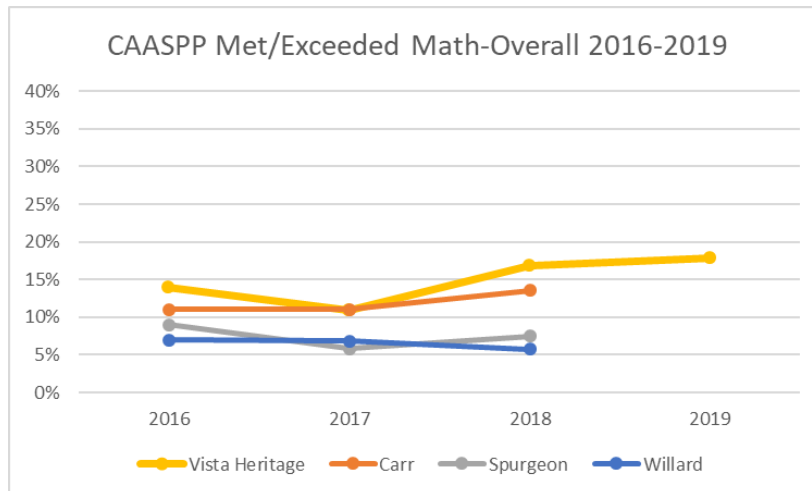


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### Growth on CAASPP

Overall, VHGA has made strong gains in ELA since 2016, after a slight dip from 22% Met/Exceeded in 2016 to 20% in 2017, and then a large 12 percentage point increase in 2018 to 32% Met/Exceeded and another small gain in 2019 to 35% (based on preliminary results). The nearby Resident Schools have had each lost ground since their 2016 outcomes in ELA, dropping one to four percentage points over the past three years. In Math, VHGA had a small dip in 2017 from 14% Met/Exceeded to 11%, but then gained six percentage points to 17% Met/Exceeded in 2018 and another small gain to 18% in 2019 (based on preliminary results). The nearby Resident Schools' results have been mixed, with Spurgeon and Willard each losing one percentage point over the 2016-18 three year span, while Carr gained three percentage points to 14% Met/Exceeded in 2018.





(<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>)

### **English Learner Re-Classification Rates**

In 2019, VHGA reclassified 31% of our ELs, significantly above the average for the Resident Schools (13%) and the local Santa Ana Unified rate (20%) for 2019. VHGA has had strong EL reclassification rates over the last four years (the current charter term), starting with 22% in our first year of reclassifications, 2017 (compared to 12% average across the three Resident Schools and 16% at SAUSD), 34% in 2018 (compared to 15% at the Resident Schools and 13% at SAUSD) and then 31% in 2019.<sup>2</sup> Given that the majority of our EL students enter VHGA “At-Risk” of Long-Term English Learner (LTEL) status (while another portion are “newcomer” ELs), we are proud of our results in helping these students finally achieve English proficiency and reclassification.

|                          | Vista Heritage | Comparison Schools Average | Santa Ana Unified |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 2016 EL Reclassification | 0%             | 24%                        | 19%               |
| 2017 EL Reclassification | 22%            | 12%                        | 16%               |
| 2018 EL Reclassification | 34%            | 15%                        | 13%               |
| 2019 EL Reclassification | 31%            | 13%                        | 20%               |

(<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>)

<sup>2</sup> <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

**Student Attendance Rate**

VHGA’s student attendance rates have been consistent and strong over the charter term, averaging over 96%. (Internal data.) This is a strong indicator that our middle grade students like to be at VHGA, and are engaged in school and their learning.

| Year    | ADA Rate |
|---------|----------|
| 2016-17 | 96.4%    |
| 2017-18 | 96.0%    |
| 2018-19 | 96.1%    |

(Internal Data.)

**Suspension/Expulsion Rate**

We are quite proud that in 2018-19, we had **zero suspensions and zero expulsions** (we have not had any expulsions since we opened in 2015). In three out of the past four years our suspension rate has been lower than OCDE (1.2%-1.8%). In 2016-17, our suspension rate was uncharacteristically higher (4.2%). With the arrival of new leadership the following year, a significant effort was made to focus on building relationships, improving school culture, including introducing Way of Council and Restorative Practices. These efforts have resulted in a drop in suspensions to 0.7% in 2017-18 and zero in 2018-19. (See Element 10 for more information about these efforts.)

| Year              | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Suspension number | 2       | 11      | 2       | 0       |
| Suspension rate   | 1.1%    | 4.2%    | 0.7%    | 0%      |
| Expulsion number  | 1       | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| Expulsion rate    | 0.2%    | 0.0%    | 0.0%    | 0.0%    |

(<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>, Internal Data)

**OCDE Annual Oversight Report**

Each year, our charter authorizer OCDE conducts a thorough annual oversight visit to assess VHGA across multiple metrics. OCDE staff wrote the following:

While the OCDE report addresses areas of growth, we want to share that the review team was very impressed with the school’s focus on disciplinary literacy and many of the essential practices that promote an engaging and positive learning environment for all students in general, and English learners in particular. That staff’s transparency during interviews and dedication to continuous improvement were also recognized. . . .”<sup>3</sup> A few highlights from the report include the following notes:

- Robust professional development program in place. Kagan strategies evident in classrooms. Bilingual teaching assistants in each classroom. School is piloting Mastery Learning model. School is following curricular program as described in charter.

<sup>3</sup> Vista Heritage Global Academy Annual Oversight Report 2018-19, May 24, 2019, “Oversight Report.”

- Governing board meetings comply with Brown Act. School submits agendas, minutes and audio of board meeting regularly and on time.
- Teachers hold appropriate credentials. School provided certification that all employees have been subject to criminal background check (FBI and DOJ) and tuberculosis risk assessment.
- School conducts monthly fire, earthquake or shelter-in-place drills. School maintains adequate liability insurance.
- Monthly coffee with Principal. School has a parent & community engagement committee in place.
- School is complying with admissions and enrollment practices as outlined in charter.
- School shows increases in overall CAASPP scores in English language arts and mathematics.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Stakeholder Satisfaction***

In preparation of our annual Local Control Accountability Plan (“LCAP”) update, reflection and goal setting process, we survey stakeholders. In 2018-19, parents responded as follows regarding our five LCAP goals:

- 100% of parents surveyed responded that “All students have access to an instructional program that promotes engagement through rigor and relevance.”
- 100% of parents believe “Vista provides a learning environment and resources that are equitable for all subgroups we serve.”
- 94% of parents believe “Vista staff is supported in an equitable way to grow in their development.”
- 97% of parents believe “Vista students receive socio-emotional supports that allow them to feel safe and successful at school.”
- 90% of parents believe “Parents are actively engaged as partners.”

Students also were provided a survey, with a 93% response rate. The following is a sampling of student questions and their responses:

- Teachers have high expectations for me: 93% Agree/Strongly Agree
- Teachers make themselves available outside of class time: 83% Agree/Strongly Agree
- Teachers care that I learn: 95% Agree/Strongly Agree
- Teachers show a personal concern for me as an individual: 89% Agree/Strongly Agree
- I feel accepted by my teachers in my classes: 89% Agree/Strongly Agree
- I feel a sense of community or belonging in my classes: 86% Agree/Strongly Agree
- Teachers encourage me to live a healthy lifestyle: 85% Agree/Strongly Agree
- I enjoy my teachers: 90% Agree/Strongly Agree
- Teachers help me learn: 94% Agree/Strongly Agree

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## ***SUCCESS OF THE KEY FEATURES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM***

At VHGA, our school design is based on the idea that students work harder and dream bigger if their education is relevant to them. We believe that relevancy is increased as students master core subjects by applying this knowledge in a real-world context. We accomplish this by carefully selected programs, procedures, and processes that allow for student choice, autonomy, experiential and interdisciplinary learning, and with opportunities to apply learning to real world situations. Students gain the needed skills to support applied learning as they move through each grade, where they experience a well-rounded, holistic, and global curriculum with a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) focus. Math, science, technology, engineering, and the arts permeate every student's experience. Importantly, our students learn to use advanced technologies as a creative means to a productive end, not an end in itself. Literature and history are also integral parts of their experience and taught in a hands-on, engaging workshop model that honors individual voices and productive dialogue. While some of the existing schools in the community may offer different components that we offer, none offer this collective, comprehensive approach to learning.

In addition to rigorous student-centered academics, VHGA also focuses on increased proficiency in crucial 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration, which ensures that students are active participants in their own education. We work tirelessly to ensure that our students will be prepared for full participation in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global community. We accomplish this by incorporating the Asia Society's International Studies Schools Network approach to global education<sup>5</sup> and P21 learning outcomes and frameworks (explained in more detail later in Element 1).<sup>6</sup>

At VHGA, we understand that our students' success will require confronting society's many prejudices and breaking barriers of discrimination that too often define who we are. We believe that mastery of basic academic standards is important and necessary, but in and of itself is an insufficient goal for our students. We believe that low-income and at-risk students of color deserve an intellectually engaging, rigorous curriculum designed to cultivate flexible thinking and broad knowledge of the world on a global scale. Through our unique blend of Global Studies, STEAM, and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), VHGA seeks to meet each child's social, emotional, physical, and academic needs to prepare them for an increasingly complex, globalized, and technologized world.

While our mission for deep student engagement is "easily understood by practitioners as being essential to learning,"<sup>7</sup> the bridge from theory to application is often difficult. To

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<sup>5</sup> Asia Society. Center for Global Education International Studies Schools Network. Accessed from <https://asiasociety.org/international-studies-schools-network>.

<sup>6</sup> Battelle for Kids. Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning: A Network of Battelle for Kids. Accessed from <http://www.battelleforkids.org/networks/p21>.

<sup>7</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

ensure that we are successful in a very ambitious school design, VCPS spends a significant amount of time and financial resources on ensuring teachers get the highest level of training and on-going coaching support to have the biggest impact on educators' practice and ultimately on student achievement. Our teachers receive extensive training in the Workshop Model, Global Education, Project Based Learning, Project Lead the Way, Kagan Cooperative Strategies, Way of Council and more. VHGA teachers spent a collective 1500 hours in professional development over the 2018 summer to ensure our students get the highest level of instruction and support.

VHGA fulfills the intent of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 to improve pupil learning; create new professional opportunities for teachers through comprehensive and ongoing professional development and coaching; and provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in education including the creation of new charter schools. Through an innovative, engaged and holistic model of education, VHGA fulfills OCDE's mission to "ensure that all students are equipped with the competencies they need to thrive in the 21st century, including respect, responsibility, integrity, and professional ethics."<sup>8</sup> Like OCDE, VHGA strives to provide a safe, caring, courteous and professional environment that fosters collaborative work, individual development, efficiency, resource management, and accountability for all.

### ***SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN MEETING THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF ITS STUDENT POPULATION***

VHGA is meeting the needs of our students in myriad ways. As highlighted in the WASC Visiting Committee Report in 2017:

- For the 2016-2017 school year, Vista Heritage successfully reclassified 32% of the students identified as English Language Learners, which is a growth of 10% from the previous year.
- The technology integration at Vista Heritage has been successfully completed through their One-to-One Chromebook Initiative. The classroom observations identified a variety of instructional technology integrations which included Google Applications, Nearpod, and a variety of other technology-based learning tools.
- At Vista Heritage, Kagan strategies and structures were observed throughout all of the classrooms. The Instructional Leadership Team has also identified their plan for training site experts for future trainings and new hires.
- The site visitation has affirmed the implementation of the mainstream full inclusion setting for students identified as Special Education at Vista Heritage.
- The administration, faculty, and staff are highly qualified and passionate about serving the students unique needs at VHGA.
- The parents and students feel that the school culture at Vista Heritage is welcoming, safe, and focused on the whole student that promotes a family atmosphere which welcomes and empowers all students, parents, and staff members.

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<sup>8</sup> Orange County Department of Education. Vision, Mission and Values. Accessed from: <https://ocde.us/AboutOCDE/Pages/Mission-and-Values.aspx>.

(WASC Visiting Committee Report, December 6, 2017.)

As evidenced by the data and external reviews detailed above, VHGA is a great success. While our organization is committed to continuous improvement and constant self-reflection, we are incredibly proud of our success to date and the lives we are helping to change in this community.

### ***AREAS OF CHALLENGE THE SCHOOL HAS EXPERIENCED AND HOW THEY HAVE BEEN/WILL BE IMPROVED***

**Facilities:** Like many start-up charter schools, VHGA has encountered challenges in securing an appropriate facility for our program and enrollment projections. We originally anticipated enrolling 450 students by the end of our first charter term, though we have had to scale that back due to the size of our current facility, which has a capacity of 300 students. In 2019-20, we will enroll approximately 300 students. We are very pleased that we have established a partnership with Red Hook Capital, which purchased the facility we currently occupy from the Templo Cavalario Church in 2018, and will be financing the renovations of the facility with an option for VHGA to purchase the facility in the future. With Red Hook, we have planned an expansion and renovation project that will enable us to enroll 450 students in grades 6-8 when the renovation is completed, via a “slow growth” model in which we will add 50 students to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class in each year of the new charter term (see Enrollment Plan, below). The renovation will also enable us to build out a space that is carefully designed to suit our model, with ample space for science labs and collaborative learning.

**Leadership Change:** In 2017-18, a new Principal started with VHGA, joining a new network Superintendent who had joined us in the fall of 2016. Our new school leader immediately took steps to improve the school culture at VHGA via adoption of restorative justice practices and more consistent implementation of Way of Council, which had been introduced the prior year. The results of this were demonstrated quickly, with a reduction in suspensions from 4.2% in 2016-17 to 0.7% in 2017-18 and zero this past school year. As illustrated above, test scores also increased, thanks in large part to our implementation of Kagan Structures along with ensuring collaborative learning and communication between peers during learning was happening more consistently across all core classes. These practices benefit our EL population and have resulted in consistently strong EL reclassification rates. Finally, the new leadership team also emphasized parent engagement, resulting in a strong sense of “belonging” and community at the school, both critical to our adolescent students’ social development, confidence, and motivation to learn.

**Start-Up Fiscal Challenges:** Another common start-up challenge for new charter school is establishing fiscal stability, given that start-up expenses typically exceed state and federal revenues in the first years of operation. VHGA was not immune from this challenge. Initial start-up expenses (purchasing instructional materials and supplies, furniture, computers, and so much more) were funded in part with a \$575,000 competitive discretionary grant awarded from the state’s Public Charter Schools Grant

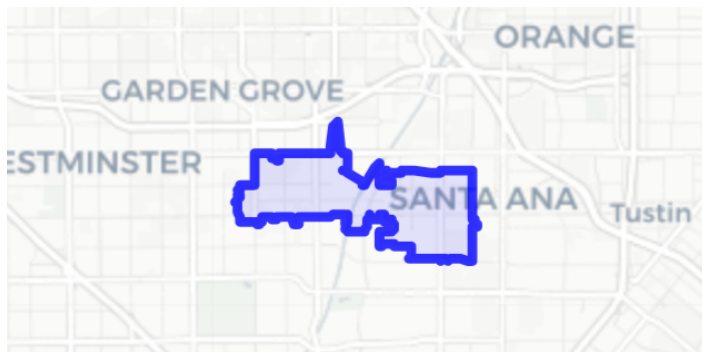


Program. These start-up fiscal challenges resulted in VHGA ended the 2016-17 school year with a small negative fund balance of -\$17,126. With strong fiscal management, we are proud to have weathered this fiscal challenge and note that VHGA's 2018-19 year-end fund balance is projected to be (not yet audited) \$158,215.

## **Student Population To Be Served**

### **TARGET POPULATION**

VHGA is located in Santa Ana in the 92703 zip code, where the population is 78% Hispanic, 16% Asian (with a large Vietnamese population in the area), 0.5% Black, and 5% White. According to Census data, 31% of adult residents over age 25 have less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, more than half (51%) have not earned a high school diploma, and only 8% of residents hold a Bachelor's degree or more.<sup>9</sup> An overwhelming majority of the population (87%) speak a language other than English at home, with 54% of the population speaking English "less than well." A quarter of the families (26%) with children under the age of 18 are living in poverty, and half (51%) the population is foreign-born.<sup>10</sup> Median income is \$52,970 with 26% of families with children under 18



were living below the federal poverty line in the past 12 months;<sup>11</sup> **in 2019, the federal poverty line for a family of four is \$25,750.**<sup>12</sup>

Notably, according to Living Wage Calculator, a project of Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier, Professor of Economic Geography at MIT, a family of four in Orange County with two full-time working adults needs each adult to

earn \$20.21/hour to be self-sustaining (not needing public assistance).<sup>13</sup> The federal poverty line rate equates to just \$5.00/hour. In other words, significantly more than 26% of families in our community are living in poverty based on the economic realities of the area.

As noted above, in 2018-19, 100% of our students qualified for FRPL, with many experiencing extreme poverty, including housing and food instability. We know that our families face myriad challenges that impact our students on a daily basis, thus we work hard to ensure VHGA is a safe and engaging place where students – and their families – feel a sense of community and belonging, with support to help them realize better futures for themselves.

<sup>9</sup> <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

<sup>10</sup> <https://factfinder.census.gov> (2017 American Community Survey)

<sup>11</sup> <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

<sup>12</sup> <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

<sup>13</sup> <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06037>; the calculator uses "a market-based approach that draws upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family's likely minimum food, childcare, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g. clothing, personal care items, etc.) costs.

**ENROLLMENT PLAN**

While we cannot with 100% accuracy predict enrollment for each year, for purposes of planning our budgets and operations conservatively, the following are our enrollment projections for the term of this charter, tied to the renovation of our facility to expand capacity to 450 students:

| Grade            | Year 1<br>2020-21 | Year 2<br>2021-22 | Year 3<br>2022-23 | Year 4<br>2023-24 | Year 5<br>2024-25 |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 6                | 150               | 150               | 150               | 150               | 150               |
| 7                | 100               | 150               | 150               | 150               | 150               |
| 8                | 100               | 100               | 150               | 150               | 150               |
| Total Enrollment | 350               | 400               | 450               | 450               | 450               |

**GOALS AND PHILOSOPHY**

VHGA believes that all cultures matter. Our unique global perspective combined with a STEAM focus teaches students to honor other cultures and perspectives, to fully embrace their own cultural heritage and, to build the technical skills to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**MISSION AND VISION**

The mission of Vista Heritage is to create a learning environment that allows students to have power in developing their identity within personal, interpersonal and educational realms. We provide a quality education for all students by creating a learning community that involves students in their development of the knowledge, skills, attitude, behaviors, aspirations, and beliefs needed to be successful academically and possess life long learning skills.

Vista Heritage’ students have power in the establishment of their identities. They create the vision of who they are, the path that they choose in life, and the reason they have chosen it. They are critical constructors of knowledge in an ever-changing and interconnected society. Their learning and development is constructed and fostered in an environment that focuses on individual strengths, need, and desires through a differentiated approach.

We achieve our mission and vision based on extensive research and the Framework for Student Engagement (explained below), through a unique combination of global competence, STEAM preparedness, and Social Emotional learning. We see these areas not as separate foci, but rather as a nested symbiotic grouping that works together to transform the school experience.

The Framework for Engagement has been developed by our Superintendent, Dr. Donald Wilson, and a team of USC scholars as an important lens through which all programs and practices are developed and selected. This framework necessitates that a shift in instructional practice is required to ensure the personalized learning experience is created to develop globally competent students. This shift in practice is commonly referred to as a move away from the “sage on the stage” model, in which the teacher directly delivers instruction through lecturing, to the “guide on the side,” in which teachers act as a coach and facilitate a more personalized learning experience and is based on a constructivist view in which, optimally, the classroom provides a series of experiences that prompt students to actively construct their own knowledge and learning.<sup>14</sup> **At VHGA, we use this as an important lens through which all programs, processes, and practices are chosen and developed.**

The Vista global educational approach combines teaching global competencies through Asia Societies International Study Schools Network.<sup>15</sup> We believe that globally competent students have broad skill sets with the disciplines that are becoming increasingly important to access the American dream: science, technology, engineering, and math. The arts allow students to access the creative heart of these disciplines and are an important part of developing a world-consciousness and ethos that keeps the needs of humanity at the center of our students’ “why” questions. When students are given a context for their learning (global education), and the tools to excel and apply them to the real world (STEAM), the outcome is deep engagement and a life-long love of learning.

Finally, through carefully designed school structures, policies and programs, we provide our students with a learning environment and social-emotional learning to help them develop into self-motivated, competent, global citizens. Kagan strategies,<sup>16</sup> Way of Council<sup>17</sup> and other acclaimed programs help engage our students and develop their capacity for success.

## **AN EDUCATED PERSON IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

Developed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, our current educational system was designed to meet the needs of the industrial revolution, with its emphasis on factory and assembly-line production jobs.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, a person time-traveling from 1918 to 2018 would feel too much at home, too familiar with the classroom culture at many schools across California and our nation. Too many students are still asked to sit

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<sup>14</sup> Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1).  
Vygotsky, L. (1987). Zone of proximal development. *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*, 5291, 157. Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active learning in higher education*, 11(3), 167-177.

<sup>15</sup> Asia Society. Center for Global Education International Studies Schools Network. Accessed from <https://asiasociety.org/international-studies-schools-network>.

<sup>16</sup> Kagan, S. (2003). Kagan structures: Research and rationale in a nutshell. *Kagan Online Magazine*.

<sup>17</sup> Ways of Council. The Council Path. Accessed from <https://waysofcouncil.net/the-council-path/>.

<sup>18</sup> Spring, J. (2017). *American education*. Routledge.

quietly for six hours each day, as their teachers lecture, or they are asked to work silently on isolated skills and have faith that these will somehow be relevant in their adult lives.

This pedagogical style may have been appropriate when our country needed workers able to do the same task, over and over, on one part that would eventually be one piece of a car, boat, or machine. Those jobs met the needs of an industry-based society; workers today need the technical skills to manage—and succeed—in an increasingly complicated high-tech and automated world. On a daily basis, the media reports on the effects of this new economy and what it means to be a qualified worker today.<sup>19</sup> Workers in traditional occupations are experiencing some of the most profound impacts, as car manufacturing plants, factories, and coalmines close, giving way to innovations in manufacturing and energy development. A 2013 Oxford University study predicted that roughly 700 common jobs are susceptible to future automation.<sup>20</sup> Another recent study out of University of Redlands' Institute for Spatial Economic Analysis showed that approximately 60% of the Southern California workforce is vulnerable to being replaced by automation in the next 10 to 20 years.<sup>21</sup> The world around us is rapidly evolving, and so our schools must also evolve.

Mastery on standardized tests and traditional approaches to the acquisition of knowledge are not sufficient for today's youth. With an ever-widening opportunity gap preventing children from contributing meaningfully in today's society and economy, we must step back and reassess both *how* children learn and the environments that best nurture learning. Schools with experiential and hands-on learning models – *that is, where students are building the independence to think deeply, test ideas, solve problems, and reflect on their own learning and growth*– are teaching us something profound about student learning and potential. It is increasingly clear that both academic (up to and through college) and life success in the 21st century demands the development of deeper learning, cultural competency, and social emotional skills that develop both our humanity and our career-readiness.<sup>22</sup>

At VHGA, we believe that if students are to successfully enter into college and career, they should be educated in a way that prepares them to be adaptable, creative, critical thinkers; they must be equipped with the basic attributes and technological skills that will allow them to pursue current innovative occupations, and they must be nimble enough to take advantage of opportunities that may not even exist yet. VHGA's unique educational approach combines teaching global competencies in tandem with a STEAM

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<sup>19</sup> McKinsey Global Institute. (2017). Technology, jobs and the future of work. Accessed from <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/technology-jobs-and-the-future-of-work>.

<sup>20</sup> Frey, C. B., & Osborne, M. (2013). The future of employment.

<sup>21</sup> Semuels, A. (2017). The Parts of America Most Susceptible to Automation. *The Atlantic*. Accessed from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/05/the-parts-of-america-most-susceptible-to-automation/525168/>.

<sup>22</sup> National Research Council. (2013). *Education for life and work: Developing transferable knowledge and skills in the 21st century*. National Academies Press.

curriculum, thus providing our students both the social capital and technological skills to ethically compete in rigorous post-secondary schools and a global economy.

We believe that 21<sup>st</sup> century competence starts with global competence.<sup>23</sup> Preparing all students for college, work and civic roles requires the ability to compete, connect, and cooperate on an international scale. Global competence starts by being aware, curious, and interested in learning about the world and how it works.<sup>24</sup> Students are able to ask globally significant questions, analyze evidence from multiple sources, and develop an argument that draws defensible conclusions. Students recognize that because they have a unique perspective that someone else may not share, it is essential to listen and consider views that are divergent from their own.

Students who are 21<sup>st</sup> century-ready and globally competent effectively communicate their ideas with diverse audiences, often through the use of appropriate technology.<sup>25</sup> By applying what they have learned, our students can translate their ideas into appropriate actions to discover solutions to local and global challenges.

Virtually every major issue in the 21st century—from climate change to national security to public health—has a global dimension. In this age of technology, information is shared globally almost instantaneously. And, with over 200 million migrants worldwide, migration and immigration are creating societies that are enormously diverse, linguistically and culturally. More than ever, people, cultures, and nations are interdependent. Schools must therefore prepare students to solve problems on a global scale and participate effectively in a global economic and civic environment. Put simply, schools must prepare students to be *globally competent*.

VHGA, as a part of the VCPS organization, is a member of the Asia Society's, International Student Study Network (ISSN), which serves as a foundation for our global studies. Asia Society is the leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context. Since its inception, Asia Society's ISSN has built a broad network of high-performing, globally oriented schools that demonstrate what a rigorous global education can do for a largely low-income, urban student population. VHGA works with the ISSN to provide a rich, global curriculum that engages students by helping them to investigate and address real-world problems, communicate ideas, and weigh diverse perspectives.<sup>26</sup> Asia Society and the ISSN schools have designed a robust approach to performance-based learning and assessment that has implications well beyond the network, offering lessons for

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<sup>23</sup> Deardorff, D. K. (Ed.). (2009). *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*. Sage.

<sup>24</sup> Pusch, M. D. (2009). The interculturally competent global leader. *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*, 66-84.

<sup>25</sup> Hutchison, A., & Beschoner, B. (2018). Mobile Devices and Multimodal Textual Practices. In *Mobile Technologies in Children's Language and Literacy: Innovative Pedagogy in Preschool and Primary Education* (pp. 83-97). Emerald Publishing Limited.

<sup>26</sup> Asia Society. Center for Global Education International Studies Schools Network. Accessed from <https://asiasociety.org/international-studies-schools-network>.

policymakers and practitioners concerned about preparing students to live and work in an increasingly complex world.

Supported by a foundation of knowledge and understanding developed through rigorous disciplinary and interdisciplinary study, the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner is globally competent and able to do the following:

**Investigate the World.** Globally competent students ask and explore critical questions and "researchable" problems that are *globally significant*, addressing important phenomena and events that are relevant in their own communities and communities across the globe. Globally competent students can articulate the significance of their questions and know how to respond to questions by identifying, collecting, and analyzing credible information from a variety of local, national and international sources. They can connect the local to the global, for example, by explaining how a local issue like their school recycling program is one part of a global process with economic, social, and environmental relevance.<sup>27</sup>

**Weigh Perspectives.** Globally competent students recognize that they have a particular perspective to which others may or may not subscribe. Importantly, such students are able to articulate and explain the perspectives of other people, groups, or schools of thought and identify influences on these perspectives, including how differential access to knowledge, technology, and resources can affect people's views. Their understanding of others' perspectives is deeply informed by historical knowledge about other cultures as well as by contemporary events. They can compare and contrast their perspectives with others, and, where appropriate, integrate these diverse viewpoints to construct a new, deeply considered one.<sup>28</sup>

**Communicate Ideas.** Globally competent students understand that audiences differ on the basis of culture, geography, faith, ideology, wealth, and other factors, and that they may see different meanings in the same information. They can effectively communicate, verbally and non-verbally, with diverse audiences. Globally competent students are able to situate themselves in a variety of cultural contexts, organize and collaboratively participate in diverse groups, and work effectively toward a common goal. Globally competent students are media and artistically savvy; they know how to choose and effectively utilize appropriate technology and media to communicate with disparate audiences, including through respectful online social networking. While English remains the dominant language of business and trade, speaking another language is important for collaborating across borders. Students receive Spanish language instruction as well as literacy in English. Building literacy in English and Spanish reinforces pride in our students' primary language (mostly Spanish) and validates the diverse cultures they come from. VHGA also provides access to language instruction for an Asian language once enrollment increases to capacity.

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<sup>27</sup> Mansilla, V. B., & Jackson, A. (2013). Educating for global competence: Learning redefined for an interconnected world. *Mastering Global Literacy (5-27)*. New York: Solution Tree.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

**Take Action.** What skills and knowledge will it take to go from learning *about* the world to making a difference *in* the world? First, it takes seeing oneself as capable of making a difference. Globally competent students see themselves as players, not bystanders. They're keenly able to recognize opportunities-- from targeted human rights advocacy to creating the next out-of-the-box, must-have business product we don't even know we need. Globally competent students ethically and creatively envision and weigh options for action, assess the potential impact of that action, take into account diverse opinions and potential consequences of the action, and show courage to execute a plan and reflect on it later.

**Apply Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Expertise.** Global competence requires that students master content knowledge detailed in the California Common Core State Standards and apply appropriate methods of inquiry within and across disciplines as historians, scientists, and artists. Global competence also requires being equipped to understand prevailing world conditions, concerns, and trends through an interdisciplinary lens. A competitive advantage will go to those students who are aware of global events, can comprehend the intersections of environmental, financial, social, and other systems, and understand how the balance of power between societies and cultures has significant short- and long-term consequences. Globally competent students are life-long learners. They are able to adapt, contribute knowledge, and participate in dialogues about a rapidly evolving world.

## **HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS**

At VHGA, we believe that learning best occurs when students are engaged academically, socially and emotionally. Student engagement is at the heart of the VHGA learning experience. We see engagement as an act that connects us to each other and to the physical world. Engaged students are focused, actively involved in school's social and educational opportunities, and academically successful.<sup>29</sup>

While there have been some overall improvements for all students of all races, the achievement gap has persisted, with a majority of Black and Latino students across the United States still lagging far behind their White counterparts.<sup>30</sup> There is increasing academic interest and emphasis on the importance of supportive instructional strategies such as scaffolding and formulating safety nets for at-risk students.<sup>31</sup> Research has increasingly demonstrated that engagement is a critical factor in positive student outcomes.<sup>32</sup> This is crucially important as many researchers regard the opposite of

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<sup>29</sup> Shernoff, D. J., Csikszentmihalyi, M., Schneider, B., & Shernoff, E. S. (2014). Student engagement in high school classrooms from the perspective of flow theory. In *Applications of flow in human development and education* (pp. 475-494). Springer, Dordrecht.

<sup>30</sup> Torlakson, P. I. T. (2013). Recommendations for transitioning California to a future assessment system. *Sacramento, CA. California Department of Education.*

<sup>31</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>32</sup> Shernoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology, 41*(6), 467-483.

engagement as disengagement,<sup>33</sup> which is a primary factor in poor performance, dropout rates, and even prison for Black and Latino boys.<sup>34</sup> Multiple studies have shown a significant correlation between engagement and achievement.<sup>35</sup> With researchers suggesting that between 25% and 66% of students may be disengaged,<sup>36</sup> engagement may be the North Star for promising practices that address the needs of at-risk students.

A priority for VHGA is to close the achievement gap for our target student population, historically underrepresented students. Research that drives the design for our educational program is based on conclusions for how learning best occurs for these at-risk student populations.<sup>37</sup> Research identifies the lack of students' social capital as one of the main factors that contributes to performance gaps for urban students. Stanton-Salazar (1997) defines social capital as institutional resources and opportunities, such as knowledge of school programs, academic tutoring and mentoring, and how to access assistance with career decision-making and college admission.<sup>38</sup> For a great number of economically disenfranchised students attending urban schools, access to social capital is severely limited, if not completely absent from their social context.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, VHGA prioritizes increasing our students' social capital within the design of our educational program.

VHGA uses a framework applied in recent studies examining the role of engagement in outperforming urban schools. This framework consists of three separate but interrelated types of student engagement: (a) emotional, (b) behavioral, and (c) cognitive.<sup>40</sup> The researchers found that when emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement are optimized, students can experience a state of "flow" wherein students are profoundly absorbed in a task to the point of losing awareness of time and space.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Fredricks, J. A., & McColskey, W. (2012). The measurement of student engagement: A comparative analysis of various methods and student self-report instruments. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 763-782). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>34</sup> Fenning, P., & Rose, J. (2007). Overrepresentation of African American students in exclusionary discipline the role of school policy. *Urban Education*, 42(6), 536-559.

<sup>35</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: what is it? Why does it matter? *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*.

<sup>36</sup> Finn, J. D. (1989). Withdrawing from school. *Review of educational research*, 59(2), 117-142. Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1).

<sup>37</sup> Christenson, S. L., Reschly, A. L., Appleton, J. J., Berman, S., Spanjers, D., & Varro, P. (2008). Best practices in fostering student engagement. In *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 1099-1120). National Association of School Psychologists.

<sup>38</sup> Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (1997). A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of racial minority children and youths. *Harvard educational review*, 67, 1-40.

<sup>39</sup> Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., & Coca, V. (2009). College readiness for all: The challenge for urban high schools. *The future of children*, 19(1), 185-210.

<sup>40</sup> Appleton, J. J., Christenson, S. L., & Furlong, M. J. (2008). Student engagement with school: Critical conceptual and methodological issues of the construct. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 369-386.

<sup>41</sup> Fredricks, J. A., & McColskey, W. (2012). The measurement of student engagement: A comparative analysis of various methods and student self-report instruments. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 763-782). Springer, Boston, MA. Shernoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology*, 41(6), 467-483.



**Behavioral engagement.** Behavioral engagement is generally defined quantitatively through attendance rates, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions.<sup>42</sup> It may also be measured qualitatively and includes paying attention, responding to teacher's questions, asking for help, and discipline issues such as following rules and acting respectfully toward teachers and classmates.<sup>43</sup> Research is clear that behavioral engagement has a significant effect on achievement.<sup>44</sup> This strong correlation to achievement gives hope to the idea that learning how to manipulate engagement behaviors may provide important pathways to narrowing or closing the achievement gap.

**Emotional engagement.** There is a strong correlation between behavior and emotional engagement, which is commonly defined as identification and students' feeling a part of school or class community.<sup>45</sup> Multiple studies affirm the connection between student attitudes about school and participation rates; students rated their engagement higher in schools and classrooms where mutual respect was fostered, strong discipline policies guided cultural norms, and teachers actively sought to build strong relationships with students.<sup>46</sup>

**Cognitive engagement.** Cognitive engagement is generally seen as a student's investment in learning.<sup>47</sup> In this way, teachers may perceive students to be engaged due to their behavior, but still not achieving due to an overall lack of cognitive engagement in the work. Cognitive engagement is demonstrated through student

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<sup>42</sup> Finn, J. D. (1989). Withdrawing from school. *Review of educational research*, 59(2), 117-142. Fredricks, J. A., & McColskey, W. (2012). The measurement of student engagement: A comparative analysis of various methods and student self-report instruments. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 763-782). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>43</sup> Finn, J. D. (1989). Withdrawing from school. *Review of educational research*, 59(2), 117-142. Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1). Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>44</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA. Furlong, M. J., Whipple, A. D., Jean, G. S., Simental, J., Soliz, A., & Punthuna, S. (2003). Multiple contexts of school engagement: Moving toward a unifying framework for educational research and practice. *The California School Psychologist*, 8(1), 99-113. Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1).

<sup>45</sup> Appleton, J. J., Christenson, S. L., & Furlong, M. J. (2008). Student engagement with school: Critical conceptual and methodological issues of the construct. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 369-386.

<sup>46</sup> Shernoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology*, 41(6), 467-483. Appleton, J. J., Christenson, S. L., & Furlong, M. J. (2008). Student engagement with school: Critical conceptual and methodological issues of the construct. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 369-386. Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1). Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>47</sup> Fredricks, J. A., & McColskey, W. (2012). The measurement of student engagement: A comparative analysis of various methods and student self-report instruments. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 763-782). Springer, Boston, MA.

behaviors such as persistence, going the extra mile, extending learning on their own, and using self-regulation strategies to accomplish tasks and guide learning.<sup>48</sup>

**Theory of Flow and Engagement.** Research on Flow Theory is a critical philosophical component of the VHGA experience. Flow Theory was first proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*.<sup>49</sup> A state of flow can best be described as total absorption and immersion in an activity. A student in flow exhibits intense concentration, interest, and enjoyment.<sup>50</sup> When a person is in flow, he or she can stay engaged in an activity and disregard time, food, and other interests or needs. In flow, a student feels not only pleasure in the activity, but more importantly, and for educational implications, successful and competent.<sup>51</sup>

One of the main principles of Flow Theory is that students feel a deep sense of success about an activity that forces them to stretch themselves just beyond their limit.<sup>52</sup> This state of optimal engagement can be traced to the work of Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist who introduced the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).<sup>53</sup> ZPD is described as the bridge between what a student cannot do and what a student could do with a little help, a theory reflected in almost every aspect of the VHGA experience via the application of a workshop model. Self-efficacy also has a positive effect on engagement, which in turn affects overall achievement. VHGA helps students achieve this state by providing them with mastery experiences that scaffold key information and modeling by those that have already been successful in a given task.<sup>54</sup> Further, we recognize the importance of understanding which instructional practices show the strongest promise in helping students achieve a state flow in their learning.

At VHGA all programs, processes, and procedures are evaluated using the Framework for Engagement before adoption, with the belief that increasing engagement in the three domains drives increases in our students' joy and passion in their education, develop a life-long love of learning, and, ultimately, bridge the achievement gap. This framework is based on the work of our Superintendent, Dr. Donald Wilson, and a team from the University of Southern California that conducted an extensive review of the literature on engagement and achievement, with a close look at the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner (Neal & Neal, 2013).<sup>55</sup> Bronfenbrenner's *Ecological Systems Theory* explores the interrelated nature of nested systems in human development.<sup>56</sup> Bronfenbrenner's

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<sup>48</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?.

In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>49</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

<sup>50</sup> Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1).

<sup>51</sup> Shernoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology*, 41(6), 467-483.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Problems of general psychology*.

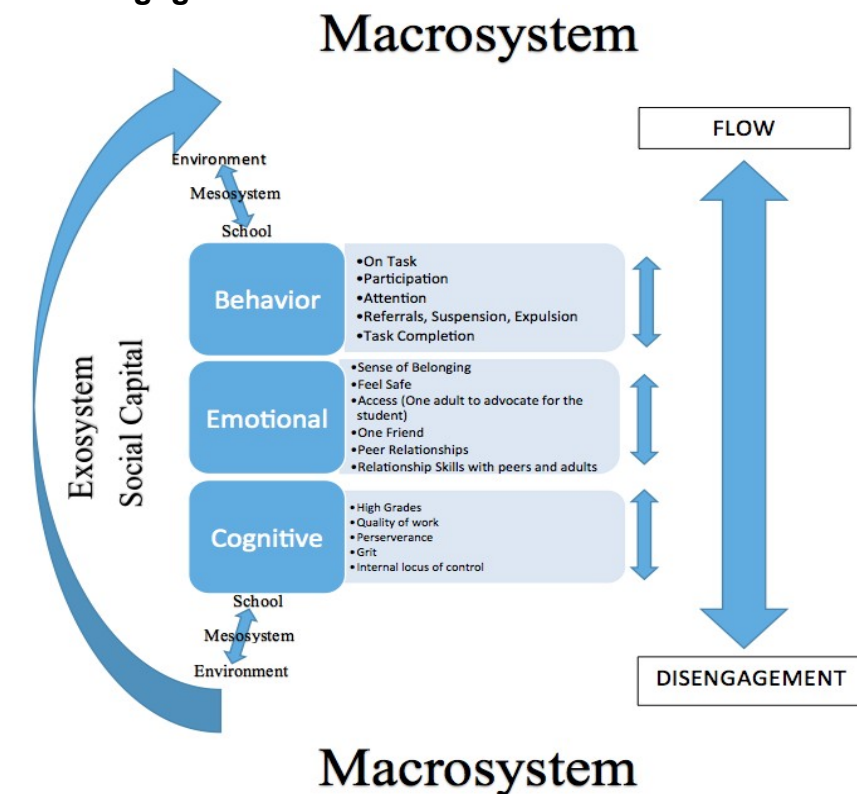
<sup>54</sup> Furlong, M. J., Whipple, A. D., Jean, G. S., Simental, J., Soliz, A., & Punthuna, S. (2003). Multiple contexts of school engagement: Moving toward a unifying framework for educational research and practice. *The California School Psychologist*, 8(1), 99-113.

<sup>55</sup> Neal, J. W., & Neal, Z. P. (2013). Nested or networked? Future directions for ecological systems theory. *Social Development*, 22(4), 722-737.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Ecological Systems Theory includes the macrosystem, exosystem, meso- and microsystems. These systems and their influence on human development are included in the conceptual framework (see chart below). The macrosystem, or attitudes and ideologies of the culture, combine with a student's microsystem in which emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement plays a significant role in his or her academic achievement. The flow chart below presents a visual representation of this theory.

## Framework for Engagement



In short, the framework provides the bases of the pedagogical stance that our school must provide instruction that gives students the opportunity to build social and emotional capital, as well as acquire strong academic and technical skills. The three domains of engagement must be present to increase student engagement and increase social capital for our students. Students learn best with programs that provide engagement in multiple domains. For instance, while Kagan Cooperative Strategies provides structures to increase cognitive engagement, they are embedded in social/emotional strategies like complimenting a partner, greetings, and thanking teams and partners after working together. Further, they address behavioral issues of staying on task, participation, and attention. Another example of how VHGA support high student engagement is through Way of Council, which grants students many opportunities to reflect about how their own thinking affects outcomes, and thus, increases cognitive engagement.<sup>57</sup> Importantly, Way of Council has been shown to decrease behavioral issues and give students the tools to solve interpersonal issues.

<sup>57</sup> Ways of Council. The Council Path. Accessed from <https://waysofcouncil.net/the-council-path/>.

## **THE REQUIREMENTS OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION CODE § 47605(B)(5)(A)(II)**

In Element 2, pursuant to Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(B), VHGA provides extensive details about intended outcomes that align with the eight state priorities and the actions to achieve the state priorities. By June 30 of each year VHGA will engage stakeholders in the Local Control Accountability Plan in accordance with the California Education Code and County policies. LSICS complies with all requirements pursuant to California Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(B)(ii), including the development of school wide goals for all subgroups as applicable to the eight state priority areas identified in Education Code section 52060(d). VHGA complies with all elements of the LCAP, including the adoption of any templates required by the State Board of Education. For details on VHGA's goals and intended actions as of this Charter Renewal Petition, see Element 2.

## **GOALS FOR ENABLING PUPILS TO BECOME AND REMAIN SELF-MOTIVATED, COMPETENT, AND LIFELONG LEARNERS**

VHGA is designed to ensure that our underserved students are equipped with the skills and attitudes to become self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners. Our emphasis on engagement helps to develop students' intrinsic self-motivation to learn and succeed. VHGA teaches our students to learn *how to learn* as they actively participate in their own learning, appreciating the relevance of their learning not only in their daily lives but also the broader world around them.

Through ongoing professional development focused on how people learn, our teachers continuously adapt their lessons and classroom experiences to meet students' needs and develop competent, skilled students in alignment with the state content standards. Through project-based learning and our emphasis on STEAM, our students continuously refine problem-solving and critical thinking and reflect on both their successes and "failures" as they adapt to a rapidly changing world. These habits of learning establish a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN**

### **CURRICULAR AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: KEY EDUCATIONAL THEORIES AND RESEARCH**

At VHGA we are committed to transforming the school experience.

Teachers who push students academically and demand high standards not only increase engagement, but also cultivate students' sense of being cared for and, ultimately, raise student achievement.<sup>58</sup> At VHGA, our pedagogical practices and

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<sup>58</sup> Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active learning in higher education*, 11(3), 167-177.

programmatic choices form the conditions for rigorous academics and warm supportive mentoring in symbiotic relation. The VHGA approach is one in which children learn by doing under the guidance of a strong mentor/teacher. We are dedicated to hiring successful teachers who balance high standards and academically rigorous expectations with constant availability for help and academic guidance.

As students move through each grade, they experience a well-rounded, holistic, and global curriculum with a STEAM focus. Mastery of basic academic standards is important and necessary, but in and of itself is an insufficient goal for our students. Low-income students of color, perhaps more than any other group of young people, benefit from an intellectually engaging, rigorous curriculum designed to cultivate flexible thinking and broad knowledge of the world on a global scale. Our students must break barriers of discrimination that too often define who we are. VHGA adheres to the guiding principles of the traditional Japanese holistic approach “Chi-Toku-Tai” which espouses: academic prowess, moral, physical, and mental health. When the needs of the whole child are addressed, a zest and love for life and all its possibilities is the outcome.

At VHGA, we create social-emotional and educational conditions and structures that are strictly aligned with the research on engagement (see above). Research on the positive correlation of strong student engagement with higher student achievement is clear and drives our instructional design. While engagement is “easily understood by practitioners as being essential to learning,”<sup>59</sup> the bridge from theory to application is often difficult. At VHGA our instructional foci are based on our deep research on engagement and represent a unique combination of global competence and STEAM preparedness. We see these two areas not as separate foci, but rather as a nested symbiotic grouping that works together to address the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner.

### **GLOBAL COMPETENCY**

VHGA is distinguished by its collaboration and partnership with Asia Society’s International Studies Schools Network (ISSN), with the goal of becoming an ISSN-certified school by the end of the first five years. The ISSN currently includes a variety of different grade levels and types of schools serving approximately 16,000 students in eight states. In keeping with the Asia Society’s original mission to serve traditionally underserved populations, the majority (63%) of ISSN students are low-income, and 73% are students of color. Four-year graduation rates and student performance rates exceed those in comparable schools. In 2011, ISSN schools had an average four-year graduation rate of 89%. In addition, evaluators found that ISSN schools outperformed their peers on 71 of 107 total measures (66.4%).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>60</sup> Asia Society. Center for Global Education International Studies Schools Network. *A GPS for Success: Updated and Improved*. Accessed from: <https://asiasociety.org/international-studies-schools-network/gps-success-updated-and-improved>

The Asia Society does not promote a single, prescriptive school design. The starting point for all of its schools is a shared definition of a college-ready, globally competent graduate. The ISSN Graduate Profile describes a student who has mastered the knowledge and skills required for college, has expertise in core content areas from a global perspective, is a proficient thinker and problem solver, can view and analyze issues and events from varying perspectives, can communicate in more than one language and collaborate across cultural boundaries, and fulfills the responsibilities of global citizenship.

VHGA works with ISSN to develop globally competent students. To help facilitate this effort, the Asia Society has developed a flexible ISSN School Design Matrix, adaptable to a range of school conditions. The matrix is clearly aligned with the VHGA Academy vision and mission and sets a trajectory for our school’s development across six domains:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Vision, Mission, Culture</b>            | This domain addresses the school’s vision, mission and culture of the school as well as the schools' expectations for all students to be ready for college and postsecondary school success.   |
| <b>Student Outcomes</b>                    | This domain examines the progress being made by all students toward achieving the characteristics defined in the ISSN Graduate Profile.  |
| <b>Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment</b> | This domain describes a consistent global focus throughout the curriculum and across all academic activities. It examines teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students. It also highlights ongoing, performance-based measures of student learning. |
| <b>School Organization and Governance</b>  | This domain considers the degree to which the school is structured to support teaching and learning.   |
| <b>Professional Learning Community</b>     | This domain focuses on the systems of collaborative communication and professional development established to improve teaching and learning.   |
| <b>Family and Community Partnerships</b>   | This domain explores the family engagement in the school’s educational mission and the connections established with local organizations and institutions.  |

The detailed matrix includes quality criteria for each domain, with benchmarks that describe beginning, emerging, proficient, and exemplary implementation. Many of the quality criteria describe practices that are common to the small schools movement in general— for example, implementing a student advisory/homeroom program—or that are good practice in any setting— for example, establishing a clear and consistent

grading policy. Other criteria, while not necessarily exclusive to the ISSN, exemplify the international studies approach:

**Global content, skills, and perspectives are embedded in the core content areas.** Students explore global topics in all of their classes. Curriculum units are often organized around global themes, supporting students to make connections across disciplines.

**World languages are part of the experience.** VHGA students are highly proficient in English, have opportunities to strengthen home languages, and be introduced to new languages in extra-curricular and afterschool programs.

**Curriculum is student-centered, authentic, globally significant, and connected to real audiences.** Students engage in solving real-world, internationally important problems and present their solutions to experts. They are empowered to make decisions about what and how they learn.

**Global learning extends beyond the classroom.** Students participate in service learning that immerses them in local and global issues, exposes them to professional opportunities, and prepares them as global citizens. Service Learning at VHGA is linked to the Global Performance Outcomes (GPO's) described in the section above regarding ISSN. Service learning directly addresses two of the GPO's: "Recognizing Different Perspectives" and "Taking Action." The curriculum is designed to allow students to apply learning to solving real world and local problems with an emphasis relevant global issues outlined in the United Nations Goals for Sustainability and other school identified world problems. Some examples of this might be students applying principles and learning from STEAM in project-based learning to address the issues of water scarcity, climate change, overuse of plastics, sustainable agriculture, etc. Model UN is another example of how students participate in Service Learning. Additionally, classrooms are equipped with the technology (Smart Board type technology and 1:1 Chromebook program) for online learning and exchanges with other students and classrooms around the world to collaboratively take action on relevant global issues. Currently, VHGA is seeking partnerships with schools in Mexico, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Korea.

Opportunities for field trips are an integral part of the Vista experience and are planned according to grade level content and age appropriateness for length of time.

VHGA works with the Asia Society ISSN to further develop or revise (as needed) its curriculum according to the "SAGE" framework and VHGA guiding principles.

- **Student choice:** Students have a say in what they learn and how they learn it.
- **Authentic tasks:** Students perform tasks and investigate questions that adults would perform or study in the real world.
- **Global significance:** Students study topics, issues, and phenomena of global importance, and gain deep knowledge of countries and cultures other than their

own.

- **Exhibition to a real-world audience:** Students share their work—and receive feedback—from audiences with relevant expertise, in person and on the web.<sup>61</sup>

VHGA students can show how their learning experiences helped them achieve global competency in four domains, as detailed more fully above in the section on An Educated Person in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

1. Investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, framing significant problems and conducting well-crafted, age-appropriate research.
2. Recognize perspectives, including one's own and those of others, explaining the nature and origin of these perspectives thoughtfully and respectfully.
3. Communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences, bridging geographic, linguistic, ideological, and cultural barriers.
4. Take action to improve conditions, viewing themselves as players in the world and participating reflectively.

The ISSN framework does not tell teachers what to teach or when to teach it; rather, it provides both teachers and students with the frameworks and the tools to make good choices. The primary purpose of the curriculum is to enhance teachers' capacity to develop and transform their own curriculum, a key component of teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. VHGA integrates four quality components, in alignment with our vision and mission, into our curricular design:

1. **Clear expectations:** Tasks are linked to specific Global Performance Standards outcomes, Common Core State Standards, and/or other standards like ISTE. These targets provide teachers and students with a shared understanding of what proficient work looks like.
2. **Authentic learning experiences:** Students explore topics and issues that represent the work of real-world professionals.
3. **Student-centered learning:** Teachers and students share ownership for learning. With feedback from frequent formative assessments, students understand where they are going and how to get there. They also make decisions about what they're learning and how they're learning it.
4. **Multiple opportunities to reach mastery:** With multiple assessments embedded in each unit and leading to graduation, students have many opportunities.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Asia Society. Center for Global Education. SAGE Advice. Accessed from: <https://asiasociety.org/education/sage-advice>.

<sup>62</sup> Asia Society. Center for Global Education International Studies Schools Network. Accessed from <https://asiasociety.org/international-studies-schools-network>.



## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ARTS, MATHEMATICS (STEAM)**

VHGA incorporates STEAM instruction into the ISSN framework to build globally competent, 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. STEAM is an acronym that represents how all topics in subject areas relate to each other and to the real world: science and technology, interpreted through engineering & the arts, all based in mathematical elements. STEAM education naturally aligns with VHGA's framework for teaching that is based on natural ways of learning and is customizable for all types of students and programs. Significantly, it adds relevancy to learning, and increased engagement for students.

A STEAM education aligns with the VHGA guiding principles in which projects have clear expectations, provide authentic learning experiences, are hands-on and student-centered, and provide myriad authentic ways to demonstrate mastery. Globally, schools are having success with STEAM, teaching academic and life skills in standards-backed, reality-based, personally relevant exploratory learning environments.<sup>63</sup>

VHGA teachers use the ISSN rubrics to create STEAM projects that address the four domains of global competence in line with the California Common Core Standards. STEAM is not a separate effort, but a naturally integrated focus that clearly addresses 21<sup>st</sup> learning in a global context. *STEAM provides the skills, while the global outcomes provide the context, through the structure of rubric-based portfolios and process work.* Our teachers can better match their learning objectives and goals to the variety of learners they encounter. Embedded within the larger guiding principles of the Framework for Engagement, STEAM at VHGA supports well-balanced and deeply cooperative teams among educators and students based on a variety of characteristics. STEAM provides another way for both teachers and students to use their skills for leading in some areas, while other areas are strengthened through observing and assisting. VHGA educators instruct within their specialty with co-planned thematic units to which everyone contributes, in projects related to the required benchmark concepts and skills.

**Project Lead the Way.** At VHGA, in addition to teacher-created projects and lessons, STEAM is taught through the acclaimed Project Lead the Way Gateway 6-8 program.<sup>64</sup> PLTW Gateway is aligned to Next Generation Science Standards and the California Common Core State Standards for math and English Language Arts. PLTW Gateway provides students opportunities to learn through exploration and discovery. Through PLTW Gateway, students become hands-on problem solvers and learn to collaborate with their fellow students. In alignment with our workshop model of instruction, teachers and students begin each module with an engaging e-book story that introduces the challenge students will collaborate on to solve. Then, in a series of activities that build upon each other, students are challenged to become confident in trying new things, to learn from mistakes, and to apply what they do know to find solutions.

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<sup>63</sup> STEAM Education. STEAM FAQ for Educators. Accessed from: <https://steamedu.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/STEAM-FAQ-Educators-11Nov15.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> Project Lead the Way. PLTW Gateway (6-8) <https://www.pltw.org/our-programs/pltw-gateway>

Instructional staff receive training in PLTW during the summer.

**Student Use of Technology.** VHGA believes that, to be a globally educated, 21<sup>st</sup> century student and citizen, students must have technology infused throughout the curriculum. Thirty-five years ago, education responded to *A Nation at Risk*,<sup>65</sup> which argued that knowledge of the New Basics is the foundation of success after graduation. The world has dramatically changed, and our low-income and at-risk students now face a Digital Divide that, if not addressed, will widen the achievement gap. Technological literacy is now an essential element in our students' futures. Our students must be able to use technology as an integrated life skill, not as a separate subject or in isolation.

While technology offers extraordinary potential for learning and bringing global awareness, research has clearly indicated that technology is not, and cannot be, treated as the be-all-end-all, but rather becomes a powerful tool when used to support learning through collaborative projects and other authentic learning experiences.<sup>66</sup> This is why, at VHGA, we work to find the most effective ways to harness the potential of technology as a comprehensible, yet powerful, tool for students.

At VHGA, technology integration is based upon the International Society for Technology in Education's National Educational Technology Standards for Students.<sup>67</sup> The ISTE Standards are *the* benchmarks for learning, teaching, and leading in the digital age, and are widely recognized and adopted worldwide. They work in concert to transform education with a uniquely global perspective. The standards are designed around age band articulation that is in alignment with the VHGA developmental and child-centered approach. Students utilize a variety of technology tools to access, manipulate, exchange and create information, and demonstrate learning. Tools such as the Internet, word processors, databases, spreadsheets, publishing software, media editors, and so forth are integrated into the curriculum. Students are required to utilize technology as an outcome in their coursework. They will also be equipped to determine in their Digital Portfolio, what tools they are interested in learning and incorporating into their class projects. Through online learning and benchmark assessments, students will be prepared to take computer-based CAASPP and other assessments.

At all VCPS, the Google Classroom (LMS) has been adopted to create a safe cyber environment where these important modern relationships can happen without fear of abuse. Through Google Classroom, teachers safely communicate with students and parents through a platform that is monitored for abuse and is private to the school

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<sup>65</sup> Gardner, D. P., Larsen, Y. W., Baker, W., Campbell, A., & Crosby, E. A. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform* (p. 65). Washington, DC: United States Department of Education.

<sup>66</sup> See, e.g., Ahmed Kahn, T., How Technology Can (And Does) Improve Education, TrustRadius, March 28, 2019 <https://www.trustradius.com/buyer-blog/how-technology-improves-education>; Towns, S. Technology is Not Cure-All for Education's Problems, Governing, March 2011 <https://www.governing.com/columns/tech-talk/col-technology-not-cure-all-solution-to-educations-problems.html>

<sup>67</sup> International Society for Technology in Education. ISTE Standards. Accessed from: <https://www.iste.org/standards>.

community. Parents and school administrators monitor daily activity and keep abreast of their student's progress and important issues that might arise. Further, through this system, the school can easily check for any cyber-abuse or bullying that may occur.

### **SCHOOL STRUCTURE TO PROMOTE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

At VHGA, the key to teacher and student happiness is promoting a culture of joyous learning. It is not confined to the classroom, but concerns the entire physical environment, the social system, the atmosphere, and norms and values.<sup>68</sup> Research on emotional engagement suggests school climate is of paramount importance to a student's academic achievement.<sup>69</sup> The research conducted on outperforming urban schools has demonstrated that they have been successful at creating a sense of connectedness and belonging that is pervasive throughout the school's organizational culture. These caring relationships exist not only among teachers and students, but among the faculty members of the school and are often included as part of the school's mission statement. Teachers at such schools are perceived by students to have a caring personality, and in turn, this motivates students to work harder for them. At VHGA, a school-wide focus on connectedness and cultural relevance is sustained through the teacher-student interactions in classrooms both in instruction and in management as well as school-wide discipline policies and practices.<sup>70</sup> Innovative features of our school design are enumerated below.

**Small and Safe Learning Communities.** Extensive research has looked at the implications of school size.<sup>71</sup> Research suggests that small to medium-size schools provide greater opportunities for deeper interpersonal relationships between students and teachers and among peers, for enhanced student participation, and for increased attendance. All of these are leading factors in student engagement.<sup>72</sup> Smaller schools

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<sup>68</sup> Creemers, B. & Reezigt, G. (1996). School level conditions affecting the effectiveness of instruction. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 7, 197–228

<sup>69</sup> See, e.g., *Jonathan Cohen on School Climate: Engaging the Whole Village, Teaching the Whole Child*, The Challenge: A Publication of the U.S. Dept. of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, [https://www.schoolclimate.org/themes/schoolclimate/assets/pdf/cohen\\_onschoolclimate\\_iv1%20copy.pdf](https://www.schoolclimate.org/themes/schoolclimate/assets/pdf/cohen_onschoolclimate_iv1%20copy.pdf) ("Over the last 30 years a growing body of empirical research has shown that a positive and sustained school climate is associated with and may be predictive of positive youth development, effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts, student learning and academic achievement, increased student graduation rates, and teacher retention.")

<sup>70</sup> Fenning, P., & Rose, J. (2007). Overrepresentation of African American students in exclusionary discipline the role of school policy. *Urban Education*, 42(6), 536-559. Coleman, J. C. (2014). A study of a professional development initiative to increase cultural competency.

<sup>71</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA. Furlong, M. J., Whipple, A. D., Jean, G. S., Simental, J., Soliz, A., & Punthuna, S. (2003). Multiple contexts of school engagement: Moving toward a unifying framework for educational research and practice. *The California School Psychologist*, 8(1), 99-113. Marks, H., Louis, K. S., & Printy, S. (2000). The capacity for organizational learning: Implications for pedagogical quality and student achievement. *Understanding schools as intelligent systems*, 239-266.

<sup>72</sup> Darling-Hammond, L., & Plank, D. N. (2015). Supporting Continuous Improvement in California's Education System. *Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE*. Finn, J. D. (1989). Withdrawing from school. *Review of educational research*, 59(2), 117-142. Furlong, M. J., & Christenson, S. L. (2008).

promote conditions for higher levels of student engagement. Our school will never exceed 450 students, and class size will remain an average of 24.9 to 1. This model is ideal in sustaining a small community, and is an economically sound ratio allowing the school financial flexibility and strength to accomplish its extensive goals. The physical design of the school prioritizes flexibility and creates multifaceted spaces that allow students to drive their own learning, exhibit agency and choice, and feel safe and welcome at school each and every day.

Central to the teacher-student relationship is the teacher's commitment to creating a safe atmosphere that allows students to take academic risks and reach beyond their current ability.<sup>73</sup> A supportive environment that pushes students not only fosters motivation, but also helps students feel competent, take ownership of their learning, and serves as a positive predictor of interest in classes and even pursuing academic goals.<sup>74</sup>

**School discipline and safety.** While school culture and discipline have a strong regulatory role in facilitating engagement, they can also play an environmental role in student behaviors such as disrespect, poor attendance, fighting, and other disruptive and problem behaviors. Attentive and constructive culture and discipline facilitates engagement by focusing on services, interventions, and program development, and identifying at-risk students who would benefit from those programs.

Significantly, even the perceptions of unsafe school environments can lead to student dissatisfaction and disengagement.<sup>75</sup> Marks notes that “a positive school environment is favorable to learning by being normed for respect, fairness, safety, and positive communications.”<sup>76</sup> In another study, strong school discipline was found to have a significant impact on school engagement, but that arbitrary or overly strict policies like our current trend towards zero tolerance actually have a negative overall effect on engagement and achievement.<sup>77</sup> These policies are perceived as unfair and can lead to even higher dropout rates.

- At VHGA, creating a safe environment with structured discipline policies is essential. Too many at-risk students start down the school-to-prison pipeline

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Engaging students at school and with learning: A relevant construct for all students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 365-368.

<sup>73</sup> Samson, P. L. (2015). Fostering student engagement: Creative problem-solving in small group facilitations. *Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching*, 8, 153-164.

<sup>74</sup> Furlong, M. J., Whipple, A. D., Jean, G. S., Simental, J., Soliz, A., & Punthuna, S. (2003). Multiple contexts of school engagement: Moving toward a unifying framework for educational research and practice. *The California School Psychologist*, 8(1), 99-113. Shernoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology*, 41(6), 467-483.

<sup>75</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>76</sup> Marks, H., Louis, K. S., & Printy, S. (2000). The capacity for organizational learning: Implications for pedagogical quality and student achievement. *Understanding schools as intelligent systems*, 239-266.

<sup>77</sup> Furlong, M. J., Whipple, A. D., Jean, G. S., Simental, J., Soliz, A., & Punthuna, S. (2003). Multiple contexts of school engagement: Moving toward a unifying framework for educational research and practice. *The California School Psychologist*, 8(1), 99-113.

precisely because of overly punitive policies that undermine student self-worth and are not aligned with the stages of child development.<sup>78</sup> We use Way of Council to foster conditions of empathy, respect, kindness, and love in the classroom and the school itself. VHGA also uses principles of Restorative Justice to teach children how to grow and learn from a mistake. The humanity and dignity of every child is paramount and the discipline and safety policies are always reflective of this deeply held belief.

**Way of Council.** The Way of Council encourages deep and honest communication. Based on indigenous, worldwide “cultural dialogical” practices including Native American traditions observed and recorded by Benjamin Franklin, as well as contemporary organizational management practices, Council is a formal, structured process of sitting in a circle and passing a talking piece in response to a prompt from the facilitator. At VHGA, we teach students the “four intentions” of council – to speak from the heart, to listen from the heart without judgment, to speak spontaneously without planning, and to keep it lean so everyone has time with the talking piece. Council is a non-hierarchical forum for discussion. Instead of standing at the board delivering instruction, teachers sit with students in the circle. This allows participants to hear each other in a way that is sorely lacking in the traditional school and classroom culture.

Council is the best tool we have found to help children appreciate the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and opinions of their classmates. Regular use of council promotes a classroom culture where children learn to connect meaningfully with their peers and with adults. Being “in council” helps students develop attention, concentration, and listening skills; to express themselves fully and appropriately; and to “suspend” preconceptions.

Importantly, at VHGA, Council is contained to the classroom, but is used as a tradition and protocol for increasing teacher, parent, and community buy-in and engagement. Participating in council has the same benefits for adults in a school community – at staff, committee, teacher/parent, or community meetings. Governing the school using Council as a tool helps us model the adult behaviors we wish to encourage in students.

In simple terms, what we have at VHGA in Council is a systemic, community-building practice, one that moves toward the State’s priorities for personalization and creating safe, caring environments. Council provides a structured dialogic practice that creates opportunities for the voices of all school stakeholders to be heard, considered, and acted upon: students, staff, parents, and community members. In classrooms, along with creating community by providing students opportunities to acknowledge their commonalities and celebrate differences, Council practice facilitates the development of social-emotional skills—such as self-expression, empathy, and cooperation—as it brings relevance, connection, and meaning to academic curriculum and standards.

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<sup>78</sup> Salole, A. T., & Abdulle, Z. (2015). Quick to punish: An examination of the school to prison pipeline for marginalized youth. *Canadian Review of Social Policy*, (72/73), 124.

At VHGA, Way of Council is supported by:

- Continuous Training from Ojai Foundation Council in Schools program and Circle Ways
- Experienced council mentors to all participating teachers
- Monthly professional developments linking council to state learning standards in all academic disciplines and to Restorative Justice policies and practices
- Monthly staff councils
- Parent presentations and parent council facilitation
- Yearly retreat at the Ojai foundation or other similar facility in conjunction with all VCPS

**After-School Programs and Clubs.** Students who participate regularly in after-school clubs have been found to have a heightened sense of belonging and overall, were more engaged in school. Interestingly, clubs that have an academic focus were found to raise engagement, but athletic and social clubs had a negligible effect unless students participated in both simultaneously.<sup>79</sup> Even then, the role of non- academic clubs did not show a big impact. This is not surprising given the correlation of academically intense activities to engagement found in the research.<sup>80</sup>

VCPS have a long history with Youth Policy Institute (YPI), a committed partner in supporting our students' wellbeing. We have used YPI for our after-school programs to create academically supportive afterschool programs including tutoring and enrichment activities.

**Uniforms.** At VHGA, we believe that uniforms provide a unifying factor that increases identification with the school and with each other. Further, a uniform eliminates the outward appearance of economic disparities found in schools, thus removing one potential cause of bullying activities. Thus, students at VHGA are expected to wear school-approved uniforms.

### **PROMOTING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL STUDENT HEALTH & WELLNESS**

**Quality of student-teacher relationship.** Researchers agree that the role of the teacher is key to student engagement.<sup>81</sup> George Kuh situated the teacher at the center of all engagement,<sup>82</sup> whereas Furlong described the teachers as fundamental to a

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<sup>79</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>80</sup> Shernoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology, 41*(6), 467-483.

<sup>81</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>82</sup> Kuh, G. D. (2001). Assessing what really matters to student learning inside the national survey of student engagement. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 33*(3), 10-17.

learning environment that promotes engagement.<sup>83</sup> This assertion is significant in its direct application to environmental factors that are within the control of the teacher and school community. A warm and supportive approach is also linked to engagement and is demonstrated through listening to students' points of view, believing in their abilities, showing respect, holding the class to high standards of behaviors, and helping students when they do not understand something.<sup>84</sup> Not surprisingly, the role of teacher engagement seems to have a contagious effect: students who perceive their teachers as engaged in the subject and excited about teaching also feel cared about, a view that raises student engagement and forms a deep sense of belonging.<sup>85</sup>

At VHGA, we strive to transform the student experience and hire teaching and support personnel that embody a deep sense of excitement and passion for children and their learning.

***Student-centered classrooms*** emphasize supportive relationships between students and teachers in academic environments that are challenging, relevant, collaborative, student-directed, and connected to real-life situations. Students are assessed on their mastery of knowledge and skills and have multiple opportunities to demonstrate that mastery. Educators are supported in creating a student-centered learning environment through opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and leadership. Research has shown that such settings are necessary for students to develop the skills to succeed in college, career, and life.

Student-centered practices are more often found in schools that serve affluent and middle-class students than those located in low-income communities. Creating student-centered learning environments is one way to effectively address the opportunity gap for these students.

VHGA firmly believes that students learn best by doing and not in passive lecture style settings. The student-centered classroom provides targeted instruction based on personalized learning goals with ample time for practice.

Our current educational system is based on the antiquated notion that children should sit quietly and still for six hours each day, while their teacher is the holder of knowledge and conveys that knowledge through lectures. However, we learn a language by speaking it, to read and write by reading and writing, and we develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and attributes by regularly using them in our daily lives. The VHGA experience puts students at the center of learning through a workshop model of instruction in which

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<sup>83</sup> Furlong, M. J., Whipple, A. D., Jean, G. S., Simental, J., Soliz, A., & Punthuna, S. (2003). Multiple contexts of school engagement: Moving toward a unifying framework for educational research and practice. *The California School Psychologist*, 8(1), 99-113.

<sup>84</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA. Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P., Friedel, J., & Paris, A. (2005). School engagement. In *What do children need to flourish?* (pp. 305-321). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>85</sup> Shernoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology*, 41(6), 467-483.

teachers act as a coach and facilitate a more personalized learning experience. This shift from vertical to horizontal classrooms is based on a constructivist view wherein, optimally, the classroom provides a series of experiences that prompt students to actively construct their own knowledge and learning.<sup>86</sup>

**Student belonging.** The research on engagement makes clear that a sense of belonging is a crucial factor in engagement. Emotional engagement has been deemed fundamental to human motivation<sup>87</sup> and is described as a sense of belonging, relatedness, and identification with school. This state of belonging requires “frequent, affectively pleasant or positive interactions with the same individuals, and they need these interactions to occur in a framework of long-term, stable caring, and concern.”<sup>88</sup> According to the research, emotional engagement plays a role in academic and cognitive engagement, which has a direct link to learning.<sup>89</sup> In one study, students who reported high levels of belonging outperformed their peers, while those who reported low levels of belonging often displayed negative and anti-social behaviors, including cheating, drug and alcohol use on school grounds, and even suicidal feelings.<sup>90</sup> It has also been shown that identification with school develops over time and is affected, positively or negatively, by a lifetime of academic successes or failures.<sup>91</sup>

While VHGA carefully attends to the interpersonal relationships and factors of engagement that fall within the locus of control of students and teachers, it also recognizes the school-controlled factors that affect student identification with their school and the value of overall satisfaction within the students’ daily routines. Most research makes evident that school-controlled factors play a role. One study found a strong connection between school engagement and school climate, and identified two distinct elements: *Physical environment*, which it described in terms of size and racial/ethnic populations, and *regulatory environment*, which consists of school discipline policies.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1).

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Problems of general psychology*. Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active learning in higher education*, 11(3), 167-177.

<sup>87</sup> Appleton, J. J., Christenson, S. L., & Furlong, M. J. (2008). Student engagement with school: Critical conceptual and methodological issues of the construct. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 369-386.

<sup>88</sup> Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological bulletin*, 117(3), 497.

<sup>89</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?.

In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>90</sup> Christenson, S. L., Reschly, A. L., Appleton, J. J., Berman, S., Spanjers, D., & Varro, P. (2008). Best practices in fostering student engagement. In *Best practices in school psychology V*(pp. 1099-1120). National Association of School Psychologists. Resnick, M. D., Bearman, P. S., Blum, R. W., Bauman, K. E., Harris, K. M., Jones, J., ... & Ireland, M. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Jama*, 278(10), 823-832.

<sup>91</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?.

In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

<sup>92</sup> Furlong, M. J., & Christenson, S. L. (2008). Engaging students at school and with learning: A relevant construct for all students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 365-368.



**Family Engagement.** Research has long been clear about the important role that families play in their children’s academic success.<sup>93</sup> At VHGA, parents, guardians, and extended family are integral parts of the school community. Teachers and administrators are committed to welcoming and working with all families to engage them in their child’s education. Communicating with families is crucial to this relationship, and there is frequent communication between the school and families. At VHGA, we are committed to using a variety of means to communicate with our families. Our families have access to a state-of-the-art learning management system, an up-to-date website, emails, and hard-copy newsletters. However, we know that many of our families do not have access to the internet and don’t use email regularly. Based on parent surveys and parent focus groups conducted by Dr. Wilson, we understand that most of our families have texting capability and prefer to be communicated with by text. At VHGA, we use our learning management system to ensure that families receive communication in their preferred format. Teachers send home regular reports of student progress, and follow-up as needed in person and via phone to ensure that families are fully equipped to support their student’s learning at home. Finally, VHGA hosts a variety of social and educational events to promote community-building and family involvement.

These may include back-to-school events, parent educational seminars, exhibitions of student work, student performances, and our special awards night, *Noche de Estrellas*. Families accompany their child to student-led conferences bi-annually to stay informed of their child’s progress, and to ensure parents know how to support their student’s learning and personal growth at home.

Our three areas of family support revolve around helping parents be an integral part of their child’s academic life:

- Home – School Relationships: VHGA fosters youth's developmental needs, parents' attitudes and practices, and schools' expectations and support of family involvement by maintaining a strong relationship between home and school.
- Responsibility for Learning: VHGA parents are involved in their child’s learning plan. Their responsibility in the plan is to support their child’s goals.
- Parenting: VHGA assists, when necessary, parents in developing the attitudes, values, and practices of parents in raising adolescent youth.

These three areas strengthen VHGA students’ abilities to develop in their academic, personal and long-term goals, through the creation of a “full circle” of expectations and communication among the student, family and school. To ensure success in maintaining the “full circle,” parents who need additional assistance are provided with, or directed to, additional resources within the school and community in order to fulfill areas of need (e.g., ESL classes, parenting classes, counseling services, job centers, etc.). The Digital Portfolios enhance parent involvement, as they have components in which the parents

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<sup>93</sup> NEA. Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education. Accessed from: [https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB11\\_ParentInvolvement08.pdf](https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB11_ParentInvolvement08.pdf). Families and Schools Together. (2016). The Importance of Parent Engagement: A List of Research and Thought Partnership. Accessed from: <https://www.familiesandschools.org/blog/the-importance-of-parent-engagement/>

are a part of their child’s development of college awareness, personal aspirations and planning for the future.

## **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

The curriculum for VHGA is based on the California Content Standards, including the Common Core Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards, ELD Standards, and the California Curriculum Frameworks. Starting in 2019-20, VHGA will begin to implement the new *2019 California Arts Standards for Public Schools, Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (Arts Standards), *2019 California World Languages Standards for Public Schools, Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (when published) and *2019 Health Education Curriculum Framework for California Public Schools, Transitional Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (Health Education Framework).

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (CORE)**

The ELA curriculum is based on California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, along with the *California English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking*.<sup>94</sup> At VHGA we believe in a Balanced Literacy approach. This approach is a curricular methodology that integrates various modalities of literacy instruction, aimed at guiding students towards proficient and lifelong reading. The balanced literacy approach is characterized by explicit skill instruction and the use of authentic texts. To this end, we create a learning environment in which our students see themselves as readers and writers, thinkers, listeners, and speakers. This research-based program emphasizes phonemic awareness and phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and writing.

The main components of a balanced literacy program and Readers and Writers Workshop approach are the following:

*Reading Aloud:* Reading aloud is the foundation of the literacy framework. This is an interactive experience in which readers are engaged in discussing a text throughout the reading. Read-Alouds develop high-level thinking and discourse and are an opportunity to deepen comprehension through discourse and active thinking. Teachers use cognitive resources, such as Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Bloom’s levels that motivate students to think critically about the text, increasing rigor and raising the caliber of conversation. By being immersed in a variety of well-chosen texts, students not only learn to love stories and reading but they also learn about written language.

*Word Study:* Word study refers to the deliberate investigation of words and includes: sight words, phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary development. Word study takes place in settings where the teacher directs children's categorization and understanding of how words work through routines, direct instruction, and word sorts. Teachers provide whole group, small group and center instruction throughout literacy instructional time. Teachers work toward automaticity and flexibility by referring

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<sup>94</sup> <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/elaeldfrmwrksbeadopted.asp>

frequently to meaningful texts. Students are often prompted to use new knowledge in reading and writing settings.

*Mini-Lessons:* Reading and writing mini lessons are approximately 10 minutes in length and provide daily direct and explicit instruction. The mini-lesson uses a clear and consistent structure that incorporates connections, teaching, active engagement, and a link to real-life application. The mini-lesson is always drawn from a unit of study or responding to a class need, and refers to a text for instructional clarity such as a read-aloud or shared reading.

*Conferring:* This is an opportunity for teachers to meet with students to discuss and document the specific needs and progress of the individual reader. The teacher may review a skill or strategy from a previous conference or may set a new goal with the student. Conferences with students are based on formal (pre-and post- assessments) and informal (observations and Reader's Response Journal) data. Questions during a conference are focused on data collected or used as a means to decide areas of growth and set goals for the student's reading level.

#### Components of Balanced Literacy Model

| <b>Read Aloud</b>     | <b>Comprehension, vocabulary, fluency</b> | <b>I do (model)</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Guided Reading        | Comprehension, vocabulary                 | We do (guided)        |
| <b>Shared Reading</b> | <b>Fluency, comprehension</b>             | <b>We do (shared)</b> |
| Independent Reading   | Comprehension                             | You do                |
| <b>Word Study</b>     | <b>Decoding, fluency</b>                  | (all)                 |

*Shared reading:* Designed to include the whole class or a small group, this activity involves students reading a common text with teacher support. It provides many opportunities for incidental learning about the way written language works. The text is re-read over the course of several days with various teaching points in mind. Fluency is a key goal of this component and ultimately leads to higher levels of comprehension. This is supportive of readers as they begin to attend to the details of print while still focusing on meaning and enjoyment. In shared reading, emerging readers get a chance to behave like readers and learn to appreciate and enjoy the process.

*Guided reading:* Guided Reading places the child in a more formal instructional situation and is the foundation of the literacy curriculum. The teacher works with a small group of students who have similar reading processes. The teacher selects and introduces new books and supports the children in reading the whole text to themselves. Teachers offer

constructive guidance, giving the child the opportunity to problem-solve while reading for meaning.

*Independent reading:* Students have extended time to read a “Just Right” book of their choice and practice reading strategies taught in the mini-lesson. “Just Right” books are at the current reading level of the student or just slightly above. Classroom readers and books are clearly labeled with reading levels in accordance with the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessments and other normed leveled libraries, like Scholastic.

Across the middle school grades, the Readers Workshop model continuously builds on students’ capacity to read independently and make the critical shift from learning to read to reading to learn.

***Readers Workshop Unit Titles***

| Grade Level           | Unit Summaries   |
|-----------------------|--|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Deep Study of Character</li><li>• Tapping the Power of Nonfiction</li><li>• Social Issues Book Clubs</li></ul>   |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investigating Characterization: Author Studies</li><li>• Essential Research Skills for Teens (coming in fall 2019)</li><li>• Historical Fiction Book Clubs</li></ul> |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dystopian Book Clubs</li><li>• Literary Nonfiction</li><li>• Contemporary Classics: Reading Award-Winning American Literature (coming in early 2020)</li></ul>       |

Similarly, in Writers Workshop, teachers in every grade guide students through this process so that students become independent writers who can write on demand for a variety of audiences and purposes, namely opinion/argument pieces, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Students write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Caulkins, L. (1994), *The Art of Teaching Writing*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann; Krashen, S. (1982), *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford: Pergamon Press.

**Writers Workshop Unit Titles**

| Grade                 | Unit Summaries   |
|-----------------------|--|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <p>UNIT 1 Personal Narrative: Crafting Powerful Life Stories: This unit helps students draw on their lives, learning strategies to generate meaningful story ideas, manage pace, elaborate on important scenes, and deepen insights. This unit especially emphasizes the importance of setting goals, practicing strategically, and aiming for high productivity.</p> <p>UNIT 2 The Literary Essay: From Character to Compare/Contrast: In this unit, sixth graders learn ways essayists generate ideas based on close readings of a text, learning strategies essayists use to gather, analyze, and explain evidence from the text to support their claims.</p> <p>UNIT 3 Research-Based Information Writing: Books, Websites, and Presentations: This unit calls students to explore the broad topic of teen activism in order to teach their readers about a topic, asking them to use increasingly sophisticated ways to draw on and structure information to explain a position or make a call to action.</p> |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <p>UNIT 1 Writing Realistic Fiction: Symbolism, Syntax, and Truth: In this unit, students compose engaging short fiction. They lift the sophistication of their writing through attention to individual scenes, symbols, and writing techniques they've discovered from close readings of powerful short fiction.</p> <p>UNIT 2 Writing About Reading: From Reader's Notebooks to Companion Books: This unit teaches students to analyze the craft and structure of the authors they admire and to write for real audiences about why that craft matters.</p> <p>UNIT 3 The Art of Argument: Research-Based Essays: This unit instructs students in writing essays that build convincing, nuanced arguments, balancing evidence and analysis to persuade readers to shift their beliefs or take action.</p>  |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <p>UNIT 1 Investigative Journalism: In this unit, students learn to use sharp observations of life to write news and investigative articles about meaningful topics, crafting vivid narratives and elaborating multiple perspectives. They'll write to shine a light on issues in their community and to actively stir their readers to take action.</p> <p>UNIT 2 The Literary Essay: Analyzing Craft and Theme: This unit returns students to literary essays, writing arguments and counterarguments about themes in texts, supporting their positions with details of plot, character, and author's craft.</p> <p>UNIT 3 Position Papers: Research and Argument: This unit encourages students to compose principled arguments by drawing on evidence, contextualizing their positions, and addressing multiple perspectives.</p>  |

<https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/h-olr/calkins/Comprehensive-Overview.pdf>

*Shared and interactive writing:* Interactive or shared writing provides an authentic setting in which the teacher can explicitly demonstrate how written language works. First, the teacher and students work together to discover a reason for writing. Once

purpose is established, the teacher helps students gain control over the conventions of print that writers need to communicate their messages in written language.

*Writers Workshop:* Guided writing, or Writers Workshop, is another way for teachers to help children learn to write; children construct their individual pieces of writing with teacher and peer guidance, assistance, and feedback. The teacher may have individual conferences with children or lead a mini lesson on an aspect of writing from topic selection to composition to punctuation to letter formation.

Finally, VHGA addresses important speaking and listening standards to help students develop vocabulary and critical communication skills. Teachers provide students with multiple opportunities to explore oral communication in the classroom through class and small group discussions. Structured speaking and listening activities include Author's Chair and literature circles where students discuss and analyze elements of books as well as relate reading experiences to their own lives. Students practice speaking clearly and using complete sentences during formal oral reports and presentations. Students are taught active, effective listening habits, including how to focus their attention, avoid distractions, use body position to signal their interest, express appreciation and appropriately pose questions. Some of the ways in which active listening skills are practiced include: following oral directions, answering questions after read-aloud, critiquing shared pieces in Writer's Workshop, writing dictated sentences and repeating rhythms through movement and clapping. Across grades 6-8, through speaking and listening instruction, students participate effectively with their peers both in learning and evaluating information they receive and in expressing themselves in myriad ways.

## **English 6**

**English 6** is designed to develop a students' ability to comprehend, appreciate, and respond to different types of texts in written form for a variety of audiences and social contexts along with acquiring academic language literacy. Oral and literary strategies integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing at increasing levels of accuracy and fluency. This course emphasizes reading comprehension, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary, and analytical skills necessary for college success.

English 6 focuses on the processes, skills, and strategies for effective communication in all its forms. This course is designed to increase students' abilities as skilled readers of literary text and poetry in a variety of genres. Students critically read literature selections and write analytically about what they have read. Students write narrative, expository, and argumentative papers. At all stages of the writing process students work in teams to research, plan, draft, edit, review and revise their documents. Students produce a variety of compositions using technology to revise, edit, and publish their work. The course emphasizes on non-fiction reading and writing and is a good companion with our Ancient Civilization course. A series of exercises and application activities follow each unit in explanatory material to reinforce the concepts presented in each unit.

## **English 7**

In **English 7**, students work on more refined standards such as tracing the development of an author's argument, use the formal research process; deliver persuasive presentations that employ evidence, and analyze characterization. The emphasized strands are as follows: Word Analysis, Vocabulary Development, Reading Comprehension; Literary Response, Writing Strategies, Writing Applications, Written and Oral Conventions, Listening and Speaking Strategies and Speaking Applications. English 7 is designed to help students excel and improve in reading, writing, researching, grammar, academic language, and verbal skills. Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the text by using their knowledge of text structure, organization, and purpose. Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. They write narrative, expository, argumentative, and descriptive texts. Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science.

## **English 8**

In **English 8**, students continue work in strands and sub-strands emphasized in English 7, in preparation for the high school years. The course provides students curriculum activities that culminate their learning from grades 4 – 8. In particular, there is additional work in the areas of informational materials for reading comprehension; transitions, parallelism and points of view for writing strategies; and sentence structure for written and oral language conventions.

This class is designed to help students excel and improve in reading, writing, researching, grammar, academic language, and verbal skills. The teacher provides differentiated instruction in which students become readers and writers, who are able to comprehend, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate a variety of text. Students engage in small group activities such as Literature Circles and Project Based Learning groups to become insightful, collaborative, and respectful learners. These activities help students develop the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills necessary to succeed in high school and higher education. Also, students develop verbal skills through Socratic Seminars, Literature Circles, and Poetry Slams. Students are required to bring class materials every day and follow classroom and school rules.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (CORE SUBJECT)**

As detailed more fully in the section on English Learners, below, the ELD program implements both the California ELD Standards and the new *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools* (ELA/ELD Framework). The school's ELD goals are directly aligned with the goals detailed in the ELD Standards and Framework to "ensure that ELs are fully supported as they:

- Read, analyze, interpret, and create a variety of literary and informational text types;
- Develop an understanding of how language is a complex, dynamic, and social resource for making meaning;
- Develop an understanding of how content is organized in different text types across disciplines using text organization and structure, language features, and vocabulary depending on purpose and audience;
- Become aware that different languages and varieties of English exist;
- Recognize their home languages and cultures as resources to value in their own right and to draw upon in order to build proficiency in English;
- Contribute actively to class and group discussions by asking questions, responding appropriately, and providing useful feedback;
- Demonstrate knowledge of content through oral presentations, writing, collaborative conversations, and multimedia; and
- Develop proficiency in shifting registers based on task, purpose, audience, and text type” (ELA/ELD Framework p. 9-10).

EL students, like their English-fluent counterparts, are expected to gain progress in each of the ELA strands -- Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. As detailed more fully below, through both integrated and designated ELD instruction, including use of the Lexia curricular program, EL students are supported in developing EL proficiency and reclassification as they master content standards. The Principal or designee monitors EL progress through formal and informal assessments including grades, standardized test scores, and ongoing communications with classroom teachers and the student’s parents/guardians. (See below, for more details about support/ELD instruction, assessment, reclassification and monitoring of ELs.)

## **MATHEMATICS (CORE)**

As a STEAM-focused school, mathematics and quantitative reasoning skills are central to the curriculum at VHGA. At all grade levels, students participate in engaging, hands-on math activities that require critical thinking, problem-solving, and conceptual understanding. VHGA holds high expectations for all students in math development and provides ample support for students to reach these expectations. California’s Common Core Content and Practice Standards and the *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, A Look At Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve in California Public Schools*, provides a foundation for work in math.

A cohesive math curriculum promotes math fluency and accuracy as well as conceptual understanding of important mathematical ideas and mathematical reasoning. Hands-on activities and materials in the classroom, as well ties to Project-Based Learning (PBL), helps students to recognize the connections between math concepts and the world around them. To facilitate this, VHGA uses Ready Math, as well as their online platform and resources, iReady, to further enhance numeracy and mathematical reasoning.



Ready Math connects math to the real world while helping students achieve true understanding lesson by lesson and year after year. The team of teachers and mathematicians who wrote Ready Math took great care to present mathematics in a logical progression from PK through Grade 8. They believe that mathematical knowledge is conveyed most effectively when it is taught in a sequence that follows the “story” of mathematics itself. The sequencing has been joined with methods of instruction that have been proven to work.<sup>96</sup> This coherent approach is designed to ensure teachers know what incoming students already have learned and that students are prepared for what comes next, helping to dramatically reduce gaps in student learning, instill persistence in problem solving, and prepare students to understand advanced math. These methods drive student understanding beyond process, to deep mastery of mathematical concepts. The goal of Ready Math is to produce students who are not merely literate, but fluent, in mathematics.

### Components to a Math Lesson

1. Guiding question/puzzlement (Sprints)
2. Review of skills from the previous lesson
3. Concept development (vocabulary & language acquisition)
4. Creation/demonstration of concept
5. Manipulation of concept (hands on)
6. Introducing concept using numbers
7. Focus on dual concept approach, which allows students to immediately demonstrate their learning by problem set with pictures and words
8. Student debriefing/discussion of their learning experience
9. Quiz/Assessments daily (Exit Tickets)

Ready Math has several key mathematical tools that are used throughout a student’s middle school years. Sprints are high-energy classroom activities in which students complete as many math facts as they are able in a set amount of time. Care is taken during a sprint to make sure that all students are working as hard as they can to recall facts, notice patterns within the sprint page, and do their personal best. To this end, sprints are designed to come in pairs, so that students can try the first sprint (Sprint A), assess their correct and incorrect answers, and then try to improve their score on Sprint B, given immediately after assessing Sprint A. Sprints are one of the primary ways in Ready Math in which students gain fluency and competency with math facts, a key building block skill for computation and comprehension throughout middle school.

The Concept Development is the primary lesson component and comprises approximately 20 minutes of Math lesson time. New learning is introduced during the Concept Development and generally moves from the concrete (using hands on materials) to the pictorial (using diagrams, pictures, etc) to the abstract (equations). Following this Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract structure allows students supports in learning increasingly complex mathematics. The Concept Development portion of the lesson concludes with the completion of the Problem Set.

During the debrief, teacher and student review vocabulary terms and make connections using the problem set. The teacher’s manual provides higher order thinking and rigorous questions for this ending piece of the lesson.

|                                | 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 7 <sup>th</sup>   | 8th   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Number and Operations          | <p>Add and subtract fractions and decimals</p> <p>Factors and multiples</p> <p>Compare numbers</p> <p>Multiply and divide whole numbers, fractions and decimals</p>  | <p>Add and subtract fractions and decimals</p> <p>Represent and solve problems involving the four operations</p> <p>Multiply and divide with fractions and decimals</p>   |   |
| Algebra and Algebraic Thinking | <p>Ratios</p> <p>Write and solve equations and inequalities</p> <p>Rates and unit rates</p> <p>Write and evaluate numerical expressions, including equivalent expressions</p> <p>Ordered pairs, coordinate graphs, and the coordinate plane</p> <p>Functions</p> | <p>Ratios</p> <p>Write and solve equations and inequalities</p> <p>Scaling, scale drawings, and scale factors</p> <p>Proportional relationships</p> <p>Write and evaluate numerical expressions, including equivalent expressions</p> | <p>Proportional relationships</p> <p>Ordered pairs, coordinate graphs, and the coordinate plane</p> <p>Functions</p> <p>Linear Functions</p> <p>Linear equations and models</p> <p>Systems of equations</p> <p>Exponents and scientific notation</p> <p>Pythagorean Theorem</p> |
| Measurement and Data           | Represent, interpret, and display data   | Represent, interpret, and display data  | Represent, interpret, and display data  |

|          |  |  |   |
|----------|--|--|---|
|          | Understand statistical questions and samples<br><br>Understand, measure, and solve problems with area, surface area and volume | Understand statistical questions and samples<br><br>Understand, measure, and solve problems with area, surface area, perimeter and volume<br><br>Probability | Understand, measure, and solve problems with volume                                   |
| Geometry |  | Angles, angle measures, and angle relationships<br><br>Draw lines, angles or triangles   | Angles, angle measures, and angle relationships<br><br>Transformations and Similarity |

At the conclusion of the debrief, students complete an exit ticket which allows the teacher to have a quick check into student understanding of the day's lesson.

Teachers provide direct instruction in new skills and present hands-on activities, while also allowing time in and out of class to practice grade level computational skills. Teachers differentiate instruction throughout the week using online intervention programs, such as Khan Academy, focusing on the needs of struggling students and those requiring more advanced work beyond the grade level curriculum. Each math period begins with a warm-up activity requiring the application of skills learned previously to solve a problem.

Because not all students have mastered the prerequisite mathematical skills for success in the math curriculum, new VHGA students are assessed at the beginning of each year and receive interventions that address areas of deficit. Students not meeting standards participate in additional math intervention.

### **Math 6**

In **Math 6**, students become mathematicians as they develop their problem solving and critical thinking skills. Throughout the course of the year, students learn the content needed to develop a foundation for more challenging middle school math courses. Math 6 is divided into the following four critical areas:

- Connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division, and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems
- Completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers

- Writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations
- Developing understanding of statistical thinking.

## **Math 7**

**Math 7** continues building upon concepts presented in Math 6. Instruction focuses on four critical areas:

- Developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships
- Developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations
- Solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume
- Drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

## **Math 8**

**Math 8** continues building upon concepts presented in Math 7, including three critical areas:

- Formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations
- Grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships
- Analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem

## **Algebra I**

This year-long course is for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who exceeded expectations in their 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math class. **Algebra 1** will accelerate students through an entire year of high school-level math, which allows them to take Geometry in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Topics covered include:

- Foundations for Algebra – variables and expressions, operations with real numbers, functions
- Equations – solving equations, proportion and percent
- Inequalities – solving simple and compound inequalities
- Functions – function concepts, applying functions
- Linear functions – characteristics of linear functions, using a variety of forms of linear functions
- Systems of Equations and Inequalities – solving systems by graphing, substitution, and elimination
- Exponents and Polynomials
- Factoring Polynomials

- Quadratic Functions and Equations
- Data Analysis and Probability
- Exponential and Radical Functions
- Rational Functions and Equations

## SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING (CORE)

The science program at VHGA emphasizes inquiry, curiosity, collaboration, scientific literacy, and especially, relevance and application to real-world problems. VHGA uses the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which emphasize and align to our goals through inquiry-oriented investigations, real-life application, and interdisciplinary thinking about scientific concepts ([www.nextgenscience.org](http://www.nextgenscience.org)). VHGA uses the 6-8 Project Lead the Way curriculum and Amplify programs, which are aligned with NGSS standards and VHGA's guiding principles and goals. Students have many opportunities to explore their own science and engineering ideas in labs, on field trips, and in an on-campus maker-space.

The implementation of our standards-based Science curriculum is driven by the constructivist belief that students learn best in an inquiry-based, hands-on, investigative environment that builds upon the knowledge of previous learning. Our students work in cooperative groups to advance through the stages of the scientific process. It is through these cooperative groups that our students learn how to work together to solve a problem.

The VHGA project-based/constructivist-driven science instructional program encourages students to learn content at higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, as students have opportunities to apply their knowledge as well as analyze, synthesize, evaluate and create information. While NGSS set the learning foundation, the actual project is the framework through which all of the teaching and experiential learning take place. Students learn concepts via active engagement in the project. Projects may be problem-, inquiry-, experiment-, or design- focused ultimately making the learning more authentic and student-centered. Projects also focus on "real-life", current, possibly community- based problems (i.e. understanding, responding to, and designing a solution for the water drought). Students are responsible for presenting their project outcomes in front of their peers and sometimes the larger school community.

Students follow the eight practices of science and engineering that the NGSS Framework identifies as essential for all students:

- Asking questions (for science) and defining problems (for engineering)
- Developing and using models
- Planning and carrying out investigations
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Using mathematics and computational thinking
- Constructing explanations (for science) and designing solutions (for engineering)

- Engaging in argument from evidence
- Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Two primary curricular resources support our students' science learning: Project Lead the Way's Gateway program and Amplify Science.

**PLTW Gateway** PLTW Gateway is aligned to Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core State Standards for Math and English Language Arts, and other national and state standards for grades 6-8. The program's 10-hour modules are flexible and customizable: They can be implemented independently or in tandem with one another, at the grade level, at any time. Both formative and summative assessments are embedded in the program. Assessments for learning and of learning play a critical role by providing meaningful feedback to students, teachers, and administrators.

PLTW Gateway units include:

### **DESIGN AND MODELING**

Students discover the design process and develop an understanding of the influence of creativity and innovation in their lives. They are then challenged and empowered to use and apply what they've learned throughout the unit to design a therapeutic toy for a child who has cerebral palsy.

### **AUTOMATION AND ROBOTICS**

Students learn about the history and impact of automation and robotics as they explore mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Using the VEX Robotics® platform, students apply what they know to design and program traffic lights, robotic arms, and more.

### **APP CREATORS**

This unit will expose students to computer science as a means of computationally analyzing and developing solutions to authentic problems through mobile app development, and will convey the positive impact of the application of computer science to other disciplines and to society.

### **COMPUTER SCIENCE FOR INNOVATORS AND MAKERS**

Throughout the unit, students will learn about programming for the physical world by blending hardware design and software development, allowing students to discover computer science concepts and skills by creating personally relevant, tangible, and shareable projects.

### **ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Students are challenged to think big and toward the future as they explore sustainable solutions to our energy needs and investigate the impact of energy on our lives and the world. They use what they've learned to design and model alternative energy sources, as well as evaluate options for reducing energy consumption.

## **FLIGHT AND SPACE**

The exciting world of aerospace comes alive through Flight and Space. Students explore the science behind aeronautics and use their knowledge to design, build, and test an airfoil.

## **SCIENCE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Science impacts the technology of yesterday, today, and the future. In this unit, students apply the concepts of physics, chemistry, and nanotechnology to activities and projects, including making ice cream, cleaning up an oil spill, and discovering the properties of nano-materials.

## **MAGIC OF ELECTRONS**

In this unit, students examine the behavior and parts of atoms as well as the impact of electricity on the world around them. They learn skills in basic circuitry design and use what they know to propose designs such as a burglar alarm for an art museum.

## **GREEN ARCHITECTURE**

In this unit, students learn how to apply green concepts to the fields of architecture and construction. They explore dimensioning, measuring, and architectural sustainability and apply what they have learned to design affordable housing units using Autodesk's® 3D architectural design software.

## **MEDICAL DETECTIVES**

Students play the role of real-life medical detectives as they collect and analyze medical data to diagnose disease. They solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs, measure and interpret vital signs, examine nervous system structure and function, investigate disease outbreaks, and explore how a breakdown within the human body can lead to dysfunction.

(<https://www.pltw.org/our-programs/pltw-gateway>)

PLTW Gateway provides comprehensive professional development for teachers as part of the program, including ongoing training opportunities throughout the school year, robust instructional support, on-demand resources, and a community of collaborative educators to connect and interact with through an online platform. PLTW Lead Teacher(s) engage in a hands-on, comprehensive two-and-a-half day training that introduces them to the pedagogy that is the cornerstone of PLTW programs. The Lead Teacher(s) then train other teachers.

VHGA also implements the Amplify science curriculum, developed by the UC Berkeley Lawrence Hall of Science. Amplify Science blends digital experiences with hands-on lessons that inspire students to think like scientists and engineers to solve real-world problems. Each full-year course was designed to address 100 percent of the NGSS, and comprises Life Science, Earth and Space Science, Physical Science and Engineering Design. Each unit of Amplify Science California engages students in a relevant, real-world problem where they investigate scientific phenomena, engage in collaboration and discussion, and develop models or explanations in order to arrive at

solutions. Amplify Science California is rooted in the Lawrence Hall of Science’s Do, Talk, Read, Write, Visualize model of learning. This research-based approach presents students with multiple modalities through which to explore the curriculum. Amplify Science California includes hands-on activities, print materials, and powerful digital tools to support online and offline teaching and learning. Highly adaptable and user-friendly, the program gives schools and individual teachers flexibility based on their technology resources and preferences.

Amplify Science is organized around units where students are introduced to compelling phenomena and real-world problems, develop and strengthen claims by collecting evidence and testing assumptions, and apply their learning in new contexts.

### **Integrated Science 6**

Students engage in scientific investigation through the following units:

**Microbiome:** There is evidence to suggest that the approximately 100 trillion bacteria living on and in the human body may correlate to many different health conditions. Further, altering one’s microbiome can result in altering one’s health for better or worse. Most notably, a treatment known as a fecal transplant—a transplant that involves using microorganisms from one person’s healthy gut microbiome to cure another person who is suffering from a potentially deadly infection—has been under review. Students take on the role of student researchers to figure out why a fecal transplant cured a patient suffering from a *C. difficile* infection.

**Metabolism:** Through inhabiting the role of medical students in a hospital, students are able to draw connections between the large-scale, macro-level experiences of the body and the micro-level processes that make the body function as they first diagnose a patient and then analyze the metabolism of world-class athletes. They uncover how body systems work together to bring molecules from food and air to the trillions of cells in the human body.

**Metabolism: Engineering Internship:** Students act as food engineering interns to design a health bar to feed people involved in natural disasters, with a particular emphasis on two populations who have health needs beyond what can be provided by emergency meals: patients and rescue workers. These plans must meet three design criteria: 1) addressing the metabolic needs of a target population; 2) tasting as good as possible; and 3) minimizing costs while serving as many people as possible. Students focus on the practice of considering trade-offs while designing solutions to deepen their understanding of metabolism. They also consider questions of scale, proportion, and quantity as different proportions of types of molecules affect a body’s health and metabolism.

**Traits and Reproduction:** Scientists and engineers are investigating possible ways spider silk can be used for medical purposes, such as for artificial tendons. Students act as student geneticists to investigate what causes variation in spider silk traits.



Specifically, they explain why parent spiders have offspring with widely varied silk flexibility traits. They uncover the roles of proteins and genes and the way that genes are inherited.

**Thermal Energy:** In their role as student thermal scientists, students work with the principal of the fictional Riverdale School to help the school choose a new heating system. They compare a system that heats a small amount of water with one that uses a larger amount of cooler groundwater. Students discover that observed temperature changes can be explained by the movement of molecules, which facilitates the transfer of kinetic energy from one place to another. As they analyze the two heating system options, students learn to distinguish between temperature and energy, and to explain how energy transfers from a warmer object to a colder object until the temperature of the two objects reaches equilibrium.

**Ocean, Atmosphere, and Climate:** Students act as student climatologists helping a group of farmers near Christchurch figure out the cause of significantly colder air temperatures during the El Niño climate event. To solve the puzzle, students investigate what causes regional climates. They learn about energy from the sun and energy transfer between Earth's surface and atmosphere, ocean currents, and prevailing winds.

**Weather Patterns:** Weather is a complex system that affects our daily lives. Understanding how weather events, such as severe rainstorms, take place is important for students to conceptualize weather events in their own community. Students play the role of student forensic meteorologists as they discover how water vapor, temperature, energy transfer, and wind influence local weather patterns in a fictional town called Galetown. They use what they have learned to explain what may have caused rainstorms in Galetown to be unusually severe in recent years.

**Earth's Changing Climate:** In the role of student climatologists, students investigate what is causing ice on Earth's surface to melt in order to help the fictional World Climate Institute educate the public about the processes involved. Students consider claims about changes to energy from the sun, to the atmosphere, to Earth's surface, or in human activities as contributing to climate change.

**Earth's Changing Climate: Engineering Internship:** Students act as civil engineering interns to design a plan to modify a city's roofs in order to reduce the city's impact on climate change. These plans must meet three design criteria: 1) reducing impact on the climate; 2) preserving the city's historic character; and 3) minimizing costs. Students focus on the practice of isolating variables in planning and conducting tests to deepen their understanding of climate change. They also learn about the cause-and-effect mechanisms involved as changes to albedo and combustion of fossil fuels affect climate.

(<https://www.amplify.com/programs/amplify-science/whats-included/>)

## Integrated Science 7

Students in grade 7 engage in the following units:

**Geology on Mars:** Evidence that water was once present on a planet is evidence that the planet may once have had living organisms. In their role as student planetary geologists working to investigate the planet Mars, students investigate whether a particular channel on Mars was caused by flowing water or flowing lava. Along the way, students engage in the practices and ways of thinking particular to planetary geologists, and learn to consider a planet as a system of interacting subsystems.

**Plate Motion:** Students play the role of geologists working for the fictional Museum of West Namibia to investigate Mesosaurus fossils found both in southern Africa and in South America. They learn that the surface of the Earth has changed dramatically over the Earth's history, with continents and ocean basins changing shape and arrangement due to the motion of tectonic plates. They also learn that as the Earth's surface changes, fossils that formed together may be split apart.

**Plate Motion: Engineering Internship:** Students act as mechanical engineering interns to design a tsunami warning system for the Indian Ocean region. These warning systems must meet three design criteria: 1) giving people as much warning time as possible to move to safety; 2) causing as few false alarms as possible; and 3) minimizing costs as much as possible. Students communicate like engineers and scientists do as they use their understanding of plate motion and patterns in data to create and justify their designs.

**Rock Transformations:** Taking on the role of student geologists, students investigate a geologic puzzle: Two rock samples, one from the Great Plains and one from the Rocky Mountains, look very different but are composed of a surprisingly similar mix of minerals. Did the rocks form together and somehow get split apart? Or did one rock form first, and then the other rock form from the materials of the first rock? To solve the mystery, students learn about how rock forms and transforms, driven by different energy sources.

**Phase Change:** Taking on the role of student chemists working for the fictional Universal Space Agency, students investigate the mystery of a disappearing methane lake on Titan. One team of scientists at the Universal Space Agency claims that the lake evaporated, while the other team of scientists claims that the lake froze. The students' assignment is to determine what happened to the lake. They discover what causes phase changes, including the role of energy transfer and attraction between molecules.

**Phase Change: Engineering Internship:** Students act as chemical engineering interns to design an incubator for low-birthweight babies. Phase change materials (PCMs) are substances that store and release large amounts of energy during the

phase changes of melting and freezing. Since they can easily be reused, PCMs are useful for everyday situations that require temperature control. Students select a combination of PCMs and an insulating lining material, applying concepts about phase change and energy transfer.

**Chemical Reactions:** In the role of student chemists, students explore how new substances are formed as they investigate a problem with the water supply in the fictional town of Westfield. They analyze a brown substance that is in the water, the iron that the town's pipes are made of, and a substance from feMTSSlizer found to have contaminated the wells that are the source of the town's water. Students use their findings to explain the source of the contaminating substance.

**Populations and Resources:** Glacier Sea has seen an alarming increase in the moon jelly population. In the role of student ecologists, students investigate reproduction, predation, food webs, and indirect effects to discover the cause. Jellyfish population blooms have become common in recent years and offer an intriguing context to learn about populations and resources.

**Matter and Energy in Ecosystems:** Students examine the case of a failed biodome, an enclosed ecosystem that was meant to be self-sustaining but ran into problems. In the role of ecologists, students discover how all the organisms in an ecosystem get the resources they need to release energy. Carbon cycles through an ecosystem due to organisms' production and use of energy storage molecules. Students build an understanding of this cycling—including the role of photosynthesis—as they solve the mystery of the biodome collapse.

(<https://www.amplify.com/programs/amplify-science/whats-included/>)

## **Integrated Science 8**

Students in grade 8 engage in the following units:

**Harnessing Human Energy:** Energy-harvesting backpacks, rocking chairs, and knee braces are just a few of the devices that have been created to capture human energy and use it to power electrical devices. Students assume the role of student energy scientists in order to help a team of rescue workers find a way to get energy to the batteries in their equipment during rescue missions. To do so, students learn about potential and kinetic energy, energy conversions, and energy transformations.

**Force and Motion:** In the role of student physicists, students help solve a physics mystery from outer space. A pod returning with asteroid samples should have stopped and docked at the space station. Instead, it is now moving back away from the station, and the video feed showing what happened in the seconds during which it reversed direction has been lost. Did the pod reverse before it got to the space station, or did it hit the station and bounced off? Students explore principles of force, motion, mass, and collisions as they solve this mystery.

**Force and Motion: Engineering Internship:** Students act as mechanical engineering interns to design delivery pods—pods of emergency supplies that are dropped in areas experiencing a natural disaster. These delivery pods must meet three design criteria: 1) limiting the amount of damage to the cargo during the drop; 2) reusing the pod’s shell as much as possible (for example, as emergency shelter); and 3) minimizing the cost of the pod as much as possible. Students focus on the practice of analyzing data to deepen their understanding of force and motion. They also learn about how structure and function are interrelated to determine the integrity and, therefore, success of their pods.

**Magnetic Fields:** As student physicists consulting for the fictional Universal Space Agency, students work to understand the function of a magnetic spacecraft launcher (a simplified version of real technology currently under development). In particular, they seek to explain why a particular test launched the spacecraft much faster than expected. To do this, they investigate how magnets move some objects at a distance, the source of the energy for that movement, and what causes differences in the energy and forces involved.

**Light Waves:** Australia has one of the highest skin cancer rates in the world: More than half of the people who live there will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime. In their role as student spectroscopists, students gain a deeper understanding of how light interacts with materials, and how these interactions affect our world—from the colors we see, to changes caused by light from the sun such as warmth, growth, and damage. Students use what they learn about light to explain the causes of Australia’s skin cancer problem.

**Earth, Moon, and Sun:** Students take on the role of student astronomers, advising an astrophotographer who needs to take photographs of the moon. In order to provide this advice, students investigate where the moon’s light comes from, what causes the characteristic changes in the appearance of the Moon that we observe, and what conditions are required to view phenomena such as particular moon phases and lunar eclipses.

**Natural Selection:** According to local legend around Oregon State Park, three unfortunate campers were found dead at their campsite and investigators found only one clue—a rough-skinned newt inside the coffeepot that the campers used to make their morning coffee. Student biologists investigate what caused the roughskinned newts of Oregon State Park to become so poisonous by uncovering mechanisms of natural selection—investigating variation in populations, survival and reproduction, and mutation.

**Natural Selection: Engineering Internship:** Students act as biomedical engineering interns to design a malaria treatment plan. These treatment plans must reduce the population of malaria plasmodia while meeting three design criteria: 1) limiting the amount of the drug-resistance trait that develops in the population; 2)

minimizing the side effects caused by the treatment; and 3) minimizing the treatment costs while treating as many patients as possible. Students focus on the practice of analyzing data to deepen their understanding of natural selection. They also learn about the cause-and-effect mechanisms involved when rates of death and reproduction can lead to increased drug resistance in the plasmodia population.

**Evolutionary History:** Students act as student paleontologists to discover the evolutionary history of a mystery fossil. Is this species more closely related to wolves or whales, and how did all three species change over time? Students learn how to interpret similarities and differences among fossils, investigate how natural selection can lead to one population becoming two different species, and investigate evolution over vast periods of time.

(<https://www.amplify.com/programs/amplify-science/whats-included/>)

Literature also is infused into the science curriculum to reinforce content literacy skills and boost comprehension in all grade levels. Students engage and read about science through both fiction and non-fiction texts. Content-rich and high interest trade books are used to support the development of science concepts and associated academic language across all grade levels. Technology also is incorporated into science activities where appropriate. Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote) and/or Google Apps facilitates data analysis, construction of graphs and tables, and interpretation of results. This software, along with online resources, is used to scaffold content for English Learners and create challenging assignments for advanced students.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES (CORE)**

The Social Studies curriculum is globally focused and build students' understanding of themselves and the world around them. Using investigation, thematic units, and essential questions, the Social Studies curriculum naturally builds upon students' prior knowledge and experience, honor and celebrate their diverse backgrounds and cultures, and deepen their self-awareness and sense of place in an ever-increasingly global society.

The California Common Core State Standards and the recently adopted California State Framework for Social Studies and History (2016) provides a foundation for students' learning, and is supplemented by teacher-created lessons to ensure that history and social sciences reflect students' cultures and identities. The curriculum includes four main social science disciplines, including: (1) History, (2) Geography, (3) Civics, and (4) Economics. Students learn to distinguish fact from opinion, connect cause and effect, and examine history through a variety of lenses and perspectives.

Social studies is presented in four interconnected formats:

1. Within the reading program through informational texts

2. Through personal and informational writing and research in the writing program
3. Via integrated, thematic units of instruction
4. Through interdisciplinary project-based learning

VHGA’s history and social sciences curriculum is rooted in the curriculum standards specified in the *History-Social Sciences Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*, *CCSS for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy), and *2014 ELA/ELD Framework*; we will adopt new history/social studies standards as they are released. Our curriculum shares the same three goals as the Framework: Knowledge and Cultural Understanding, Democratic Understanding and Civic Values, and Skills Attainment and Social Participation. Students gain an understanding of human history as well as how our society and the world work. The curriculum not only supports student acquisition of core knowledge of the world’s eras and civilizations, but also develops the critical thinking skills that historians and social scientists employ to distinguish the important from the unimportant, to recognize vital connections between the present and the past, and to appreciate universal historical themes and dilemmas.

VHGA uses the Asia Society Social Studies Framework, which is well suited to our globally-oriented, project-based learning emphasis. Learning activities engage students in an inclusive classroom setting in reading rich literature and original source documents; students also experience daily opportunities to develop listening, speaking, research, and writing skills.

The Asia Society Social Studies Framework provides standards-based, spiraled curricular resources in which students work in cooperative groups to learn progressively more difficult concepts through a process of step-by-step discovery with age-appropriate themes for each grade level:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <p>The Image of Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the World Were 100 People</li> <li>• A Web of Global Issues</li> <li>• We Know and We Want to Know</li> <li>• Sources of Information</li> <li>• Summarize and Reflect</li> <li>• Observe, Analyze, Interpret</li> <li>• Image Combination with Multiple Interpretations</li> <li>• Collaborative Poster</li> <li>• Project Presentations</li> <li>• The Language of Observation, Analysis, and Interpretation</li> </ul> |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <p>Focus on Geography: Critical Issues Around the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Mapping in the Classroom</li> <li>• Five Themes of Geography</li> <li>• Identifying Credible Sources</li> <li>• Physical Characteristics of Place</li> </ul>  |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Characteristics of Place</li> <li>• Human-Environment Interaction (Positive Effects)</li> <li>• Human-Environment Interaction (Negative Effects)</li> <li>• Collaborative Project</li> <li>• Project Presentations</li> </ul>   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade | <p>Focus on People: Targeted Populations and Activist Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victims, Perpetrators, Bystanders and Allies</li> <li>• Character Profile of Targeted Individual or Family</li> <li>• The Issue in Everyday Life</li> <li>• Allies as Activists</li> <li>• Ideal Scenarios</li> <li>• Interview Skills</li> <li>• Collaborative Project</li> <li>• Project Presentations Dramatizations and Interviews</li> </ul> |

This series is well-aligned to our emphasis on engaging, curiosity-inspiring curriculum with real world relevance for students. VHGA extends reading and writing instruction in social studies by examining primary sources, reading historic literature, conducting research, writing and presenting findings. In all Social Science coursework, there is an emphasis on developing intellectual reasoning, reflection and research skills.

### **Social Studies 6**

Students in grade six expand their understanding of history by studying the people and events that ushered in the dawn of the major Western and non-Western ancient civilizations. Geography is of special significance in the development of the human story. Continued emphasis is placed on the everyday lives, problems, and accomplishments of people, their role in developing social, economic, and political structures, as well as in establishing and spreading ideas that helped transform the world forever. Students develop higher levels of critical thinking by considering why civilizations developed where and when they did, why they became dominant, and why they declined. Students analyze the interactions among the various cultures, emphasizing their enduring contributions and the link, despite time, between the contemporary and ancient worlds.

### **Social Studies 7**

Students in grade seven study the social, cultural, and technological changes that occurred in Europe, Africa, and Asia in the years A.D. 500–1789. After reviewing the ancient world and the ways in which archaeologists and historians uncover the past, students study the history and geography of great civilizations that were developing concurrently throughout the world during medieval and early modern times. Students examine the growing economic interaction among civilizations as well as the exchange of ideas, beliefs, technologies, and commodities. They learn about the resulting growth of Enlightenment philosophy and the new examination of the concepts of reason and authority, the natural rights of human beings and the divine right of kings,

experimentalism in science, and the dogma of belief. Finally, students assess the political forces let loose by the Enlightenment, particularly the rise of democratic ideas, and they learn about the continuing influence of these ideas in the world today.

## **Social Studies 8**

Students in grade eight United States History study the ideas, issues, and events from the framing of the Constitution up to World War I, with an emphasis on America's role in the war. After reviewing the development of America's democratic institutions founded on the Judeo-Christian heritage and English parliamentary traditions, particularly the shaping of the Constitution, students trace the development of American politics, society, culture, and economy and relate them to the emergence of major regional differences. Students learn about the challenges facing the new nation, with an emphasis on the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War. They make connections between the rise of industrialization and contemporary social and economic conditions.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (NON-CORE)**

Physical Education (PE) is critical for student learning and for maintaining personal well-being. The physical education program at VHGA is an integral part of our mission to address the needs of the whole child and to develop life-long habits of fitness and wellness. Students are exposed to a variety of physical movement activities that suit diverse learning styles and skills, based on the *Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*.

Physical Education in grades 6-8 is performed through non-traditional physical activities, teambuilding activities, and journaling of progress following the California Standards for Physical Education. Students learn the skills and mechanics necessary to participate in physical activity for the rest of their lives, while independently tracking their progress, and developing positive lifelong healthy habits. There are 5 critical areas Physical Education addresses:

- Demonstrate motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of activities
- Demonstrate knowledge of movement concepts, principles, and strategies as they apply to learning and performance of physical activities
- Assess and maintain a level of physical fitness to improve health and performance
- Demonstrate knowledge of physical fitness concepts, principles, and strategies to improve health and performance.
- Demonstrate and utilize knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies as applied to learning and performance of physical activity.

Students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade also learn and understand concepts of health, nutrition and the importance of staying healthy through a variety of academic course settings.



With the addition of experiential education philosophies and activities, along with language development that supports Emotional Intelligence and Literacy, VHGA integrates social/emotional training with physical activity. PE activities contribute to an integrated social-emotional program as students practice and demonstrate greater capacity with communication skills, cooperation, empathy, purposeful inclusion, fairness, teamwork, increased confidence, and growth in resilience and self-efficacy.

## **WORLD LANGUAGES (NON-CORE)**

### **Mandarin 1**

This course is designed for beginners of the language. The course aims for acquisition of the usual basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Included in the course is the presentation of basic grammar and an introduction to Chinese culture. Pinyin (the most widely used Chinese phonetic system) will be taught as a tool to learn the spoken language. Students will also learn Chinese characters in order to be able to communicate in Mandarin on a limited range of topics related to everyday situations. Students practice listening and speaking in real-life situations, learn to read and write Chinese characters, and examine how culture and language interact in China. In-class activities and course assignments aim to assist students as they develop the oral proficiency and confidence necessary to initiate simple conversations.

### **Mandarin 2**

This course is for students who, having successfully developed strong basic skills, are ready to increase proficiency in oral comprehension and in the speaking, reading and writing skills of Mandarin Chinese. Readings are real-life dialogues emphasizing proper use of Mandarin with the goal of developing vocabulary and fluency. Written and oral precision will be emphasized. Authentic materials will be studied. Culture content is incorporated into instruction. Students can write short articles by either hand writing or typing Chinese characters.

### **Spanish 1**<sup>97</sup>

Spanish 1 is a first-year class designed to teach students the fundamental vocabulary and grammar necessary to begin communicating and understanding in the Spanish language. Students develop the basic communication skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing Spanish.

Students who take Spanish 1 are able to speak, read, write, and comprehend Spanish on a basic level at the culmination of the course. These skills are developed through active class participation. Students in Spanish 1 interact with five standards for world language:

- Communication
- Culture

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<sup>97</sup> We plan to offer Spanish when the school grows to capacity.

- Connections
- Comparison
- Communities

## **Spanish 2**

Spanish 2 is a second-year class designed to teach students the fundamental of verb conjugations, phonetics, and syntax. Students also develop the basic communication skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing Spanish. Students also take a closer look at various Hispanic/Latino cultural aspects.

Students taking Spanish 2 have a better understanding of Spanish by practicing speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are developed through active class participation, pair group, group presentation, and individual activities. Students in Spanish 2 interact with five standards for world language:

- Communication
- Culture
- Connections
- Comparison
- Communities

## **MISSION-DRIVEN ARTS EDUCATION (NON-CORE)**

From the earliest renderings found in the caves of Lascaux, France, to the installations of Rauschenberg, human beings have been using artistic expression to find meaning, express self, communicate messages and seek answers. All cultures and peoples have participated in the arts, conveying significant meaning through their artifacts and artistic traditions in music, dance, visual arts, literature, and drama. Art is a universal language that provides all students with connections to other civilizations. It provides factual, interpretive, and emotive contexts for historical events. Art is more than an act or artifact; it is a bridge that integrates the various, and often disparate, compartments of our lives. It develops sensitivity to one's surroundings and the intricacies that enable self-discovery and understanding of the human condition.

At VHGA, we do not view art only as an independent activity with a subset of standards and skills, but rather as a humanistic strand that runs throughout our curriculum. Incorporating "Art" into STEM learning is deliberate and important. This allows us to reach across the cultural, financial, and digital divides that separate our students from the "wider class." Through the arts, we develop a sense of self in our students and a respect for the many cultures from which they come, while providing valuable links to new cultures. The arts also allow us to make academic connections across the curriculum and provide cohesiveness to thematic planning that gives our second language learners one of the major scaffolds to gaining content and academic understanding.

VHGA strives to provide our students with the tools they need to produce meaning within artistic endeavors. These skills are embedded throughout the day and placed in the context of meaningful experiences. For instance, while exploring the theme of *If the World Were 100 People* (sixth grade social studies standards) or learning to write autobiographies in Workshop, our students might learn about proportion, symmetry, observation and various media, such as drawing, painting, collage, and installation, to produce self- or family portraits. Dramatic play is used extensively to enhance understanding through in-depth, cross-curricular and thematic studies, the building blocks of theatric expression is developed as a means, not an end.

At VHGA, we are committed to music education and its cross-curricular implications, providing a systematic approach to the skills it requires. As our enrollment increases, we have a full-time music teacher who delivers instruction to our students on a weekly basis. This opportunity is extremely important, as many of our students do not have access to these skills outside of the school setting. Through our music program, our students acquire basic knowledge of musical history, composers, theory, reading musical notation and the skills and mechanics of singing. These skills are advanced with a school-wide choral program.

Instrumental music programs are sequential instrument method courses for beginner, intermediate, and advanced instrumental music students. Students learn beginning to advanced music theory (rhythms, note names, expressions), music history, performance techniques, and cultural diversity through music. Students develop a basic structure to learn required music performing skills needed to rehearse and perform concert sheet music. Sheet music is chosen based on its difficulty level relative to the performance level of the student musicians.

## **Drama**

In this class, students are introduced to the basic concepts of theater arts. Students use various creative drama techniques to build confidence and trust, stimulate imagination, movement and role-play. Through theater games and activities students learn to trust themselves as well as others in their groups. Students learn to use drama and theater vocabulary in class discussions and the activities specifically address the promotion and reinforcement of students' literacy skills. Students exhibit and reinforce their skills through individual and group presentations, performances, and script and journal writing.

## **Music**

This class offers instruction in guitar and piano with a focus on the skills necessary for long-term student success and an appreciation of music. Fundamentals stressed include proper posture and playing position, development of characteristic tone quality and training in music literacy. Students practice their instrument in order to perform bi-annual concerts that Vista holds in the Winter and Spring.

## Art and Design

In this class, students experiment with many two- and three- dimensional art forms, such as drawing, painting, perspective, and three-dimensional art. Emphasis is placed on the art elements and principles of design throughout the course.

## **ADVISORY/GLOBAL HOUR (NON-CORE)**

6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Vista participate in an advisory period four times a week called Global Hour. Many narrative accounts attest to advisory's positive impact. Generally, studies have shown that students who do not feel an attachment to school staff are likely to have poorer attendance and to drop out more than students who feel that they are part of a supportive school environment. In addition, healthy relationships between teachers and students appear to facilitate academic achievement.

At VHGA, there are three main goals of the advisory program:

- **Social Emotional:** Students are in an environment that fosters bonding within an advisory group so that they feel accepted and valued by their teacher and peers.
- **College Ready Skills:** Students build non-cognitive skills that include a range of behaviors that reflect greater student self-awareness, self-monitoring, self-control, study skills, work habits, time management, help-seeking behavior, and social problem solving skills. They begin to develop the behaviors, problem solving, and coping skills that allow students to successfully manage new environments and the new academic and social demands of high school and college.
- **College Knowledge:** Students begin to gather the information and skills that allow them to successfully navigate the complex college admissions and financial aid processes, as well as begins to develop an understanding of college norms and culture.

It is in Advisory/Global Hour that class Council, from the Council in Schools program created by the Ojai Foundation, is regularly held. Council is a practice that cultivates heartfelt and meaningful communication skills, encourages mutual understanding and respect, and enhances community cohesion. Inspired and informed by the commonalities inherent in worldwide cultural and organizational dialogue practices, Council elements include the use of circular seating, defined intentions, focusing tools (such as a “talking piece”), clear beginnings and endings, and “witnessing,” a process of summarizing and acting upon what is shared in the session. Participation in Council engenders receptivity, authentic expression, and creative spontaneity as it builds positive relationships in classrooms and the Vista communities.

## **ELECTIVES (NON-CORE)**

### Speech and Debate

Speech and Debate is an introductory course that covers a variety of styles of public speaking and formal debate. Through research and practice students will become

familiar with these styles through instruction, research, and practice. Each unit will culminate in performance assignments that require students to demonstrate their abilities within the classroom setting. Opportunities to take their knowledge to competition at the local and state level may be made available to students as well through extracurricular programs. Students will prepare and deliver speeches and participate in several in-class debates and forums on current topics. Techniques will be taught to control speech anxiety, and structure and organize information to present to a variety of audiences. As such, the fundamentals of physical and vocal delivery skills, use of language and gesturing, as well as listening skills will be learned.

### **Leadership**

The purpose of this course is to help students develop leadership skills necessary for success in business careers through effective communications, problem-solving techniques, and managing resources and meetings. The students will develop an understanding of the need for community service as part of their overall civic and professional responsibilities. This leadership class will require students to plan, implement and evaluate projects. In doing so, students will be using both problem-solving and leadership skills. They will be challenged to understand their role in leadership and to identify ways in which they interact with others in order to improve conditions or to implement innovative ideas. Students also have the option of participating in a Council Leadership program where they become council leaders and help facilitate council circles, further developing their leadership skills.

### **Psychology**

The course is designed to be an introduction to the science and profession of psychology. The course will assist the student in the development of a foundation of basic knowledge in order to pursue further studies in specific areas of psychology. The course will survey introductory topics such as learning, memory, sensation and perception, personality, lifespan development, physiological basis of behavior, stress and health, psychological disorders, social psychology, and research methods. The topics of states of consciousness and psychotherapy will also be covered.

### **Entrepreneurship**

This course is about more than lectures and textbooks. Entrepreneurship focuses on applications of ideas that students can own. The Youth Entrepreneurs curriculum brings business studies to life through experiential learning, executed in real, market-based scenarios. Entrepreneurship introduces economic thinking and striving to instill the moral character necessary for students to lead lives as thriving, productive citizens.

### **TECHNOLOGY (NON-CORE)**

As detailed above, mastery of Technological skills is a core component of our STEAM emphasis, and critical for 21<sup>st</sup> century success. Through PLTW Gateway, Amplify, and direct tech-based learning (keyboarding, presentation preparation, online research skills, etc.) students receive direct and integrated tech-based learning throughout the curriculum. VHGA also provides Technology elective courses:

### **3D Animation**

Emphasis on the production of three-dimensional (3D) animation as final digital outputting using modeling, rendering and animation software. This is a beginning level 3D computer animation course focused on introducing 3D animation software and practicing each student's existing motion skills.

### **IT Essentials**

Cisco's IT Essentials: PC Hardware and Software curriculum introduces the skills needed to help meet growing demand for entry-level information and communication technology (ICT) professionals. It covers the fundamentals of PC technology, networking, and security, and also introduces advanced concepts.

### **Robotics**

Robotics is a lab-based course that uses a hands-on approach to introduce the basic concepts of robotics, focusing on the construction and programming of autonomous mobile robots. Course information will be tied to lab experiments; students will work in groups to build and test increasingly more complex mobile robots. This will be achieved utilizing VEX Robotic devices, platform, and curriculum.

### **Advanced Tech**

Students learn the foundational skills in various forms of technologies. Ranging from programming with Spheros and Scratch, to creating unique digital content with 360 cameras and virtual reality devices. Students also learn how these technologies lead to potential careers in modern day industry.

## **INNOVATIVE CURRICULAR COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

As detailed throughout the previous sections, VHGA is distinguished by its collaboration and partnership with Asia Society's International Studies Schools Network (ISSN), with the goal of becoming an ISSN-certified school by the end of the first five years, along with our emphasis on STEAM. Our focus on the varying elements of student engagement, personalized and differentiated learning, active learning strategies and more are all based on research about how learning best occurs. Our program is carefully designed, based on our years of experience in this community working with students in middle grades, to prepare students to succeed in high school, post-secondary school and beyond.

## INTERVENTION AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

As detailed more fully below, in all VCPS, we implement a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) approach prevent academic and behavioral problems and to intervene early and strategically.

The MTSS process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners may participate in interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. Eagle Hour is built into the daily schedule to facilitate student time on intervention programs such as Lexia, Fountas & Pinnel, Khan Academy and more, with small group targeted instruction. These services may be offered by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. MTSS is designed for making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data.

Enrichments are broad and engaging, including physical education, the arts, technology and opportunities outside of the classroom including field trips, as detailed above.

## CURRICULAR AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The following table outlines the initial textbook adoptions planned for grades 6-8 in the core content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Science and Science.

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| English Language Arts      | Lucy Calkins' Writers and Readers Workshop, Leveled Readers/novels from state-approved list   |
| ELD                        | Lexia, Fountas & Pinnell Intervention   |
| Mathematics                | Ready Math  |
| Science                    | Amplify Science, PLTW Gateway   |
| Social Science/History     | Asia Society Social Studies Framework   |
| World Languages            | San Diego Office of Ed open-source curriculum:<br><a href="https://mandarin.sdcoe.net/cd3.html">https://mandarin.sdcoe.net/cd3.html</a> |
| Visual and Performing Arts | Teacher-created   |
| P.E./Health                | Teacher-created   |
| Advisory/Character Ed      | Way of Council  |

## COMPREHENSIVE COURSE LIST

| Subject Area | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Grade 8 |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|

|                                   |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>History / Social Science</b>   | Social Studies 6   | Social Studies 7   | Social Studies 8   |
| <b>English Language Arts</b>      | English 6  | English 7  | English 8  |
| <b>Math</b>                       | Math 6   | Math 7   | Math 8<br>Algebra I  |
| <b>Science</b>                    | Integrated Science 6                                       | Integrated Science 7                                       | Integrated Science 8                                       |
| <b>Visual and Performing Arts</b> | Drama<br>Music   | Music  | Art and Design<br>Music                                    |
| <b>World Languages</b>            | Mandarin 1<br>Spanish 1                                    | Mandarin 1 or 2<br>Spanish 1 or 2                          | Mandarin 1 or 2<br>Spanish 1 or 2                          |
| <b>Electives</b>                  | Entrepreneurship<br>Robotics<br>IT Essentials              | Advanced Tech<br>Psychology<br>3D Animation                | Leadership<br>Speech & Debate                              |
| <b>Other Required Courses</b>     | PE<br>Advisory/Global Hour<br>Eagle Hour<br>(Intervention) | PE<br>Advisory/Global Hour<br>Eagle Hour<br>(Intervention) | PE<br>Advisory/Global Hour<br>Eagle Hour<br>(Intervention) |

## **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND STRATEGIES**

At VHGA, we use the Framework for Engagement as the lens through which all instructional programs and practices are implemented. Communication and relationships that extend beyond the classroom and incorporate a widening circle of adult influence and interaction necessitate a major shift from the current instructional practice of “stand and deliver” that dominates classrooms across America. Studies conducted by Csikszentmihalyi, the creator of Flow Theory and his team, found that students spent approximately 86% in passive lecture style or independent activities.<sup>98</sup>

This framework necessitates that a shift in instructional practice is required to ensure the personalized learning experience is created to develop globally competent students. This shift in practice is commonly referred to as a move away from the “sage on the stage” model, in which the teacher directly delivers instruction through lecturing, to the “guide on the side,” in which teachers act as a coach and facilitate a more personalized learning experience and is based on a constructivist view in which, optimally, the classroom provides a series of experiences that prompt students to actively construct their own knowledge and learning (Taylor & Parsons, 2011; Vygotsky, 1987; Zepke &

<sup>98</sup> Shernoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology, 41*(6), 467-483.



Leach, 2010). At VHGA we use this as an important lens through which all programs, processes, and practices are chosen and developed. Professional development extends to core instructional models that are critical to the success of the educational program. The following processes and procedures are integral to the VHGA learning experience:

**The Workshop Model.** At VHGA, all subjects are taught based on pedagogy found in the Lucy Calkins Reading and Writing Workshop model. This method structures each lesson with 10 to 15 minutes of teacher-led instruction followed by ample time for student-centered, hands-on learning. A typical lesson across all subject matter starts with student-friendly objectives connected to the California Content Standards with real-life application, followed by a 10- to 15-minute lesson that offers clear modeling and guided group practice. The remainder of the time is for independent practice and ranges from 30 to 50 minutes. While students work independently and/or cooperatively in small groups, the teacher and TA are free to work with small groups and one-on-one instruction. During this time, the teacher and assistant also use formative assessments to guide instructional support and future lessons. This model honors teacher and student autonomy and provides ample choice in alignment with a Constructivist Learning Environment. *All of our curricular choices reflect this framework. Teachers are fully trained in Reading and Writing Workshop with the expectation of transferring the basic pedagogical skills to all subjects.*

**Problem-based pedagogy.** This model is described as “an atmosphere where there is a dialectic tension and conflict that can promote a learning environment through a process of inquiry and understanding (that) includes concrete experiences, opportunities for reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.”<sup>99</sup> *VHGA strategically uses this approach with a global and STEAM curriculum that focuses on relevant application by applying learning to solving both local and global issues our students are facing today.* This also provides students the opportunity for active exploration of issues based on real life scenarios and problems.

**Project-based learning (PBL).** Project-based learning strives to increase relevance by applying real-life problems and issues to a final project outcome that function as an authentic assessment of student learning. Elucidating the relevance of a project has been linked to deeper engagement.<sup>100</sup> Providing students opportunities to explore issues that are meaningful in their circumstances and lives motivates them to learn and show more willingness to work through difficult ideas and learning.<sup>101</sup>

Because we choose to focus on solid implementation of our core curriculum in the first two years (literacy, math, science, and social studies), VHGA teachers receive training on PBL through our partnership with the International Schools Study Network (ISSN). The ISSN, in partnership with the Buck Institute, provides on-going professional

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<sup>99</sup> Samson, P. L. (2015). Fostering student engagement: Creative problem-solving in small group facilitations. *Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching*, 8, 153-164.

<sup>100</sup> Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current issues in education*, 14(1).

<sup>101</sup> Samson, P. L. (2015). Fostering student engagement: Creative problem-solving in small group facilitations. *Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching*, 8, 153-164.

development and coaching for project-based learning. The eventual expectation is for all grade levels to have one major PBL project their second year, and two projects (one each semester) by our third year and beyond. Although teachers are required to facilitate two projects each year, they are encouraged to create multiple, interdisciplinary projects beyond the requirements.

**Kagan Cooperative learning and strategies.** One key component of experiential or problem-based learning that repeatedly stands out in the literature, as a factor in engagement is the use of cooperative learning strategies. Although some research has indicated that teacher-student relationships are possibly the most important factor in increased student engagement,<sup>102</sup> another study that examined the difference in impact of student-teacher relationships, quality of student effort, and peer- to-peer interaction found that “peer interaction had the strongest predictive capacity for engagement and outcomes.”<sup>103</sup> The Heritage development team has recognized the importance of both teacher-student and peer-to-peer interactions in designing the school’s instructional approach. Clearly, both are important and are constantly considered when designing Heritage pedagogy. Student interaction and collaborative learning promotes dialectic practices that support student viewpoints and interests. Cooperative learning has also been found to increase motivation, positive classroom behaviors, social networks, and academic improvements.<sup>104</sup>

At VHGA, all teachers receive Kagan Cooperative Learning training. Already, embedded into all VHGA schools, Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies are designed for implementation across all content and curriculum. Kagan structures involve cooperative interaction, and are designed to efficiently produce engagement, positive social interactions, and achievement because they incorporate four basic principles, the PIES principles:

- **Positive Interdependence:** We are positively interdependent when a gain for one is a gain for another. This dynamic produces a sense of belonging to the same team. In a traditional setting, students are set against each other in competition to answer questions. With Kagan structures, students work together and learn global attributes of sharing, caring, helping, and empathy.
- **Individual Accountability:** All students are held accountable for learning-- not just the student who raises her hand.
- **Equal Participation:** Because the structures involve every student, each student participates equally throughout the day.
- **Simultaneous Interaction:** All students have an opportunity to verbalize answers and thinking-- as opposed to a traditional class where only one or two students

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<sup>102</sup> Furlong, M. J., Whipple, A. D., Jean, G. S., Simental, J., Soliz, A., & Punthuna, S. (2003). Multiple contexts of school engagement: Moving toward a unifying framework for educational research and practice. *The California School Psychologist, 8*(1), 99-113.

<sup>103</sup> Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active learning in higher education, 11*(3), 167-177.

<sup>104</sup> Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97-131). Springer, Boston, MA.

Shermoff, E. S., Kratochwill, T. R., & Stoiber, K. C. (2003). Training in Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs): What are school psychology programs teaching?. *Journal of School Psychology, 41*(6), 467-483.

answer any given question.

Kagan Structures are bridges that allow teachers to pass easily from principles to practices, implementing basic principles and visions as part of any lesson, at any grade level, with any curriculum. At VHGA, teachers learn to use a Kagan structure every time they ask the class a question, thus ensuring equal engagement for all.

Cooperative Learning follows our principles of engagement, is brain compatible, learner centered, and has real-life transfer because they enforce our belief that you learn by doing.

**Mastery learning.** Mastery experiences develop self-efficacy by allowing students to reflect on where their skill level is at any given time and by using success, partial success, and even failure to point the way toward mastery of a subject or skill.<sup>105</sup>

Currently, most classrooms see failure as an end in itself-- which results in a failing grade. By allowing students to fail on a task and then reflect on that experience as a stepping-stone to a learning goal fosters a growth mindset, increases resilience, and promotes life-long learning.<sup>106</sup> At VHGA teachers receive professional development on the latest developments and research on Master Learning. One site that is used by VHGA staff to understand and implement Mastery Grading is <http://www.gradingforlearning.wordpress.com>. Developed by Dr. Derrick Chau, he and his team have created a system in tandem with the website to help teachers and schools make the emotional and pedagogical shifts needed to honor child centered and developmentally appropriate.

**Relevance.** A recent study on student learning and engagement conducted at four out-performing urban schools in Southern California with a majority of at-risk students indicated that the relevance of instruction was continually and clearly drawn to the students' immediate and future lives. The study showed that student engagement occurred when students took ownership, invested in learning, and internalized curricula to incorporate—and purposefully use—it in their lives.<sup>107</sup> When they recognized the purpose of what they were learning, the students were motivated to persevere through difficult and rigorous lessons and projects.

- VCPS believe that when students have a clear understanding of the value, purpose, and procedures for learning activities and the logic by which teachers arrived at their design, they are more likely to see the value of what they are

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<sup>105</sup> Furlong, M. J., & Christenson, S. L. (2008). Engaging students at school and with learning: A relevant construct for all students. *Psychology in the Schools, 45*(5), 365-368.

<sup>106</sup> Bempechat, J., & Shernoff, D. J. (2012). Parental influences on achievement motivation and student engagement. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 315-342). Springer, Boston, MA. Finn, J. D. (1989). Withdrawing from school. *Review of educational research, 59*(2), 117-142. Pintrich, P. R. (2003). A motivational science perspective on the role of student motivation in learning and teaching contexts. *Journal of educational Psychology, 95*(4), 667

<sup>107</sup> Pike, G. R., & Kuh, G. D. (2005). A typology of student engagement for American colleges and universities. *Research in higher education, 46*(2), 185-209.

being asked to learn and consequently participate more eagerly in their learning with greater achievement levels.

We take an approach to education based on the idea that students work harder and dream bigger if their education is relevant to them. Every teacher and every parent has heard a student or child ask, “Why do I have to learn or do this?” When students don’t see the connection between the content and activities of the classroom and their future lives, they question what’s happening and what we ask them to do. Research has confirmed that perceived relevance is a critical factor in maintaining student interest and motivation.

To ensure VHGA relevancy for VHGA students, every lesson at VHGA starts by answering the *What? Why?* and *How?* before instruction begins

- **What?** What is our learning objective for this lesson? What are we doing in class today? What questions will we try to answer? What concepts will we address? What activities will we do?
- **Why?** Why are we studying this? How are today’s content and activities tied to the learning outcomes? What should I know or be able to do after today’s class? How can the information and skills be used in everyday life?
- **How?** How are we going to address the content? What are the discrete steps we will need to take to reach our learning objective? What activities, discussions, and projects will we be using? How will I know that I have mastered the learning objective?

At VHGA, teachers are expected to answer those questions for all learning. They do so through clear objectives connected to real-world application, clear instruction through the workshop model, student-driven rubrics, and multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate mastery of learning. At VHGA, we believe that when students have a clear understanding of the value, purpose, and procedures for learning activities and the logic by which teachers arrived at their design, they are more likely to see the value of what they are being asked to learn and consequently participate more eagerly in their learning with greater achievement levels.

**Digital Portfolios.** Because students develop and grow in their desire for autonomy and independence, but at the same time, continue to rely on guidance from parents and other adults, VHGA students develop Digital Portfolios upon enrollment starting from kindergarten. They have opportunities to reflect on their learning, make appropriate choices, and receive assistance with their learning plan in their pursuit of academic, personal, and career goals. Guidance from VHGA staff occurs on a frequent basis as they regularly conference and meet with students throughout the week in our workshop model.

Students develop clarity of purpose by creating a Digital Portfolio that considers their current level of progress and long-term goals. VHGA faculty and parents assist students as they map out their learning needs. The learning management system, weekly student/teacher conferences during workshop time, and regularly scheduled

parent/teacher conferences provide a structured time during which students and families are able to monitor their own progress, review academic decisions, present problems or conflict, and revise goals as they learn and achieve. At VHGA, we are preparing our students to be fully participatory in their own educational journey, which extends beyond the fifth grade.

The Digital Portfolio is a key tool for helping students' development of metacognition. This is built by giving students ownership over their learning and allowing them to think about how they learn. As students reflect on their plan, progress, achievements, and continued areas of work, they can take that understanding and apply it to learning in the classroom. Digital Portfolios also review assessments results in order to best prepare students for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).

Another area that supports Digital Portfolios and student metacognition are student-led conferences. As parents, faculty, and students meet regarding a student's academic, personal, and career goals, the student presents his/her understandings about his/her development, challenges, strengths, and joys. As discoveries are made, steps on how parents and faculty can support further development are articulated.<sup>108</sup>

***Differentiated Instruction.*** VHGA staff utilizes its knowledge of the whole child in order to effectively implement differentiation of instruction. Evidence has suggested that students are more successful in school and find it more satisfying if they are taught in ways that are responsive to their readiness levels.<sup>109</sup>

To effectively implement differentiation, students have multiple routes to demonstrate their understandings; use a variety of materials that address learning at their level of instruction and with their learning modality; work in small, flexible learning groups for instruction that are based on a variety of learning needs; work within a flexible pacing structures, which allows for learner variance; engage in lessons that are knowledge-centered and structured around essential learning; and have work that considers their learner traits so that students can learn successfully.

Individualized work is at an appropriate level of challenge; tasks and questions link to students' interests, and address the students' learning profiles (e.g., learning modality, culture, language). Hence, by giving them choices regarding topics of study, ways of learning, and presenting information, students are able to determine the best access points for their own learning and build upon areas strength. In a VHGA classroom, differentiation provides students emotional safety, as similarities and differences, strengths and weaknesses, cooperation and respect are all valued. Selection of programs at VHGA are based, in part, on their ability to meet these criteria. Readers and Writers Workshop, ISTE, Project Lead the Way, Amplify Science and other similar programs have mastery learning as a core value and are considered for implementation at VHGA.

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<sup>108</sup> Marzano, R. J. (2011). *Formative assessment & standards-based grading*. Solution Tree Press.

<sup>109</sup> Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language* (A. Kozulin, trans.).

**Data-Driven instruction.** The instructional path is paved through the CCSS and the use of Curriculum Maps. Throughout the week, teachers use a variety of formative assessments to understand where their students are successful and where they need more support. A full explanation of our assessments is provided later in this document. The results of these assessments drives follow-up instruction, support, and/or intervention. Grade-level Heritage staff groups create assessment calendars in conjunction with their curriculum. All students are assessed regularly to ensure clear progress. Teachers review their students' scores, meet with grade-level teams and administration to review the results, and together determine what the next steps of action may be. Similarly, quarterly assessments are reviewed in order to determine learning directions. The Quarterly Assessment have more weight, as it will cover nine weeks of instruction. The Quarterly assessments are aligned to the SBAC. Possible outcomes may include a need for an SST and a review of any other types of interventions that would help the student; an online assessment tool and learning management system is the tool utilized to assess students and to create the assessments. Also, teachers have regular opportunities in the workshop model to discuss "data" and learning growth with students so that students are aware of their achievement level/mastery and what they need to do to grow.

Online assessment and learning management systems allow teachers and administrators the opportunity to gather and organize data that guides next steps. Edulastic, PowerSchool, and Google Classroom are examples of online assessment programs that are utilized by teachers to create assessments, and also for administration to support in writing of quarterly assessments. Currently, VCPS has recently adopted a Learning Management System, Google Classroom. VHGA uses the same online assessment and learning management system as all schools in VCPS system.

**Homework.** At VHGA, our approach to homework is research-based and in alignment with our core values of honoring the development of the whole child. The most comprehensive research on homework comes from a 2006 meta-analysis by Duke University psychology professor Harris Cooper, who found a positive achievement correlation for homework starting in the seventh grade, but a weak relationship for those in younger grades.

At VHGA, we believe that limited, but thoughtfully scheduled homework can teach important learner skills such as study habits, self-discipline, inquisitiveness, and independent problem solving skills. The Charter School's homework policy espouses general guidelines that allow for teacher flexibility and individualized student learning plans:

1. Homework is an extension of classroom learning and **not a replacement for teacher direct instruction**. Students might be asked to explore ideas, stories, and additional information related to a classroom theme, writing project, or science inquiry.

2. Teachers must ensure that **students understand basic concepts before assigning extended work**. We do not want students creating life-long bad habits from the repetition of incorrect concepts. Students should be able to complete the work primarily on their own without the need for extensive parental guidance.
3. Homework completion is not included as part of a student achievement grade. Our purpose is to create self-motivated learners that love exploration.
4. Homework should be developmentally appropriate and not create a burden on family time or resources.
5. Cooperative and shared learning projects may be assigned from time to time and needs to be completed from home with the help of a parent. For example, writing a narrative about one's family may necessitate interviewing family members, and the parent is expected to support and facilitate this activity outside of school.<sup>110</sup>

### **HOW THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT STUDENT DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY-RELATED SKILLS AND STUDENT USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is an important global strand that runs throughout our curriculum. It allows us to reach across the cultural, financial, and digital divides that currently separate our students from gaining full access to the American dream. Most of our students do not have full Internet and computer access in their homes. To level the playing field, *VHGA students are provided a Chrome Book or similar device*. All classrooms will have a class set of Chromebooks for students to check in and out each period for academic use. Students are also allowed to take devices home for select projects with increasing opportunities for home use in preparation for our middle school experience which will allow all students greater flexibility for daily use.

VHGA extensively utilizes Google Classroom and Google Apps for Education for students and teachers. These Google services are provided free of charge to the school. Students and families will also have access to the school's Learning Management System and online portfolio. In addition to investing in Chromebooks for the students, the school provide WIFI access in all areas of the campus and implement Internet security software that complies with the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

In addition to integrated technical skills, VHGA is committed to digital safety. Students receive instruction in developing digital literacy skills, including self-regulation, curiosity, and responsibility in an extraordinarily connected world. Cyber-bullying and cyber-safety are addressed yearly for all VHGA students. VHGA ensures that students understand and exercise good judgment as they navigate the infinite amount of information that exists online. This approach is in line with our focus on social- emotional skills, as students must learn how, when, and why the Internet can support their personal and academic growth.

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<sup>110</sup> Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E. A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987–2003. *Review of educational research*, 76(1), 1-62.

## WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (WASC) ACCREDITATION

While not required for middle schools, VHGA is proud to have a full, six-year accreditation from WASC through 2023-24.

### Academic Calendar and Schedules

#### ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The academic calendar complies with the annual instructional minutes requirements set forth in Education Code Section 47612.5(a). The proposed school calendar for 2020–2021 includes 180 instructional days and 190 teacher workdays (180 instructional, five summer Professional Development, five school-year Professional Development). First year teachers and teachers at new VCPs schools also are required to do additional Professional Development in all programs that pertain to their school and grade levels up to three additional weeks prior to the start of the first day of school. Most commonly these trainings are in Readers and Writers Workshop, Way of Council, Kagan, and Project Lead the Way.



### VISTA HERITAGE GLOBAL ACADEMY

A Vista Charter Public School

#### 2020-2021 Instructional Calendar

2609 West Fifth St., Santa Ana, CA 92703

P (714) 988-2719 | F (714) 988-2747

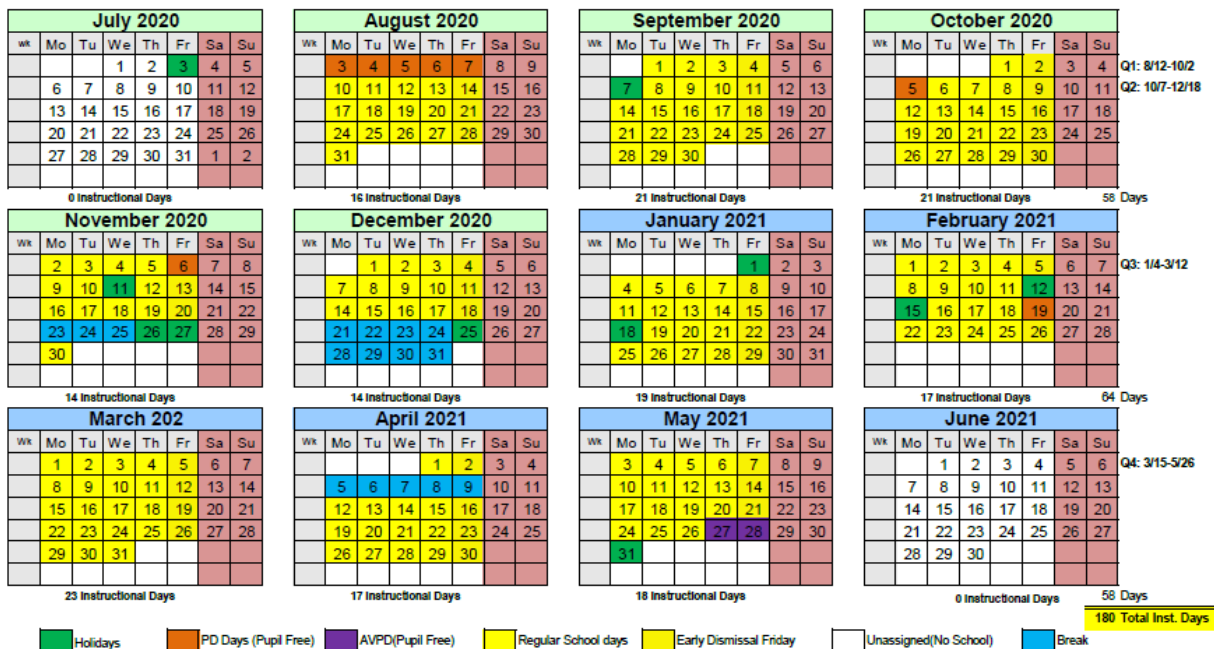
www.vistaheritagems.org



Superintendent: Donald Wilson Ed.D.

Principal: Collin Felch Ed.D.

Assistant Principal: Brian Bailey





## SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULES

VHGA offers 385 minutes of instruction for all grades per regular day and 261 minutes for all grades on “early release” days on Friday. Teachers have professional development (PD) and collaborative time for two hours each Friday after early release. During Eagle Hour, all students participate in targeted intervention and support with core teachers leading small group instruction and students engaged in online, adaptive learning. Designated ELD also occurs during Eagle Hour with ELs working with our ELD Coordinator on focused proficiency development.

### **Mondays-Thursdays**

#### 6th Grade

7:57 - Call to Class  
8:00 - 9:34 - Period 1/2 (94 min.)  
9:37 - 11:11 - Period 3/4 (94 min.)  
11:11 - 11:46 - Lunch (35 min.)  
11:49 - 12:34 - Global (45 min.)  
12:37 - 1:23 - Eagle Hour (45 min.)  
1:26 - 3:00 - Period 5/6 (94 min.)

#### 7th Grade

7:57 - Call to Class  
8:00 - 9:34 - Period 1/2 (94 min.)  
9:37 - 11:11 - Period 3/4 (94 min.)  
11:14 - 11:59 - Eagle Hour (45 min.)  
11:59 - 12:34 - Lunch (35 min.)  
12:37 - 1:23 - Global (45 min.)  
1:26 - 3:00 - Period 5/6 (94 min.)

#### 8th Grade

7:57 - Call to Class  
8:00 - 9:34 - Period 1/2 (94 min.)  
9:37 - 11:11 - Period 3/4 (94 min.)  
11:14 - 11:59 - Global (45 min.)  
12:02 - 12:47 - Eagle Hour (45 min.)  
12:47 - 1:23 - Lunch (35 min.)  
1:26 - 3:00 - Period 5/6 (94 min.)

### **Fridays**

#### 6th Grade

7:57 - Call to Class  
8:00-8:41 - Period 1  
8:44-9:25 - Period 2  
9:28-10:09 - Period 3  
10:09-10:46 - Lunch  
10:49-11:30 - Period 4  
11:33-12:14 - Period 5  
12:17-12:58 - Period 6

#### 7th Grade

7:57 - Call to Class  
8:00-8:41 - Period 1  
8:44-9:25 - Period 2  
9:28-10:09 - Period 3  
10:12-10:53 - Period 4  
10:53-11:30 - Lunch  
11:33-12:14 - Period 5  
12:17-12:58 - Period 6

#### 8th Grade

7:57 - Call to Class  
8:00-8:41 - Period 1  
8:44-9:25 - Period 2  
9:28-10:09 - Period 3  
10:12-10:53 - Period 4  
10:56-11:37 - Period 5  
11:37-12:14 - Lunch  
12:17-12:58 - Period 6

## INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS AND MINUTES

VHGA offers significantly more instructional minutes per year than required.

| Grades | Grades Offered | # Regular Days | Instr. Minutes Per Regular Day | # Early Dismissal Days | Instr. Minutes Per Early Dismissal Day | # Minimum Days | Instr. Minutes Per Minimum Day | # Other Days | Instr. Minutes Per Other Day | Total Instr. Days | Minutes Req'd Per State Law | Total Instr. Minutes |
|--------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| TK/K   | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 36000                       | 0                    |
| 1      | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 50400                       | 0                    |
| 2      | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 50400                       | 0                    |
| 3      | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 50400                       | 0                    |
| 4      | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 54000                       | 0                    |
| 5      | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 54000                       | 0                    |
| 6      | Yes            | 135            | 385                            | 45                     | 261                                    |                |                                |              |                              | 180               | 54000                       | 63720                |
| 7      | Yes            | 135            | 385                            | 45                     | 261                                    |                |                                |              |                              | 180               | 54000                       | 63720                |
| 8      | Yes            | 135            | 385                            | 45                     | 261                                    |                |                                |              |                              | 180               | 54000                       | 63720                |
| 9      | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 64800                       | 0                    |
| 10     | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 64800                       | 0                    |
| 11     | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 64800                       | 0                    |
| 12     | No             |                |                                |                        |  |                |                                |              |                              | 0                 | 64800                       | 0                    |

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **TEACHER RECRUITMENT**

VHGA utilizes multiple search methods to attract and recruit qualified teachers to deliver our instructional program. Some of these include EdJoin, VHGA job fairs and its website, advertisements at colleges and universities, and word of mouth. Selection of teachers is based on their teaching experience and ability to demonstrate effective instructional capabilities in the classroom. VHGA recruits ESSA-compliant teachers holding a CLAD or BCLAD credential with experience in planning and implementing an engaging, differentiated instructional program. Teachers need to be well versed in SDAIE and English Language Development (ELD) techniques. (See full job description in Element 5.)

The Superintendent and Principal review the qualifications of applicants' resumes and VHGA employment applications. The Superintendent and Principal screen promising applicants by speaking with previous employers prior to selection for an interview. VHGA's administrators and Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) conduct interviews with candidates. From the first interview, teachers who meet federal and state requirements are asked to come back for a demonstration lesson with the ILT. The Principal ultimately selects teachers based on teaching experience, subject matter/grade level expertise, and demonstrated classroom capabilities. The Principal notifies each person of his or her status once a decision is made. Candidates who are offered employment receive written notice from VHGA.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

At VHGA, professional development is critical to the success of our students. At VHGA, we understand that effective professional development needs to be consistent; the one-time professional development approach traditionally used by school districts has been shown to be less effective than ongoing professional development.<sup>111</sup> At VHGA, professional development is directly applicable to classroom practices (such as

<sup>111</sup> Castillo, R. L. (2011). *Effective implementation of professional development and student achievement*. California State University, Fresno. Coleman, J. C. (2014). A study of a professional development initiative to increase cultural competency.

promoting global competence) in order for teachers to maximize the usefulness of the training, learning Kagan strategies to increase collaborative processes, and Way of Council training to ensure rich social/emotional environments for our students.<sup>112</sup>

VHGA has both short-term and long-term professional development plans that promote deep learning and strong implementation of its programs.

VHGA utilizes several specific structures to ensure that teachers are continuously learning and growing their practice. Below are the key structures that contribute toward professional learning:

**All Vista Days:** VHGA participates in All Vista Days, which are dedicated to professional development common to all Vista schools. This training includes such topics as: the ISSN framework, Kagan Cooperative training, Way of Council, integrated technology, integrated English Language Learning, and similar initiatives.

**Collaborative planning time:** Teachers have weekly common planning time during the week for deliberate collaboration with grade-level teams. This structure ensures that grade-level teams have regular time to discuss trends of particular students and to jointly develop projects and lesson plans. The weekly time allotted to teachers increase as the school grows and adds additional teachers for PE, music, art and other enriching activities.

**Professional Learning Communities:** VHGA faculty works as a professional learning community in order to deliver the type of focus, differentiation, and rigor required by the educational program. A professional learning community is characterized by a collective focus on student learning, shared norms and values, collaboration, de-privatization of practice, data-driven decisions, and reflective dialogue.<sup>113</sup> Not unlike the students, the faculty at VHGA meta-cognitively process their instruction. The focus questions rely not upon what was taught, but rather upon what was learned. The staff and structures of the school must be responsive to student needs, whether through professional development in new areas of practice, improvement of instruction using peer coaching, realignment of time and resources to meet the greatest areas of need. Faculty analyze student data from assessments and adapt their instructional plans to meet deficit areas by collaborating twice a month in both content and grade-level teams. Faculty receive Professional Development support during minimum days (currently set for Fridays). This support enhances the Professional Learning Community.

**Peer coaching:** Grade-level teams are given time to meet with and observe one another frequently. These teams utilize a protocol to provide each other with targeted feedback and personal growth support.

**Instructional rounds:** Instructional rounds are a powerful collaborative structure in which a group of teachers or the school identifies a shared struggle or concern of

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Marzano, R. J. (2011). *Formative assessment & standards-based grading*. Solution Tree Press.

practice and then conducts classroom walkthroughs to intentionally learn from the instructional practices of the observed teacher. The premise of instructional rounds is that many of our teachers are already implementing successful strategies that may not be widely known or shared. Another underlying purpose of instructional rounds is for a community of teachers, or network, to collaboratively identify and solve a problem of practice by implementing and modeling different solutions. Additionally, instructional rounds provide a non-threatening method for a school community to review yearly goals and program implementation.

**Teacher growth and development:** VHGA uses the Dr. Charlotte Danielson Evaluation Instrument<sup>114</sup> as a way to measure and support teacher growth and development. The Danielson framework is a structured program that allows teachers to self-analyze using rubrics to distinguish, in any area, whether they are proficient, below, or can work toward reaching new heights. It provides clear examples, enabling teachers to differentiate between levels of performance. The Danielson Framework was not intended as a tool for evaluation, but provides a framework that is clear and growth oriented. The framework covers four major domains: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. Within those domains are the different components listed below:

#### Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

- 1a Demonstrating Knowledge of Content Pedagogy
- 1b Demonstrating Knowledge of Students
- 1c Setting Instructional Outcomes
- 1d Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources
- 1e Designing Coherent Instructions
- 1f Designing Student Assessments

#### Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

- 2a Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2b Establishing a Culture for Learning
- 2c Managing Classroom Procedures
- 2d Managing Student Behavior
- 2e Organizing Physical Space

#### Domain 3: Instruction

- 3a Communicating with Students
- 3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- 3c Engaging Students in Learning
- 3d Using Assessment in Instruction
- 3e Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

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<sup>114</sup> The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument. Accessed from: <http://www.loccsd.ca/~div15/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2013-framework-for-teaching-evaluation-instrument.pdf>.

#### Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

- 4a Reflect on Teaching
- 4b Maintaining Accurate Records
- 4c Communicating with Families
- 4d Participating in a Professional Community
- 4e Growing and Developing Professionally
- 4f Showing Professionalism

**ISSN Professional Development:** Our partnership with ISSN includes collaboration with other network schools and additional services. Administrative and instructional staff participate in professional development that include the following:

**Site visits:** VHGA hosts an ISSN site visit during its first and third years in the network.<sup>115</sup> Visits are conducted by a group of four to six network principals and consultants, who spend two and a half days at a school, visiting classrooms, conducting focus groups and interviews, and reviewing curriculum maps, student and staff handbooks, and other artifacts that capture the work of the school. At the end of the visit, the host school receives a 40-page report with feedback on each area of the ISSN School Design Matrix. That report becomes a tool to guide strategic planning and ongoing improvement efforts. The visits also serve as a rich professional development opportunity for the visiting principals.

**National network meetings:** Asia Society hosts biannual meetings for ISSN school leaders, where they conduct a study tour of a network school, participate in targeted learning activities, and have time to connect and share ideas. These meetings provide a rare opportunity to connect with peers, exchange ideas, solve common challenges, and learn together in a safe community.

**Regional events:** Regional ISSN coordinators offer additional trainings and events for ISSN educators to connect within a geographic region. These are opportunities for teachers to share feedback on curriculum, for administrators to support each other in solving common problems of practice, and for all staff to gain new skills and knowledge relevant to the global studies mission.

| <b>Professional Development Topics and Professional Learning Community</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Compliance and Mandated Training</b>                                    | Mandated Reporting<br>Uniform Complaint Procedures<br>FERPA<br>Blood Borne Pathogens<br>Safe School Plan & Procedures – Emergency Drills, Evacuation procedures, etc. |

<sup>115</sup> We also host site visits for other organizations, MTSS, CSU Long Beach, OC Charter Principals Network, who come to observe our model and instructional practices.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | Sexual Harassment<br>Appropriate Use of Technology  |
| <b>School Culture</b>                                       | Way of Council<br>School Discipline Policies and Procedures<br>Restorative Justice practices  |
| <b>Curriculum &amp; Instructional Methods</b>               | Lesson Plan Components<br>Direct Instruction (I Do, We Do, You Do)<br>ISSN (GPS, PBL, Global Standards)<br>Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies<br>Project Lead the Way, Amplify Science<br>Readers and Writers Workshop<br>Ready Math and CGI<br>Technology instruction and integration<br>Mastery Learning<br>Educating for Global Competence  |
| <b>Assessments &amp; Standards</b>                          | Assessments to inform instruction<br>Common Core and State standards<br>Internal Standards<br>Scope and Sequence<br>Alignment of Curriculum, Standards, Assessments<br>Progress Reports and Report Cards<br>Assessments (teacher created, publisher, and national normed)<br>Adoption of the Dr. Charlotte Danielson Evaluation Instrument<br>Deep Dives of Domains (1. Planning; 2. Classroom Environment; 3. Instruction; 4. Professional Responsibilities)<br>SBAC aligned assessments<br>Learning Management System |
| <b>Differentiation / Special Education/Student Supports</b> | Modifications and intervention strategies<br>Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)<br>Data Driven Instruction<br>Techniques for Differentiation<br>English Learner strategies, reclassification and monitoring policies and procedures<br>Special Education compliance and services  |

## **MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS**

VHGA is committed to meeting the needs of each and every student and helping them to succeed. All members of our faculty and our instructional leaders assist each family to ensure the educational success of their child, including making appropriate referrals to community organizations.

By providing highly differentiated and scaffolding supports for each learner, all students are capable of thriving academically, socially and emotionally at VHGA. The educational program is appropriate for students of various backgrounds, including students who are academically low achieving, students who are academically high- achieving, English Learners, and students with disabilities. As described below, VHGA uses a variety of assessment tools to identify students who fit into these categories and in turn, implements a variety of effective strategies to target the unique needs of each child. Through transparent and continuous communication with their families, we ensure that students' needs are being met in the school community and also supported at home.

After a student has enrolled in VHGA, baseline assessments are given to each student. Included in the baseline assessments are the following:

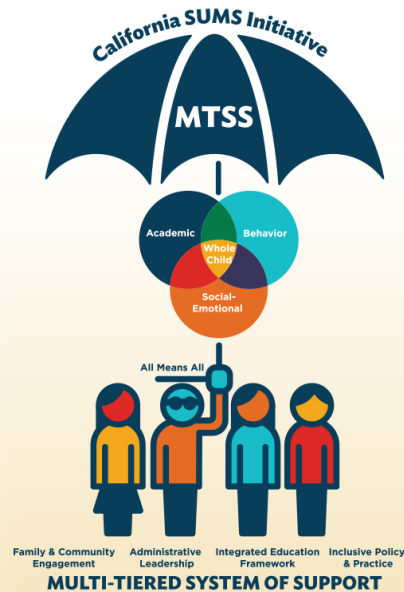
- An enrollment form collected after admission that asks families to provide information they wish to share including student's interests/strengths, areas of growth, learning preferences and other pertinent background information.
- Fountas and Pinnell baseline Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for all entering Kindergarten students.
- Diagnostic assessments in language arts and mathematics for all students. VHGA uses Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments for all grade levels and Lucy Calkins writing assessments for all grade level. Math assessments are from the Ready Math Program. (VHGA also will administer SBAC Interim Assessments for grades 6-8 as detailed in Elements 2/3.)

### ***MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)***

As in all VCPS, VHGA implements a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) approach to ensure students are monitored regularly to determine progress. This diagnostic approach helps inform teachers in a timely manner to ensure all students are identified and supported in their learning. The goal is to prevent academic and behavioral problems and to intervene early.

The MTSS process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners may participate in interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be offered by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. MTSS is designed for making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data. The chart below details the MTSS Tiers for academic and behavioral interventions.

## MTSS for Academic and Behavioral Interventions



Tier 1 – Proactive Prevention through high-quality first instruction and pedagogy

- Diagnostic and ongoing assessment
- CCSS-driven instruction
- Integrated ELD in all subjects
- Reader's and Writer's workshop model
- Close school-to-home communication
- Progress reports
- Differentiation through PBL, Kagan strategies,
- Way of Council

Tier 2 – Targeted Intervention

- Family and school communication
- Learning Management System updated regularly
- Parent conferences, phone calls, and home visits.
- Targeted small group Literacy instruction using Fountas and Pinnell Leveled



- Literacy intervention (LLI) and Ready Math intervention strategies
- Eagle Hour (daily intervention period with students receiving small group, targeted support)

### Tier 3 – Intensive Intervention

- Administrative involvement
- Student Success Team
- Administration, teacher, student interventions (e.g., Way of Council and other restorative student to student practices)
- Counseling
- Possible referral for an IEP

### **Student Success Team**

The Student Success Team (SST) is centered on the student, and reviews individual student strengths and areas of concern in academics, behaviors, or other areas. The SST is the main vehicle for Tier 3 MTSS strategies. The SST is comprised of one administrator, one Special Education teacher or Specialist, the current teacher, parents of the student being discussed, and other staff or personnel such as teaching assistants that may have valuable information regarding the strengths and needs of the student. The SST plans strategies and organizes resources to assist students, parents, administrators, and teachers with concerns that are interfering with success. The SST is a general education function, and all students can benefit from an SST, including, but not limited to, those students achieving below or above grade level, English Language Learners, students with educational needs, and students who have experienced emotional trauma or behavioral issues.

Any VHGA family member or staff member who has a concern for a student can refer that student to SST for consideration. Anyone who is connected to that student can be included in the SST to share about the student’s strengths as well as concerns and strategies that may or may not have been used in the past. People who may be included in an SST meeting might be, for example, teachers, parents, counselors, doctors, administration, social workers, and law enforcement representatives. The meeting is designed to convene a supportive team in a positive atmosphere to determine and implement best strategies to support VHGA students in finding success.

The VHGA SST meetings shall include the following steps:

1. Introduction of SST team members and participants
2. Meeting purpose and process
3. Timekeeper appointed to track SST meeting minutes
4. Identification of Student Strengths
5. Concern areas are listed, discussed, clarified, and brainstormed
6. Pertinent information and modifications are listed
7. Concerns are synthesized with one or two chosen for focus
8. Strategies to deal with are brainstormed or chosen
9. Identification of actionable strategies

10. Individual commitments to actionable strategies
11. Person responsible and timelines for all actions are recorded
12. Follow-up date is set

After implementation of an SST plan and follow-up, if the problem continues, revisions to the plan are discussed and implemented; however, if deemed necessary by the SST, a referral for special education or Section 504 assessment might be made.

The following subsections explain the ways in which VHGA identifies and addresses the needs of diverse learners.

## **ENGLISH LEARNERS**

Approximately one third of our students are English Learners (ELs), with the vast majority being Spanish speaking. We have structured our program to meet the needs of ELs with a goal that they gain fluency in English as quickly as possible in a supportive setting. VHGA teachers, staff and school leaders communicate to parents in their home language as needed—but use English instruction for the content areas in the classroom.

We have structured our program to meet the needs of ELs with a goal that they gain fluency in English as quickly as possible in a supportive setting. VHGA teachers, staff and school leaders communicate to parents in their home language as needed—but use English instruction for the content areas in the classroom.

### ***IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS***

VHGA's EL program adopts the VCPS English Learner Plan (as approved by OCDE). VHGA's EL program is designed to ensure English Learners (including those who are reclassified) have equal access to instructional materials and supports in order to achieve grade-level content mastery and English-language proficiency.

In order to identify EL students in a timely fashion and to provide appropriate instructional support and services, all parents are required to complete a *Home Language Survey* upon enrollment at the Charter School. (Cal. Education Code § 52164.1) Students whose primary language is not English are assessed using the English Language Proficiency for California (ELPAC) assessment aligned to the CA ELD Standards if he or she has not previously been identified as an English learner by a California public school or if there is no record of prior ELPAC test results. The ELPAC assessment take place within 30 days of the start of the Charter School year or within two (2) weeks after the date of the student's first enrollment at VHGA.

The ELD Coordinator (the Assistant Principal) assesses English language proficiency of all currently enrolled English Learners in accordance with California Education Code guidelines. Students with disabilities are permitted to take the test with the accommodations listed in the Education Code if they are specified in the student's IEP

or Section 504 plan. An alternate assessment for English language proficiency is administered to students who are unable to participate in the ELPAC, according to the guidelines set forth in the student’s IEP. The Charter School notifies parents of the school’s responsibility to conduct ELPAC testing and inform parents of ELPAC assessment results within 30 calendar days following receipt of results from the test contractor.

Students are monitored in conjunction with the ELPAC General Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs):

| Level | Description  |
|-------|--|
| 4     | English learners at this level have <b>well developed</b> oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) skills. They can use English to learn and communicate in meaningful ways that are appropriate to different tasks, purposes, and audiences in a variety of social and academic contexts. They may need occasional linguistic support to engage in familiar social and academic contexts; they may need light support to communicate on less familiar tasks and topics. This test performance level corresponds to the upper range of the “Bridging” proficiency level as described in the 2012 California English Language Development Standards, Kindergarten Through Grade 12 (CA ELD Standards). |
| 3     | English learners at this level have <b>moderately developed</b> oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) skills. They can sometimes use English to learn and communicate in meaningful ways in a range of topics and content areas. They need light-to-minimal linguistic support to engage in familiar social and academic contexts; they need moderate support to communicate on less familiar tasks and topics. This test performance level corresponds to the upper range of the “Expanding” proficiency level through the lower range of the “Bridging” proficiency level as described in the CA ELD Standards.  |
| 2     | English learners at this level have <b>somewhat developed</b> oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) skills. They can use English to meet immediate communication needs but often are not able to use English to learn and communicate on topics and content areas. They need moderate-to-light linguistic support to engage in familiar social and academic contexts; they need substantial-to-moderate support to communicate on less familiar tasks and topics. This test performance level corresponds to the low- to mid-range of the “Expanding” proficiency level as   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | described in the CA ELD Standards.  |
| 1 | English learners at this level have <b>minimally developed</b> oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) English skills. They tend to rely on learned words and phrases to communicate meaning at a basic level. They need substantial-to-moderate linguistic support to communicate in familiar social and academic contexts; they need substantial linguistic support to communicate on less familiar tasks and topics. This test performance level corresponds to the “Emerging” proficiency level as described in the CA ELD Standards. |

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ep/elpacgpld.asp>)

Parents are notified of their rights and their child’s ELPAC scores each year and are encouraged to participate in the reclassification process. Parents are notified when a student is being considered for reclassification and again when they are officially reclassified.

### ***EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION***

All EL students learn with all other students in the classroom during instructional time. In addition, EL students have designated ELD instruction in small groups daily during ELD/Literacy time. All students participate in the general education classroom during instructional time where teachers implement strategies to support “integrated” academic language acquisition. Teachers use modeling, graphic organizers and visuals to support students’ recognition of essential information in all academic subjects. Teachers are mindful of the stages of language acquisition and differentiate instruction within the classroom to meet the needs of each student.

EL students are also provided with Designated ELD instruction on a daily basis during Eagle Hour. During designated ELD, they complete curricular tasks in Reading Comprehension, Grammar, Word Meaning and Writing at their level of English, using the Lexia platform. Upon completion of weekly tasks student data is analyzed to track progress of language acquisition. The Lexia Platform also provides a norm-referenced test that students take three times a year to track progress and standards mastery. When a student is identified as to having difficulties mastering a concept, students are pulled out for targeted intervention on the specific content necessary.

All VHGA teachers are trained to use Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) techniques to meet the needs of ELs. The instructional design model used by VHGA places a heavy emphasis on differentiating instruction to meet the needs of ELs based on their academic and language readiness. VHGA’s philosophy of personalizing instruction for all students also benefits ELs by providing entry points learning tasks and outcomes that are tailored to the student’s needs.

Sheltered instruction/SDAIE is grounded in a pedagogical commitment to meeting the needs of diverse learners, in this case particularly those students who are English learners. Teachers engage in the following practices to support universal access of subject matter content for all students:<sup>116</sup>

- During lesson planning and preparation, teachers identify lesson objectives aligned with state and local standards.
- Teachers link new content to students' background experiences and introduce unfamiliar vocabulary to facilitate comprehension.
- Teachers use controlled vocabulary, sentence structure, visuals, and gestures as necessary and appropriate to make the presentation of content comprehensible.
- Teachers provide students with a variety of strategies for organizing and retaining information associated with effective learning, such as graphic organizers and note taking.
- Teachers provide students with regular opportunities to interact with their peers through collaborative learning activities, such as think/pair/share, partner and group projects.
- Teachers provide students with regular opportunities to use new language skills in context.
- Teachers pace lessons appropriately to allow for the participation and active engagement of all students.
- Teachers utilize language-based as well as content-based assessments.

SDAIE instruction also focuses on strategies for taking students Into, Through, and Beyond the topics covered. For example, SDAIE-enhanced instruction might proceed as follows:

- i. **Into:** Determining what the students know about the topic of study. Possible SDAIE strategies for "Into":  
**Anticipatory Guide:** Students are given a series of statements that relate to concepts they are studying in their unit on Ancient Greece. Students indicate AGREE or DISAGREE. After the information has been presented, students check to see if they were correct.  
**Brainstorming** - Students work in small groups. Each group begins with a stimulus such as a word, phrase, picture, or object related to the topic of Ancient Greece. A recorder records all responses to that stimulus and ideas from each group are shared with the class.
- ii. **Through:** The teacher enhances direct instruction on the topic by utilizing realia, manipulatives, visuals, graphic organizers, and various modes of interaction between students. In addition to reading the text and listening to information

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<sup>116</sup> Based on the eight broad elements of sheltered instruction described by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short. *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP model*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon (2004).

presented by the teacher, students takes responsibility for learning by participating in group-work and sharing understanding with others. Possible SDAIE strategies for “Through”:

**Graphic Organizers** – Students complete a variety of graphic organizers as they read or listen to information. Graphic organizers used might include:

- Comparison-Contrast Matrix-Students determine similarities and differences between two topics studied
- Flowcharts – Students sequence important events in the content studied.
- Cause and Effect Chart – Students chart the ways in different characteristics effect change and impact others.

**Reciprocal Teaching** - Two students work together to read a passage in the social science text. Student A reads one paragraph aloud, then asks Student B one or two good questions based on the reading. Student B answers. Students A and B discuss questions and answers and repeat the process.

**Picture This** – Following the introduction of several key vocabulary terms related to the unit, a blank paper is divided into eight sections. Students draw pictures or symbols to represent words or major concepts. They then exchange papers with a partner and try to correctly label each other's drawings.

**Reading Guide** Students work in small groups to read a longer section of the social science textbook. Students first take turns reading the headings of the reading. Then, with their group, students predict what will be discussed in those sections. Students write their answers on a prediction chart. In their groups, students take turns reading the first page aloud, and finish reading the selection in silence. They write "yes" or "no" on the prediction chart to indicate whether or not their predictions were correct. Finally, students write one thinking question (Why..., How..., Compare..., What if...), and exchange papers to answer each other's questions.

**III. Beyond:** To create further understanding, students go beyond rote memorization and demonstrate real-world application of the learned information. This process requires higher-level critical-thinking skills. Possible SDAIE strategies for “Beyond”:

**Roam the Room** - In groups, students write down their individual answers to a higher-level question posed by the teacher (e.g. if only one idea or invention from the Greek culture could be passed on to subsequent cultures, what should it be and why?). Students share their answers within their group and the group comes up with and records on chart paper one “best” answer for their group. Groups then walk around to view other groups’ answers.

**Quotes** – Students identify quotes from a fictional text related to the unit. They create a chart listing the quote and the point they feel the quote illustrates.

### ***HOW THE PROGRAM WILL MEET THE NEW STATE ELD STANDARDS AND USE THE RESULTS OF THE ELPAC***

VHGA bases its English Learner support program on the 2012 California ELD Standards. As guided by the CA ELD Standards, VHGA teachers provide instruction grounded in the best available research on supporting ELs in an English Immersion environment. Students are expected to advance at least one ELD level annually. Our ELD Coordinator (the Assistant Principal) partners with the classroom teachers to include ELD goals on students' learning plans, including specific goals to meet during dedicated ELD instruction. Additionally, our ELD Coordinator assesses student progress towards attainment of the standards using standards-based portfolios.

If students are not making sufficient academic progress as indicated through ELPAC data, we modify our EL program as needed.

VHGA ensures that teachers meet all state and federal requirements and are supported to meet the needs of ELs. We hire teachers that are CLAD/BLAD certified and place a priority on hiring teacher(s) that speak Spanish and English and can provide strong instruction within a structured immersion classroom. We also support teachers by providing professional development on structured immersion instruction, specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) teaching strategies, language development, monitoring, and assessment of ELs. We commit to monthly professional development specifically addressing the instructional effectiveness, reviewing assessment data and revising curriculum to meet our EL students' needs.

Parents are notified regarding their child's English Language Development along with ELPAC scores every progress report or every semester and/or as often as needed.

### ***SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS, INCLUDING INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTION***

See above. Teachers have access to ELD assessment results to inform program placement, reclassification, and instruction. VHGA uses assessment interpretation resources to help teachers and administrators use student results to inform English Learners and their parents or guardians about student progress.

VHGA provides high quality professional learning opportunities for all of its educators to ensure that every English Learner has access to teachers who are prepared to accommodate individual instruction to meet the levels of rigor and depth required by the CA ELD Standards. Professional development focuses on enhancing teacher's knowledge of how to teach English learners to read and write as well as how to address the achievement gap by providing pedagogical tools to ensure that all ELs can meet the CA ELD Standards. All teachers are authorized to teach English Learners and receive training in the effective implementation of techniques such as SDAIE, scaffolding and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. Our ELD Coordinator also communicates the specific language needs of our EL students. Strategies such as front-loading content, using visuals and other means of organizing information, and pairing ELs with more capable peers further ensure student access to academic content.

### ***PROCESS FOR ANNUAL EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL'S ENGLISH LEARNER PROGRAM***

The Principal at VHGA is responsible for ensuring the quality and success of all instructional programs and reports to the Vista Public Charter Schools Superintendent and Board on progress towards academic goals, including serving EL students. The Principal conducts regular classroom observations and provides feedback and coaching. In addition, the Principal works with relevant staff annually to review summative data on student progress, including our annual ELPAC scores. This data analysis is followed by conversation and, if necessary, additional staff training. We expect our English Learners to show proficiency in content areas and that our ELs improve at least one ELD level annually as measured by the ELPAC.

Teachers are expected to regularly evaluate student progress by reviewing EL data from formative and summative assessments. Teachers use the results of this data to change their instructional practices to better serve each student. In order to document progress, all teachers receive an ELD folder for each of their EL students that is used to monitor individual progress at their targeted ELD level. These folders include the new ELD standards by level 1-4. Teachers use these folders to collect student work samples, and check of mastery towards each ELD standard.

### ***PROCESS AND SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR RECLASSIFICATION***

VHGA monitors student mastery of the ELD standards through the use of ELD folders. The ELD folder is used as a guide that, when implemented systematically and consistently, ensures the implementation of a quality ELD program. Teachers select assessments and work samples that accurately represent the student's current level of performance in listening, speaking, reading, writing and language.

As English Learners progress, work samples that no longer characterize the student's best work are replaced with more representative samples. By the time an ELD portfolio is complete, it contains at least one sample for each domain. The ELD Coordinator reviews ELD folders at the end of each reporting period and EL students receive ELD grades in addition to ELA grades in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The following assessments are examples of ELD folder evidence:

- Publisher ELD assessments
- End-of-unit assessments from state-adopted ELD programs
- Teacher/grade-level created performance tasks
- Checklists to informally observe student performance in everyday activities
- Core content area assignments scored using an ELD standards-based scoring rubric



It is the responsibility of the Principal, collaborating with the ELD Coordinator to work with classroom teachers to carry out the EL Master Plan. The ELD Coordinator maintains ELD portfolios, monitors classroom instruction, updates ELD levels in the VHGA Student Information System (Power School), places ELs according to ELD level, reviews EL monitoring rosters to ensure ELs are advancing a minimum of one ELD level per year, reviews ELD grades to ensure that students and parents receive updated information of ELD progress at each reporting period, and checks readiness for promotion, reclassification or need for intervention. The ELD Coordinator works with teachers to make the final decision regarding progression to the next ELD Proficiency Level.

EL student classification uses the 2012 California English Language Development Standards' three Proficiency Level Descriptors -- Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging -- in conjunction with the more recently approved (2016) ELPAC four Performance Level Descriptors (Levels 1-4) as described above.

The three levels represent the stages of English language development, describing expectations for how well students can understand and use the English language at each level – knowledge, skills, and abilities across a continuum -- as they continue to build on existing language skills and knowledge.<sup>117</sup>

*Emerging:* Students at this level typically progress very quickly, learning to use English for immediate needs as well as beginning to understand and use academic vocabulary and other features of academic language.

*Expanding:* Students at this level are challenged to increase their English skills in more contexts and learn a greater variety of vocabulary and linguistic structures, applying their growing language skills in more sophisticated ways that are appropriate to their age and grade level.

*Bridging:* Students at this level continue to learn and apply a range of high-level English language skills in a wide variety of contexts, including comprehension and production of highly technical texts. The “bridge” alluded to is the transition to full engagement in grade-level academic tasks and activities in a variety of content areas without the need for specialized ELD instruction. However, ELs at all levels of English language proficiency fully participate in grade-level tasks in all content areas with varying degrees of scaffolding in order to develop both content knowledge and English.

Both teachers and administration monitor the progress and performance of each student identified as an English Learner with the goal of helping these students reclassify to Re-designated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) status. Once the Charter School receives ELPAC results, the EL Coordinator begins to analyze the data and

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<sup>117</sup> California Department of Education. California English Language Development Standards, K-12 (Nov. 2012). <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/eldstndspublication14.pdf>. Accessed on August 6, 2018.

determine the eligibility for re-designation of each student within 30 days of receiving the scores. The reclassification criteria is as follows:

| <b>Reclassification Criteria</b>   |
|--|
| <p><b>Annual ELPAC Scores</b><br/><i>Overall annual ELPAC score of 3 or 4 (with skill area scores of 3 or higher in Oral and Written language)</i></p> |
| <p><b>Teacher Evaluation</b><br/>The teacher judges the student will be successful in a Mainstream English Program based on a review of:</p>           |
| <p><b>Report Card</b><br/>Report card grade marks of C or higher in English Language Arts</p>  |
| <p><b>CAASPP</b><br/>The students has demonstrated basic grade-level skills on the Assessment by performing in the Nearly Met band or above</p>        |
| <p><b>Parent Opinion/Consultation</b></p>  |

Students scoring Level 3 or 4 on the ELPAC are considered for possible reclassification. If a student scores below Level 3 on any subtest (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing), he/she will no longer be considered for reclassification despite an overall score of Level 3 or Level 4. Teachers submit ELD folders and work samples for each student that was administered the ELPAC regardless of score.

Annual Review of Student Progress begins mid spring, after ELPAC scores become available and just after the second submission of ELD folders and work samples. All student ELD folders are initially reviewed by the ELD coordinator. If the standards check off sheet and work samples indicate Average Progress or Advanced Progress for their identified ELD level and ELPAC scores also meet the requirements listed above, the student moves forward on to the second step of the Reclassification process.

The reclassification team (which includes the teacher, an Administrator, and may include a parent) reviews the information listed above as well as teacher recommendations and overall successful classroom performance in academic areas as indicated by report cards, and benchmark/summative assessment type tests. The reclassification team also discusses if the student has met sufficient goals. If a student has satisfied all of these requirements they then be recommended for reclassification pending the release of CAASPP scores for that year. If a student Meets or Exceeds standards on the ELA test, he/she is officially reclassified, and their file will be updated to reflect Reclassified Fluent English Proficient in that academic year. A student

continues to be monitored by the reclassification team for two years after official reclassification, as required by ESSA.

### ***PROCESS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS AND RECLASSIFIED (RFEP) STUDENTS***

In order to meet the individual needs of each English learner, the ELD Coordinator carefully monitors student performance on both classroom assignments and standardized testing. Students scoring at the lowest levels of the ELPAC are provided supplemental English Instruction focusing on skills, vocabulary and information that support both their oral and written English language acquisition. The goal is to ensure a quality instructional program that enables English Learners to attain English proficiency, achievement of all learning plan goals, and to have full access to the range of educational opportunities that VHGA provides for all students.

Students are monitored in conjunction with the new CA ELD Standards Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs). The PLDs describe student knowledge, skills, and abilities across a continuum, identifying what ELs know and can do at early stages and at exit from each of three proficiency levels: Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging. These descriptors guide VHGA teachers as they provide ELs with targeted instruction in English language development as well as differentiated instruction in academic content areas<sup>118</sup>:

Emerging: Students at this level typically progress very quickly, learning to use English for immediate needs as well as beginning to understand and use academic vocabulary and other features of academic language.

Expanding: Students at this level are challenged to increase their English skills in more contexts, and learn a greater variety of vocabulary and linguistic structures, applying their growing language skills in more sophisticated ways appropriate to their age and grade level.

Bridging: Students at this level continue to learn and apply a range of high-level English language skills in wide variety of contexts, including comprehension and production of highly technical texts. The “bridge” alluded to is the transition to full engagement in grade-level academic tasks and activities in a variety of content areas without the need for specialized ELD instruction. However, ELs at all levels of English language proficiency fully participate in grade level tasks in all content areas with varying degrees of scaffolding in order to develop both content knowledge and English.

English learners continue to be re-evaluated annually using the ELPAC assessment until such time as they have demonstrated that they are able to compete effectively with English-speaking peers in mainstream classrooms and are reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP). VHGA set a demanding reclassification target annually as part of the

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<sup>118</sup> <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/sbeoverviewpld.pdf>

Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) goal setting process. The ELD Coordinator serves as the ELPAC testing coordinator and meets periodically with teachers to discuss the progress of English learners toward mastery of the CA ELD standards. The testing coordinator continues to monitor students who are re-designated as RFEP during a period of two years, by meeting regularly with their teachers and reviewing their benchmark assessments and standardized testing results to ensure that they are able to keep up with their peers.

***PROCESS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS AND SUPPORTS FOR LONG TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS (LTELs)***

Under California law, Long Term English Learners (LTELs) are defined as those students who are enrolled in grades 6 to 12, have been enrolled in schools in the United States for six years or more, have remained at the same English language proficiency level for two or more consecutive prior years, or have regressed to a lower English language proficiency level, and, for students in grades 6-9, have scored Far Below Basic or Below Basic (or new equivalent) on the state testing in ELA. (Cal. Ed. Code § 313.1) We closely monitor each EL’s progress and any instances in which a student is not making sufficient progress towards reclassification. The ELD Coordinator and classroom teachers work together to identify the reasons why a student has not acquired English at an expected rate and determine the best support system for that student moving forward. VHGA prioritizes resources (e.g. curriculum for ELD instruction) for students at risk of being identified as LTELs. Students and parents are made aware of the risks associated with LTEL status, as well as specific barriers to reclassification and ways to address them.

***GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS AND STUDENTS ACHIEVING ABOVE GRADE LEVEL***

***IDENTIFICATION***

Gifted and high-achieving students are among the most underserved populations in schools with high levels of economically disadvantaged students. Gifted students in underachieving schools are often misdiagnosed based on behavioral issues and misplaced in Special Education classrooms. At VHGA, we are committed to seeking out and identifying our gifted and high-achieving students (GATE). Research has indicated that approximately 10% of any given school population is gifted. Students are identified as possible high achievers and/or gifted when demonstrating abilities significantly beyond their peers or developmental stages through teacher observation, internal assessments, and CAASPP data.

Students must meet at least 4 of the criteria below; one of the criteria must include Cognitive Ability of Standardized Achievement.

| Criteria | EO/RFEP | EL |
|----------|---------|----|
|----------|---------|----|

|                                   |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Cognitive (TONI)                  | Verbal - 85%+<br>Non-Verbal - 85%+                       | Verbal - 85%+<br>Non-Verbal - 85%+                        |
| SBAC                              | ELA - 4<br>Math - 4                                      | ELA - 4<br>Math - 4                                       |
| Renaissance 360                   | ELA - 85%+<br>Math - 85%+                                | ELA - 85%+<br>Math - 85%+                                 |
| Reading Level<br>(Brigance)       | 2+ grades above  | 2+ grades above   |
| Report Card                       | Condor - 50%+4s in ELA<br>or Math<br>Heritage - GPA 3.5+ | Condor - 50%+ 4s in ELA<br>or Math<br>Heritage - GPA 3.5+ |
| Teacher Recommendation<br>(SRBSS) | Elevated in 2 or more<br>domains                         | Elevated in 2 or more<br>domains                          |
| Environmental                     | McKinney-Vento, Foster<br>Migrant, SPED                  | McKinney-Vento, Foster<br>Migrant, SPED                   |
| EL Reclassified                   | By 4th grade   | N/A   |
| ELPAC                             | N/A  | +2 levels in one year                                     |

Notes: Students with Cognitive ability 90%+ automatically qualify. Students with high achievement score must also have Cognitive ability of at least 50%. Students who have been identified as possible achievers and/or gifted are tested for giftedness. VHGA continually evaluates students' achievement level to ensure that high-achieving students can be quickly identified and served.

### ***PARENT NOTIFICATION AND INVOLVEMENT***

Just as in the case with low-achieving students, the classroom teacher contacts parents of academically high-achieving students to discuss student performance and strategies for deeper engagement that adequately challenge the gifted or high-achieving learner. Parents are notified in writing or by phone to set up a conference. Family members provide rich information about their child's strengths, needs, and learning styles— which informs the supports the learner receives at school. The Digital Portfolios enhance parent involvement, as they have components that involve parents in their child's development, personal aspirations, and specific needs. Family conferences are held for all students in the fall and spring to discuss student progress and set learning goals. This is just as important for gifted and high-achieving students as it is for low-achieving students. Progress toward these goals are communicated through regular progress reports, calls and emails home, and in-person meetings with parents, teachers, and

administrative staff. Constant communication between the school and families builds stronger partnerships to support children of all abilities.

### ***MEETING GIFTED AND HIGH ACHIEVING STUDENTS' NEEDS***

The VHGA workshop model of instruction and focus on student engagement allows daily differentiation. Further, the workshop model affords student choice and autonomy, key factors in serving gifted and high-achieving students. The curriculum and programmatic choices at VHGA provide ample opportunities for high-level thinking and problem solving. Our focus on global outcomes and competencies provide real-life application and a deep sense of relevance that serves gifted learners.

- Readers and Writer's Workshop provides academic freedom and differentiation
- All students starting in the first grade have access to a Chromebook or similar device and can access leveled libraries, supplemental programs, Kahn Academy, and other similar programs and apps
- Project Lead the Way science curriculum is designed to engage learners and provide opportunities for high level-thinking skills through a hands-on experimental approach
- Fourth and fifth grade student Way of Council leadership opportunities
- Individual and small group projects developed to challenge the academically high-achieving students and extend learning beyond the classroom.
- Guiding students to develop their own learning goals and objectives.

### ***MONITOR PROGRESS OF GIFTED STUDENTS AND STUDENTS ACHIEVING ABOVE GRADE LEVEL***

High-achieving and gifted students are closely monitored by teachers and through family outreach. Students are also able to articulate their needs and goals when developing their Digital Portfolios. The school also monitors the percentage of identified students and gauge it against the average of 10% students being gifted or high-achieving at most schools. Student behavioral issues will be identified and looked at as possible identifying markers of gifted or high-achieving students not being sufficiently challenged.

### ***STUDENTS ACHIEVING BELOW GRADE LEVEL***

#### ***ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION***

VHGA serves a population that traditionally has struggled to bridge the achievement gap and often faces significant challenges to achieve grade-level competency. While students may be achieving at significantly below grade level in some, or all, academic areas, when they enroll at VHGA, it is our responsibility to ensure that each child is properly assessed and supported in rising to his or her potential. We firmly believe that **all** children have the potential to thrive academically given the right conditions for learning. At VHGA, we create the conditions for learning through classroom and school environments that are emotionally safe and developmentally appropriate.

Our goal, at VHGA, is to ensure that every child is performing at or above grade-level academically. To ensure that our students meet their goals, our teachers and staff provide on-going and continuous assessments in our efforts to seek out and support children who are academically low-achieving and might be facing a special learning need or experiencing extenuating circumstances outside of school. We are dedicated to providing the additional academic and social emotional support such students need to succeed.

VHGA enlists a variety of assessment tools to identify students who are achieving at lower academic levels. All incoming students take a diagnostic reading and math assessment through Renaissance STAR 360. Additionally, diagnostic assessment in English Language Arts and mathematics will be administered to all students multiple times each year. For ELA the assessment will include the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) differentiated for grade levels 6-8. For mathematics, Ready math assessments are used.

### ***PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION AND INVOLVEMENT***

The classroom teacher contacts the parents of academically low-achieving students to discuss student performance and strategies for improvement. Parents are notified in writing, email or phone to set up a conference. Parents are key partners in helping us understand their child and what strategies might best fit the needs of their child. Family members provide rich information about their child's strengths, needs, and learning styles – which, in turn, shapes the supports that the learner receives at school. The Digital Portfolios enhance parent involvement, as they have components that allow the parents to be a part of their child's development, personal aspirations, and specific needs. Family conferences are held for all students in the fall and spring to discuss student progress and to set learning goals. Progress toward these goals are communicated through regular progress reports each semester and more often as needed, calls and emails home, and in-person meetings with parents, teachers, and administrative staff as needed. Constant communication between the school and families enables stronger partnerships to support the children.

### ***SUPPORTS AND INTERVENTIONS***

Academically low-achieving students are fully integrated into the entire student body. The engaging and active educational program at VHGA is designed to accommodate the full range of students, including academically low-achieving students. Specific practices that support academically low-achieving students include the following:

- Hands-on, workshop- and project-based curriculum provides concrete experiences to help students access content through a range of modalities.
- Kagan cooperative strategies are used throughout the day and provide concrete structures that allow all students to engage and be held accountable for their learning in any subject

- Lucy Calkin’s Readers and Writers daily workshops allow for grouping according to instructional reading and writing levels. Teachers may meet with struggling readers for more time in small groups or individually during workshop. Students are regularly paired up with stronger readers and writers during workshop, which provides peer support and modeling.
- Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention provides targeted and early intervention strategies.
- Lexia
- Eagle Hour is a flexible intervention/enrichment period during the school day where teachers get to select appropriate skill-based interventions for each specific students' needs. Students may also self-select into intervention or enrichment classes. This allows for intensive, targeted interventions with reduced class sizes, while also giving students who are displaying mastery the ability to participate in enrichment classes that they would not be able to take otherwise.
- Leveled reading libraries provide differentiation for low- and high-achieving learners.
- Students who are struggling with math or not mastering standards receive tiered intervention to support with learning. At the first level of support, teachers provide differentiated instruction in small groups in the classrooms. These groups are informed by data as well as the skills and concepts. If students continue to struggle they are provided with more intensive interventions such as small group or one-on-one pull out interventions. In these small groups, the support provider would model procedural knowledge and provide time for them to develop conceptual understanding. Students might also engage with web-based adaptive programs for fluency and automaticity (i.e., Freckle, Khan Academy etc).

### ***MONITORING PROGRESS***

Student progress is monitored on an ongoing basis through a combination of teacher observation, classroom assessments, and benchmark assessments. If intervention supports do not lead to sufficient progress, as previously stated, a Student Success Team (SST) is convened to consider alternative intervention strategies. Prior to monthly meetings, the case manager consults with all referring teachers to gather more data and information about the referred student. At the meeting, referrals are reviewed and next steps to support students are taken based on the data and information collected. Academic supports can include small group pull-out intervention, one-on-one intervention, accommodation of student work, counseling, participating in peer counseling groups, parent consult/involvement, wrap around services if necessary, or referral for evaluation.

Should the SST process fail to yield adequate progress, additional steps, such as a referral for a special education evaluation and/or 504 services are taken. Additionally, the workshop model of instruction, Kagan strategies, and Way of Council provide a framework for continual and ongoing observation and assessment. Teachers at VHGA



meet on a monthly basis to analyze student data and make data-driven decisions to identify student needs and adjust instruction accordingly.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED/LOW INCOME STUDENTS**

As detailed above, virtually all of our students come from socio-economically disadvantaged families; in many cases our students experience extreme poverty including homelessness and housing instability and food instability. In order to support these students, our engaging, differentiated instructional program provides them with support and resources to ensure success. A small school environment, small class sizes, supplemental supports including tutoring and more all ensure these students are well-known and supported. Teachers receive training on identifying students with significant needs/students in crisis and referrals to appropriate child and family supports.

We minimize financial challenges for students by offering free uniforms and providing meals, including Friday take-home meals for our neediest students and meals via Blessings in a Backpack on weekends. A comprehensive meal and snack program and free before and afterschool care helps support working families.

As with all student subgroups, the Principal and Superintendent monitor subgroup data through state testing, benchmark testing and ongoing monitoring of students' progress.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

As an inclusive model school, VHGA is committed to meeting the needs of all of our students with disabilities, and pledges to work in cooperation with the OCDE and/or a Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) to ensure that a free and appropriate education is provided to all students with exceptional needs. VHGA will comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other civil rights law enforced by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Furthermore, VHGA will comply with OCDE and SELPA guidelines and all California laws pertaining to students with disabilities.

The following description regarding how special education and related services will be provided and funded is being proposed by VHGA for the sole purpose of providing a reasonably comprehensive description of the special education program in the charter petition, in accordance with Education Code section 47605(b). During any time in which VHGA operates as a school of the district for special education purposes (pursuant to Education Code 47641(b)), the specific manner in which special education and related services will be provided and funded shall be set forth in a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"), delineating the respective responsibilities of VHGA and the OCDE. The language that follows is not meant to preclude alternative arrangements between the OCDE and VHGA as agreed upon in the MOU.

### ***SELPA AFFILIATION***

VHGA is an independent Local Education Agency (LEA) member in the El Dorado Charter SELPA for purposes of special education, pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a). A change in LEA status or SELPA membership shall not require a material revision of this charter.

As an independent LEA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a), VHGA will assume full responsibility for providing special education and related services to eligible charter school students, in accordance with state and federal law.

VHGA will follow policies and procedures of the El Dorado SELPA and shall utilize SELPA forms and information systems necessary to identify and serve students who qualify for special education. VHGA agrees to collaborate with the SELPA to respond to inquiries and request and provide access to information and records, as needed, and shall be responsible for maintaining confidentiality of student records.

### ***CHILD FIND***

VHGA understands its responsibility to ensure that all children with disabilities who need special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated, regardless of the severity of the disability. No assessment or evaluation will be used for admission purposes.

As noted above, VHGA will implement a multi-tiered instructional and support framework (MTSS), prior to referring a child for an evaluation under IDEA. However, VHGA shall ensure that child find identification occurs in a timely manner and that no procedures or practices result in delaying or denying this identification. A parent/guardian or VHGA staff member may request an initial evaluation at any time to determine if the child is a child with a disability, regardless of whether the child has participated in an MTSS framework. Special education referrals shall be made only after general education supports and interventions have been considered and provided, as appropriate. If the Student Study Team finds that the pre-intervention plan is not sufficient to meet the student's needs, they will recommend that student for a formal special education assessment. VHGA may also choose to refer a student for services through the provisions of a Section 504 Plan, if appropriate.

As an independent LEA for special education purposes, VHGA shall be solely responsible for compliance with state and federal Child Find requirements. VHGA shall implement policies and procedures of the SELPA in which it is a member to ensure timely identification and referral of students suspected of having a disability.

### ***REFERRAL FOR ASSESSMENT***

The term "assessments" shall have the same meaning as the term "evaluation" in the IDEA, as provided in Section 1414, Title 20 of the United States Code. VHGA's internal

method for referral for assessment will be the Student Success Team (SST). Parents/guardians will be informed that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them.

As an independent LEA for special education purposes, in the event that VHGA receives a written request for evaluation, it will be solely responsible for working with the parent/guardian to address the request and shall follow SELPA policies, procedures, and timelines. VHGA shall respond to a written request for assessment within 15 days.

If VHGA concludes that an assessment is appropriate, the parent/guardian will receive a written Assessment Plan within 15 days. The parent will be given at least 15 days to provide written consent to the Assessment Plan. Assessments will be done only upon receipt of written parent/guardian permission. The assessment will be completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's/guardian's written consent for assessment.

### **ASSESSMENT**

As an LEA for special education, VHGA shall be solely responsible for conducting special education assessments deemed necessary and appropriate by VHGA. The Principal will be responsible for gathering all pertinent information and arranging for assessments to be conducted in all areas of suspected disability.

Information gathered will be used as tools to determine the student's disability, eligibility for services, and determining the nature and extent of required services. The types of assessments that may be used for determining eligibility for specialized instruction and services will include, but not limited to:

- Individual testing;
- Teacher observations;
- Interviews;
- Review of school records, reports, and work samples; and
- Parent input.

VHGA will follow the following assessment guidelines. If a conflict with SELPA policies and procedures exists, then SELPA policies and procedures will govern.

- Parents or guardians of any student referred for assessment must give their written consent for the school to administer the assessment;
- The assessment will be completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment;
- The student must be evaluated in all areas related to his/her suspected disability;
- Assessments must be conducted by a person with knowledge of the student's suspected disability, and administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel and in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments. Individually administered tests of intellectual or emotional functioning must be administered by a credentialed school psychologist;

- Assessments will be selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory;
- Assessments will be delivered in the student's primary language, and a qualified interpreter will be provided if needed;
- Assessment tools must be used for purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable; and
- Assessments will be adapted as necessary for students with impaired sensory, physical or speaking skills; and
- A multidisciplinary team will be assembled to assess the student, including a teacher knowledgeable in the disability.

Upon completion of the assessment, an IEP team will be assembled to review the results of the assessment and determine the student's eligibility for special education. VHGA will be responsible for scheduling, coordinating and facilitating the IEP meeting. Educators qualified to interpret test results will present the assessment data at the IEP meeting. Parents/guardians will be provided with written notice of the IEP meeting, and the meeting will be held at a mutually agreeable time and place.

### ***DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF IEP***

Every student who is assessed for special education will have an IEP that documents assessment results and eligibility determination for special education services.

As an LEA for special education, VHGA shall be solely responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the IEP and school site implementation are maintained. VHGA will provide modifications and accommodations outlined within each individual's IEP and serve each student in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Each student who has an IEP will have an IEP team that oversees the IEP Development, implementation and progress of the student. All decisions concerning the special education programs and services to be provided to a student with a disability are to be made by the IEP team. The IEP team will include all of the following members:

- The parent or guardian of the student for whom the IEP was developed;
- The Student, if appropriate
- The Principal;
- At least one special education teacher;
- A General Education teacher who is familiar with the curriculum appropriate to that student, if the student is, or may be, participating in the general education environment;
- A SELPA Special Education Representative, if appropriate;
- If the child was recently assessed, the individual who conducted the assessment or who is qualified to interpret the assessment results;
- Others familiar with the student may be invited as needed.

VHGA will provide an interpreter if necessary to ensure that all parents and/or guardians understand and can participate in the IEP process. If a parent cannot attend the IEP

meeting, the school will ensure his/her participation using other methods, such as conferencing by telephone or meeting at the parent's home.

A copy of the IEP will be given to the parent/guardian in accordance with state and federal laws. Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, the IEP will be implemented by VHGA. The IEP will include all required components and be written on SELPA forms.

The student's IEP will include the following:

- A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance;
- The rationale for placement decisions, including cogent and responsive explanations for the recommendations;
- The services the student will receive and the means for delivering those services;
- A description of when services will begin, how often the student will receive them, who will provide them, and where they will be delivered;
- Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives focusing on the student's current level of performance and appropriately ambitious for his/her circumstances; The goals and objectives will also be linguistically appropriate, as per Ed Code Section 56345(b).
- A description of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and monitored and when reports will be provided;
- Accommodations necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the pupil on state and district assessments;
- For students 16 years of age and older, measurable postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment and independent living skills, along with transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals
- The IEP shall be reasonably calculated to enable the child to make progress appropriate in light of his/her circumstances.

IEP meetings will be held according to the following schedule:

- Yearly to review the student's progress and make any necessary changes;
- Every three years to review the results of a mandatory comprehensive reevaluation of the student's progress;
- After the student has received a formal assessment or reassessment;
- When a parent or teacher feels that the student has demonstrated significant educational growth or a lack of anticipated progress (consistent with state and federal law, IEP meetings will be held within 30 days of a parent's request);
- When an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is required at the appropriate age;
- When VHGA seeks to suspend or remove the student for a period of 10 days or more for the same behavior, in order to determine if the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his/her disability.

### ***IEP REVIEW***

The IEP team will formally review the student's IEP at least once a year to determine how the IEP is meeting his/her needs. In accordance with IDEA regulations, the IEP team will also conduct a formal review of the IEP once every three years, in which the student is reassessed and the IEP is reviewed as part of an overall comprehensive reevaluation of the student's progress.

As an LEA for special education, VHGA shall be responsible for conducting IEP reviews and determining necessary supports, services, placements, in accordance with SELPA policies and all applicable laws.

Unless otherwise specified on the student's IEP, parents will be informed three times per year (which is the same frequency as progress is reported to all students and parents) of the student's progress toward meeting annual goals and whether the student is expected to meet his/her annual goals. The Goals and Objectives section of the IEP will be an attachment to the general progress report. This will serve to document the method by which the student's progress toward achieving the annual goal is measured, the student's progress during the relevant period, the extent to which it is anticipated the student will achieve the annual goal prior to the next annual review, and where needed, the reasons the student did not meet the goal.

If a parent/guardian or faculty member feels the student's educational needs are not being met, they may request a reassessment or a review of the IEP by the IEP team at any time during the year via written notice to the school. Once the request is received, VHGA will have thirty days, not including school vacations greater than five days, to hold the IEP meeting.

### ***SPECIAL EDUCATION STRATEGIES FOR INSTRUCTION AND SERVICES***

As an independent LEA for special education purposes, VHGA will offer a comprehensive inclusion program that includes co-teaching, individualized instruction with differentiation for all learners, and the myriad other programmatic aspects detailed above that are designed to support diverse learners' needs, including the needs of students with disabilities. Each student's IEP requires different kinds of accommodations and modifications for instruction and services; therefore, the educational strategies of the IEP will be built around the student's needs. If a student's IEP team determines that the student requires placement outside of a general education classroom, VHGA will provide the necessary placement and/or services. The instruction outlined in each student's IEP will be delivered by personnel qualified to do so.

### ***INTERIM AND INITIAL PLACEMENTS OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS***

VHGA shall comply with Education Code Section 56325 with regard to students transferring into the Charter School within the academic school year.

As an independent LEA for special education purposes, VHGA shall provide transferring students with free and appropriate public education, including services comparable to those listed in the existing IEP.

For students transferring to the VHGA from another school within the same SELPA, VHGA, pursuant to Education Code Section 56325(a)(2), shall continue to provide services comparable to those described in the existing approved IEP, unless parents/guardians and VHGA agree to develop and implement a new IEP.

For students transferring to the VHGA from another school within a different SELPA, VHGA, pursuant to Education Code Section 56325(a)(1), shall continue to provide services comparable to those described in the existing approved IEP for a period of up to 30 days, by which time VHGA shall adopt the previous IEP or, in consultation with parents/guardians, develop and implement a new IEP that is consistent with federal and state law.

For students transferring to VHGA from a school outside of California, VHGA shall provide the student with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in their existing IEP, until VHGA conducts an assessment pursuant to Section 1414 of Title 20 of the United States Code, if determined to be necessary by VHGA, and develops a new IEP, if appropriate, in accordance with federal and state law.

### **STAFFING**

As an LEA for special education purposes, it will assume responsibility for special education staffing and service delivery. VHGA will be responsible for hiring, training, and/or contracting with the staff necessary to provide special education services to its students. VHGA shall ensure that all special education staff hired or contracted by VHGA is qualified to provide services in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and SELPA policies.

VHGA employs one special education teacher with specialization in mild/moderate disabilities. In partnership with the Principal, this teacher will ensure the implementation of Individualized Education Plans and compliance with all special education policy, monitoring, and compliance procedures. As the school grows, VHGA will continue to employ an appropriate mix of special education teachers as appropriate for the student population it serves as dictated by the needs indicated on student IEPs.

It will be the duty of the Principal to oversee and ensure the following:

- Ensure that all aspects of the IEP are followed;
- Arrange for the teacher of the student to attend the team meetings;
- Communicate with parents about progress made toward attaining the goals stated on the student's IEP, and inform them of due process procedures and rights;

- Consult quarterly with the Principal to ensure that the objectives and goals of students with IEP's are being met;
- Complete the requisite paperwork, updating and filing of necessary information for initial referrals, triennial evaluations, ongoing monitoring of student progress, and appropriate provision of any/all test modifications as stipulated in the IEP;
- Maintain a central file with all special education evaluation material and IEP's in accordance with FERPA and IDEA guidelines; and
- Provide a report of student progress on the same schedule as students in general education)

All teaching staff at VHGA will also be involved in assuring that all IEPs and 504 plans are properly implemented.

### ***PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CHARTER SCHOOL STAFF***

VHGA administrators, general and special education teaching staff, as well as other appropriate faculty and staff members will attend professional development and/or training meetings necessary to comply with state and federal special education laws, including training sponsored by the OCDE and/or SELPA.

As an independent LEA for special education, VHGA shall seek professional development opportunities for its staff through potential trainings facilitated by the OCDE, SELPA, colleges and universities, and private companies or agencies to ensure compliance with state and federal special education laws as well as implementation of best practices for students with disabilities.

### ***REPORTING***

VHGA, in collaboration with OCDE or SELPA where appropriate, will collect and maintain the following information on disabled students as required by IDEA:

- A calculation of all school-age students with disabilities being provided special education services by age, grade, category of disability and the number of students with disabilities who are English Language Learners;
- The number of students provided with test modifications and the types and the number of students exempted from Statewide assessments;
- The settings in which students with disabilities receive their services, specifically including the portion of the school day they receive services with non-disabled peers and time away from the regular classroom;
- The number of students with disabilities suspended "in-school" and out of school, organized by disability and length of suspensions; and
- The basis of exit from VHGA of students with disabilities (i.e., attainment of diploma and type, declassified, moved, etc.).

All necessary procedures and practices to ensure confidentiality and accurate/timely reporting will be the responsibility of the Principal. The Principal will ensure that a central file with all special education evaluation material and IEP's is maintained and



that this file is locked and confidential, in accordance with IDEA guidelines. The Principal will oversee access to these records, and will be responsible for ensuring that all providers responsible for the implementation of a student's IEP will have access to a copy of the IEP and will be informed of their specific responsibilities in implementing the IEP.

### ***PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS***

Parents or guardians of students with IEP's at VHGA must give written consent for the evaluation and placement of their child, be included in the decision-making process when change in placement is under consideration, and be invited, along with teachers, to conferences and meetings to develop their child's IEP.

The school will provide the parent with a written Notice of Procedural Safeguards, which will include information on the procedure to initiate both formal and informal dispute resolutions, at least once per year. VHGA will utilize the Notice of Procedural Safeguards used by the OCDE or SELPA in which it is a member.

As an LEA for special education purposes, concerns or disagreements raised by parents/guardians will be acknowledged by the school within five days. VHGA will work to arrange a meeting with the parents/guardians to seek resolution of the disagreement. If a disagreement or concern persists, parents or guardians have the right to initiate a due process hearing to challenge a decision regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of their child.

### ***DISPUTE RESOLUTION***

As an LEA for special education purposes, VHGA acknowledges its responsibility to resolve disputes or defend due process complaints arising as a result of VHGA's alleged failure to provide FAPE to students enrolled in the charter school. VHGA may also initiate a due process hearing or request for mediation with respect to a student enrolled in VHGA if it determines such action is legally necessary or advisable.

### ***COMPLAINT PROCEDURES***

Parents or guardians also have the right to file a complaint with OCDE and/or California State Department of Education if they believe that the school has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing special education.

### ***SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT***

VHGA recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of VHGA. Any student, who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a

major life activity including but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodation by the school.

VHGA shall be solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. All facilities of the VHGA shall be accessible for all students with disabilities in accordance with the ADA.

VHGA will designate one employee to coordinate the school's compliance with its responsibilities under Section 504. A 504 team will be assembled by the Principal or Principal-designated 504 Coordinator and shall include the parent/guardian, the student, a qualified staff member, and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student's existing records; including academic, social and behavioral records, and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate.

If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team who will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

- Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel.
- Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligent quotient.
- Tests are selected and administered to ensure that when a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

The final determination of whether the student is eligible for services under Section 504 must be made by the 504 team. Written notice of the eligibility determination will be provided to the parent or guardian of the student in their primary language, along with notice of the procedural safeguards available to them. If during the evaluation, the 504 team obtains information indicating possible eligibility of the student for special education per the IDEA, a referral for assessment under the IDEA will be made by the 504 team.

If the student is found by the 504 team to qualify for services and supports under Section 504, the 504 team shall be responsible for determining what, if any, accommodations or services are needed to ensure that the student receives the free and appropriate public education ("FAPE"). In developing the 504 Plan, the 504 team

shall consider all relevant information utilized during the evaluation of the student, drawing upon a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, assessments conducted by the School's professional staff.

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program accommodations, modifications or services that may be necessary.

All 504 team participants, parents, guardians, teachers and any other participants in the student's education, including substitutes and tutors, must have a copy of each student's 504 Plan. The Principal will ensure that teachers include 504 Plans with lesson plans for short-term substitutes and that he/she review the 504 Plan with a long-term substitute. A copy of the 504 Plan shall be maintained in the student's file. Each student's 504 Plan will be reviewed at least once per year to determine the appropriateness of the Plan, needed modifications to the plan, and continued eligibility.

### **STUDENTS IN OTHER SUBGROUPS**

VHGA offers a variety of support for students with extraordinary needs, such as foster youth and homeless students. The Principal serves as the designee for foster and homeless youth and monitor their performance and progress. Our extensive intervention program provides several levels of guidance depending on the need of the student, including counseling, and referrals to outside resources.

VHGA identifies homeless youth through initial enrollment forms, as well as drops in grades, hunger, fatigue and other signs of stress. If a parent or student indicates they are living in a situation that would qualify as homeless the school informs them of their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act. VHGA adheres to the McKinney-Vento Act and provides all required supports to its homeless youth.

VHGA screens for foster youth via possible visits from social services; non-parent enrolling student in school; home arrangements (group home) and self-identification. As needed, foster youth can be referred to the SST process to determine the individual supports and interventions needed to help them succeed in their classes. Our foster youth are also provided counseling services or referred to free or reduced cost mental health clinics if signs of emotional concerns present themselves.

As detailed above, our SST process and teacher training ensures that all students with special needs are promptly identified and provided the supports they need, including referrals for students and their families to outside support organizations.

Students in all subgroups are monitored through performance on state assessments, internal benchmark exams, and grades. Continued support is provided to students based on their performance on each indicator.

### **"A TYPICAL DAY"**

The following provides an example of what a day in the life at Vista Heritage Global Academy might look and feel like for a student. Schools are dynamic, human-centered

organizations and, while schedules and basic routines will have consistency, no two days will look exactly alike. The following description strives to highlight unique features of a VHGA day, but is solely demonstrative. Times and the actual bell schedule has been manipulated to showcase innovative programs, approaches, and signature practices.

Miguel, a sixth-grade student, gets off the new Santa Ana trolley with his mother and little sister at the front of the school. They walk to the front of the school where his mom drops him off and she continues on to drop off his little sister at Vista Condor Global Academy next door. Although he knows he is now in middle school and expected to be more independent, he is secretly happy to be immediately greeted by Dr. Felch, the principal.

“Good morning, Dr. Felch,” he shyly says to him and in return receives a big, “Miguel! Good Morning! It’s great to see you. How are you enjoying the year so far?” Miguel tells him that it’s been really good and quickly walks through the front doors and into the main entrance, where he gets greeting again by Ms. Limon, as he passes her at the front desk. He looks up and sees the giant mural of the Eagle and the Condor and remembers the assembly they had where his principal reminded them about what their school mascot symbolizes. Right then, his favorite teacher, Ms. Huff sees him looking at the mural and asks him if he remembers what it means.

“Yes, Miss,” but Miss Huff pushes him to tell the story to him.

A little embarrassed, but secretly beaming with pride that his teacher is giving him the opportunity to tell her what he knows, Miguel tells her, “The eagle is an ancient symbol of our ancestors that represents the importance of the mind, intellect, progress, and technology and reminds us that we need to strive hard to get a good education.” Miguel then points to the condor and tells his teacher that the condor is also an important symbol that teaches us that the heart is as important as the mind and that taking care of the environment is as important as technological progress and that working to be both the eagle and condor is needed if we want to be good global citizens. Miguel’s sister goes to Vista Condor Global Academy and her uniform has the condor on it, but now that he is in 6<sup>th</sup> grade his has the Eagle.

Miguel loves the days when the kids from the middle school get to go to the elementary school and be a reading buddy with them. Last year he got to have a reading buddy, but this year he gets to be the buddy. He looks down at his own uniform and sees the eagle and thinks, “It’s just like my principal and teacher tell me... when the condor and eagle fly together, that’s when we can transform the world.” Miguel wants to make his teacher and parents proud and transform the world one day. That thought reminds him that they are working on a project in his science class where they are learning about a little girl with muscular dystrophy and that today they are going to use the computers to design a boot to help her walk better. Miguel is excited really likes the design team he is working with and excited about the project.

Miguel has barely gotten through the door yet, but he is excited and beaming with pride to be at Vista Heritage Global Academy.

Miguel is surprised when he sees his mother again and a bit embarrassed when she leans down and kisses him on the forehead. “*Mijo*,” she says, “Today, I get to have coffee with the principal and other parents this morning. Your principal is going to tell us all about the great things your school is doing and then we have committee meetings. But I will see you later, today I get to volunteer in your class.”

Miguel quickly kisses his mom again, but is happy to leave her and go have breakfast with his friends before the first class starts. Pretty soon, Miguel hears the bell and heads to his first class.

### Language Arts

Ms. Huff is standing at the door greeting each student as they come into the room. Miguel shakes his teacher’s hand and says, “Good morning, Ms. Huff, It’s a great day for learning!” Ms. Huff laughs because Miguel beat her to her own daily greeting. He knows the routine, but she directs all the students to the front of the room to find their place next to their literacy partners. She reminds them to have their writing journal with them and ready to go, but that they will start with a Kagan Community builder.

Miguel walks into his advisory class and puts his backpack away. He gets his Chrome book off the cart and sits at his desk next to the other three students on his class team. He looks at his team table cards and remembers to greet his shoulder and face partner with a warm welcome and a compliment. No sooner do they finish their greetings than Ms. Huff starts the class off with a Kagan community building activity. They have been learning about writing a personal narrative and the last few weeks they have focused on their family genealogy, heritage, and stories, and it doesn’t surprise Miguel that the activity involves sharing things he loves about his family. The computer-generated Kagan spinner on the screen in front of the class stops on two. Miguel feels disappointed he doesn’t get to start, but congratulates his shoulder partner. Each one of his team members gets to share, and they remember to compliment each other after they share. “I love the story about your *abuela* and how she got to our country, Miguel,” his partner tells him, and Miguel beams with pride—not for the first time this morning, and it’s not even 8:15 yet.

After the community builder Miguel grabs his writer’s journal and heads to the mini lesson area. He never thought of himself as a good writer before, but he now thinks that he might want to be an author when he grows up. He can’t wait to see what his teacher is going to do today in Writer’s Workshop.

Ms. Huff gets right to the point, “Writers, remember yesterday when we talked about making our writing more exciting for the reader? Today I want to show you one way to do that. One thing that great writers do to engage their readers is to surprise them by making inanimate objects or non-human characters—remember inanimate is

something that is not living like a rock or a mountain, and non-human characters are something that is not human, like a dog or animal—act like a human.

When an author does this, we call it personification. Today, I'm going to show you how to use personification to make the stories you are working on more exciting for your readers." Ms. Huff knows how important modeling is and has planned for it and says, "Let me show you some examples of how published authors have done it."

Ms. Huff pulls out three books, and says, "Let's see how some of our favorite published authors use personification in their writing to engage us as readers. The first one is *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein, and Miguel remembers when his teacher read that to them during their unit on Poetry. She picks out a small passage and reads it to the class and shows how the author gives the tree human attributes and feelings. She says, "This makes me love the tree so much." She explains how personification helps the reader feel sad and happy for the tree by the end of the story. She shares two more examples. This only takes a few minutes, and then she clearly repeats the day's objective, "So, remember authors...Great writers sometimes use personification to engage and excite their readers. Watch me now, as I try to use personification in the story I am writing."

Ms. Huff sits before her story, which she has projected onto the interactive touch screen, and starts to read, "The little boy was racing all around the woods chasing butterflies until he got so tired he had to sit on an old tree stump."

"Hmmm," Ms. Huff thinks out loud to herself, I wonder what would happen if the tree stump could talk." She starts to write, "As the winded boy sat..." She crosses out "sat" and says, "He's tired from running around, so he is really going to plop down." She writes instead, "plunked down hard on the stump." She continues, "The little boy heard someone scream "Ouch, that hurt!" The little boy looked around the woods, but didn't see anybody. "Oh my gosh, you are so heavy. At least you could have asked for my permission." This time the boy heard the voice come from under him, down by his feet and he jumped so high, he nearly hit his head on the branch of a nearby tree."

The whole class laughs, and so does Ms. Huff. But, she quickly turns back to the lesson, "Do you see how I gave the tree stump a voice and made it react like a human? I used personification when I did that. I think it's time for you to give personification a try. Take out your stories and, for the next 60 seconds, I want you to look for inanimate objects in your stories where you might use personification to excite and engage your reader."

Right away, Miguel and his partner open their journals and search for inanimate objects in their stories. Miguel found two and can't wait to share. Another bell goes off and the teacher asks if anyone needs more time. She tells them to use one finger for a little more time, two for a lot, or just raise their whole hand if they are ready. Everyone is ready.

A bell the goes off. “Ok, you and your partner will use the *Kagan Rally Robin* structure to share all of your ideas. Don’t forget, you share one idea and then your partner shares one until you don’t have any more ideas left or the timer goes off. If you finish before the timer, please use the rest of the time to ask your partner probing questions.

She spins the partner button and says, “Partner A begins.”

The class is suddenly abuzz with conversation and sharing. Miguel and his partner share all their ideas, but the bell hasn’t gone off. Miguel says to his partner, “I really like your idea of using personification with your family car! What do you think your car might say or do to make it seem like a person?” The partners are deep in conversation when the buzzer goes off, and they look up at Ms. Huff. Ms. Huff had been going from pair to pair during the time, and says, “I really love how so many of you found great places to use personification in your writing!” She goes on to share a few examples that she heard.

“Please turn to your partners and thank them for sharing their thoughts and ideas with you.” Once this lesson concludes, Ms. Huff says, “So remember, authors, great writers can use personification in their stories to engage the reader and make their writing exciting and interesting. How many of you will try to use personification in your stories today?” Hands fly up. It has been 12 minutes since the lesson began, and the class is ready for to get to work.

“Let’s go back to our desks and work on your stories. I’m going to set the timer for 30 minutes today. You are really building up you writer’s stamina, and I’m so proud of all of your efforts.”

While the students work on their stories, Ms. Huff calls a small group to work with her. She had read the writing journals over the weekend and noticed a small group was still struggling with keeping a narrative focused. She has a small lesson to help them along. Later, she calls Miguel up for a one-on-one conference and works with him on breaking his story into paragraphs by using good transitional sentences at the end and beginning of each paragraph to keep the reader focused and the narrative sharp, but soon the five-minute transition bell rings.

It is time to end Writers Workshop and move on to Readers Workshop. The students have been working for an extended time and Ms. Huff gathers the class for a quick community builder. She picks a Kagan strategy that gets the kids moving a bit, as they have been sitting and reading for 30 minutes straight. After the two-minute activity, she tells them it is time for Readers Workshop to begin.

Ms. Huff doesn’t spend a lot of time at the front of the class. She is usually walking around or working with small groups or one to one with a student, but she always starts workshop at her teaching station for a mini lesson. She tells the class to grab the book they are reading and come to the carpet. Miguel loves Readers Workshop. It is just like Writers Workshop, but he gets lots of time to read his new favorite book. The last unit

was on non-fiction, but they are working on fiction to go along with their unit on narrative writing. Ms. Huff teaches a mini lesson about inference and uses lots of examples from her own book. Soon, the class has practiced, and they get to read. While the class reads their books silently, Miguel is asked to join the T.A. at her teaching station. She says that she thinks he has made so much progress and that he might need to re-think his current level. She has him read a passage from the Fountas and Pinnell leveled reading inventory and then another. He is so excited to learn that he has jumped three levels from Q to T. The T.A. points out that he is almost at a high school reading level asks him if he would like to pick out a T level book. He does, but he wants to finish the book he is reading. She quickly replies, "Oh, of course, I can never leave a book when I love it. Sometimes, I'm even sad when I finish it, because I love the characters so much. Has that ever happened to you?" "Oh yes, after reading the last Harry Potter book, I was so sad that I wanted to start from the first book all over again!" Miguel goes to the leveled library to pick a book, but he is excited to go onto his Chrome book and see all the other T level books he might choose from, too.

Again the bell rings sooner than Miguel could imagine. He loves the block schedule and is always surprised that two hours can fly by that fast.

#### Recess/Nutrition

The T.A. walks the class out to the yard. Miguel is excited because he has been playing soccer with his friends, but no sooner do they start than his friend says something mean and they start to argue. Soon, a crowd is starting to gather, but quickly Coach G is there and gently asks Miguel and the other boy to come over to the Way of Council bench. He reminds them about their peace pledge and asks them to use the Peace Talk Protocol. When they are ready, they can go back and play. Miguel and his partner look up at the plaque. Coach G helps them to read it together:

#### Sit face to face

Share: This is what happened, this is what I wanted to happen, this is how I can make things better

Speak and listen from the heart

Use a talking piece

The boys go through the protocol, and within a few minutes are laughing. There is still time to play soccer, and they race off together. Soon the bell rings and Miguel heads off with his friends to math.

#### Math

Miguel knows the routines of Math class like the back of his hand. Upon being greeted by his teacher Ms. Sotero, he joins the other students at his assigned table, as they all retrieve their assigned Chrome books and log in to Google classroom. There he finds his Math Goals Tracker form. On this form he reviews the work he accomplished during the last class. He reminds himself that he was in the middle of practicing translating the information included in word problems into an appropriate equation that Ms. Sotero had taught him and his group at the teacher's table.



Miguel understands that he still needs to practice this skill today, because on Monday he did not reach his goal: I will select the best equation to solve a problem, based on the information contained in the word problem in at least 4 out of 5 tries. Shaking his head, Miguel remembers how he struggled on Monday. He reassures himself by recalling what Ms. Sotero said to him then, when she saw his scrunched up face. “Remember, Miguel, what I always say. Fail early and fail often. As long as you keep your Growth Mindset, you will get better. Don’t give up on yourself. I’m here when you need my help.” Smiling with confidence, Miguel decides he will continue to work on the same goal. He is not going to give up on himself.

“What’s your daily goal, Miguel?” asks Anahi, his elbow partner.

“I’m still going to practice word problems,” he responds. He glances at Anahi’s tracker and sees that she has a completely different goal. Anahi will be using Khan Academy for independent practice on inequalities. Miguel practiced his inequalities last week, and feels the pride that comes from accomplishing a goal one sets for oneself. He submits his daily goal tracker online, and opens the application Edulastic (an online assessment platform) and finds the Word Problem practice that Ms. Sotero has uploaded.

Just as he is about to begin, Ms. Sotero calls the class to attention. “By now, you all should have submitted your daily goals...Anahi, it looks like I still don’t have yours.” Miguel notices Anahi quickly hit a button on her keyboard. Soon after Ms. Sotero says, “Ahh, there we go. Thank you Anahi, my friend.”

“I noticed on Monday that a few of you still had some questions about how to pick the proper equation for word problems. So today I will start by meeting with you at the Teacher’s Table. So can I see Eduardo, Miguel, Daniella, Hector and Estrella up here with me. In the second rotation I would like to see Angel, Ashley, Raymond, and Sissi at the teacher’s table, and we will review ratios, okay? Raise your hand if you would like to begin with Independent Practice.” Miguel sees the hands of seven classmates go up in the air. “Great. You all start the rotation at the back tables. Who is ready for an assessment?” Only two hands go up. “Okay, Jesse and Maribel, do you know what standards you are assessing?” They nod in the affirmative. “Okay, all the assessments are already in Edulastic listed by standards. Take your time. I suppose the rest of you are looking to begin with peer study partners?” Many head nods. “Ok then, get to it.”

The classroom explodes with movement as students pack and stack their belongings and move to the appropriate table. The students in the back at the independent practice table pop earbuds in and begin intently watching the Kahn Academy videos their teacher had linked to their accounts. Other students paired off, and began to hold quiet “six inch voice” conversations about their Math assignments. Jesse and Maribel transitioned to the assessment corner. Miguel was impressed as he looked at Jesse, who had an eager and determined look on his face. Miguel could remember a time where Jesse hated Math class, and would spend most of his time misbehaving or checking his cell phone. However, ever since joining Ms. Sotero’s class, with her way of

teaching Jesse has changed completely. It seems to Miguel that Jesse actually enjoys Math class.

Miguel knows why. In the past, the entire class had to sit quietly while the teacher would speed through practice problems on the board, assign the same practice problems for homework, and give the same exam to everyone on Friday. Now, in Ms. Sotero's class, students are given the choice to work on the things that they want and need to work on. No longer is the Math lesson one-size-fits-all. Ms. Sotero meets every day with small groups of students and teaches them the standards they still have to Master. Miguel finds it much more exciting and fun because every day, he knows he is learning exactly what he needs to know, and he is ready to learn it, and eager to demonstrate when he masters a new idea.

Ms. Sotero's lesson reminds him of lessons he has learned all through elementary school, except now he only learns what HE needs to learn and he learns it small groups. Ms. Sotero is easily able to understand exactly what confuses him, and provides him with instruction that is best for him. He loves it. The quiet energy in the room shows!

#### Lunch

Miguel loves his classroom, but maybe not as much as lunch. The cafeteria always has such great food, and he is proud that his school serves a "homemade" meal every day that is healthy and good! After they eat, they all go to the auditorium and play. There are no problems today, and that is good, because the last few days some kids in his class were pretty harsh to each other and one girl even cried. Miguel's advisory teacher said they were going to have a council about some of the events this week. Miguel thought that was a good idea too. Too soon, the bell rings, and it is time for his science class.

#### Science and Technology

Miguel never thought about being a scientist before, but Mr. Baily makes learning so exciting that he now thinks he will study science in college. Today is really special, too, because his mom is a special science helper. She does this every Tuesday, which helps the teacher with all the set up needed for the Project Lead The Way units. Miguel can tell how much his teacher likes his mom, and this makes him love his teacher even more.

Miguel's class is learning about the effects that Muscular Dystrophy can have on a person's life. They started the unit learning about a girl with the disease and then spent time learning all about it. One of the things they learned is that the disease can affect fine motor skills and even how a person walks because of the damage to the muscles. The little girl they learned about was affected in that way and walks on the balls of her feet. The teacher has tasked them with designing a boot that can help her rehabilitate her muscles and train her to walk normally again.

Miguel and his team introduce the design problem when faced with the challenge of her rehabilitation. Even though the girl they are working for is fictional, Miguel remembers

how his teacher showed them real life examples when they went on a field trip to Children's Hospital and got to talk to real doctors and researchers. Mr. Baily always reminds the class that one of Vista's main global outcomes is for students to take action in the world with their learning. Miguel loves that the project might actually help someone with this problem.

They start the period by presenting their ideas and Miguel thinks his team's drawings and ideas were some of the best solutions in the class, but he also likes a lot of the other ideas. Soon, they build their prototypes and test them. The tests are fun, but Miguel has to think really hard as his teacher pushes his team to consider failure points of data to identify aspects of the design solution that can be improved. He knows this part of science is important, and he wants to help his team, because next week they are going to present their solutions and suggestions for improvement to their classmates and then to their sister school classmates via Skype at the American School in Guatemala City. Their sister school friends told them that one of their classmates uses crutches because of the disease and that makes their designs have even more relevance and meaning. Miguel hopes that their solutions can help their friends in Guatemala. Even though presenting is hard, Miguel likes getting feedback, because, as a global citizen, he knows that understanding different perspectives is important. He also loves science because it helps him design real solutions for real- world problems.

#### Advisory

Miguel can't believe the day is almost over and that they are already at their advisory class. When Miguel gets to the class, the furniture has been rearranged. The desks are against the wall, and the chairs are in a circle. In the middle of the circle is the council table. It is covered in a beautiful tablecloth. It is the one his mother brought back from Guatemala. Miguel beams with pride that his teacher loved her gift. The low table is covered with a few flowers in a vase, the dedication bowl, and talking pieces the class has brought in to share.

Everyone sits quietly in the circle, and Ms. Mackie asks if anyone would like to make a dedication. A few students make dedications by walking up and dropping a stone into the bowl; as they do, they dedicate the Council to their moms. Miguel is a little nervous, but remembers how much he misses his family dog that recently passed. He quietly walks up, drops a stone into the dedication bowl, and says, "I dedicate this to my dog that died this year." As Miguel walks back to his seat, the students and Ms. Mackie raise their hands and wiggle their fingers in silent support.

Ms. Mackie reminds them that in Council they are to speak from the heart, listen from the heart, be spontaneous and not worry about how good their story might be, and to be lean so everyone in the circle can say what is in their heart.

Ms. Mackie starts by talking about what happened this week during lunch and recess breaks. She says that being mean to each other is sometimes bullying or can lead to bullying if we don't think about how our actions can affect others.

She then tells the class about a time when she was bullied when she was in middle school and how it made her feel. After her framing story, she says to the circle, “So today, fellow global citizens, tell the circle a story of a time when you were bullied and how it made you feel. But, maybe, if you are feeling brave, you can tell a story of a time when you treated someone else not very nicely or bullied someone and how that made you feel.”

For the next 30 minutes the talking piece is passed. Miguel remembers what happened at recess and shares that story. Some kids are brave and tell how about when they were a bully, and how it made them feel bad inside. Council winds down with a witness round, in which students can witness something that touched them during the circle and then a closing. Sometimes Councils are fun, but today it was serious. Miguel decides he is going to try really hard not to be a bully, as he realized that his classmates feel the same thing he does when he gets bullied. The Council is over and Ms. Mackie has the class help put the furniture back and ready for the next day.

End of the day

Miguel can't believe how fast the day went. It seems like he was just eating breakfast. In fact, he thinks he might have been in FLOW today. His teacher always tells him that FLOW is the best part of learning and that you know you are in flow when you are thinking hard, having fun, and forget about everything else except what you are doing. Miguel is sure he was in FLOW today during Writers Workshop and science. He tells Ms. Mackie that he was in FLOW a lot today and thanks her for being his favorite teacher ever. Ms. Mackie thanks Miguel for taking his learning so seriously and thanks his mom for her help. She asks his mom if she is able to use the Learning Management System and lets her know there will be another parent-training coming up soon.

Normally, Miguel would go to the after-school program, but since his mom volunteers on Monday's she takes him home with her. Miguel walks across the parking lot with his mom, and they wait for the trolley to take them home. As the trolley approaches, Miguel takes one last look at the murals of the Condor and the Eagle and reflects on how his day was all about bringing the heart and the mind together to make the world a better place for himself, his family, and even his friends in Guatemala. He is, once again, beaming with pride to be a Vista Heritage student.

## **ELEMENT 2 – MEASURABLE PUPIL OUTCOMES**

*“The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. “Pupil outcomes,” for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school’s educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both schoolwide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47607. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(B).)*

VHGA will meet all statewide content and performance standards and targets. Ed. Code §§ 47605(c)(1), 60605. VHGA will comply with all applicable laws and regulations related to AB 97 (Local Control Funding Formula) and AB 484, and will continue to as they may be amended from time to time, including all requirements pertaining to pupil outcomes.

### **MEASURABLE GOALS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

VHGA pursues the ambitious student outcome goals, as measured by multiple and varied benchmark assessments that are aligned to state and federal standards (including CA CCSS) and reflect proficiency measures required by the new CAASPP assessments, as well as state priorities detailed in California Education Code § 52060(d), as detailed in the chart below.

These student outcomes are directly tied to the goal of providing scholars with a rigorous standards-based program while preparing them to be college and career-ready.

### **MEASURABLE PUPIL OUTCOMES: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE TARGETS ALIGNED TO STATE PRIORITIES**

VHGA will pursue the following school-wide and subgroup outcome goals, based on the state priorities detailed in California Education Code § 52060(d). Student performance and achievement of school-wide, subgroup and individual student progress will be measured by multiple and varied summative and formative assessments that are aligned to state and federal standards (including the new Common Core) and reflect proficiency measures required by the CAASPP, as well as state priorities detailed in California Education Code § 52060(d).

The following chart details the Charter School’s goals as of this petition submission, for all pupils (including statistically significant subgroups) pursuant to California Education Code § 52052, for each of the eight (8) state priorities identified in California Education Code § 52060(d), including specific annual actions the school will take to achieve each of the identified annual goals. We note that as required under the California Education Code, VHGA’s stakeholders will engage in a collaborative process each year to update and prepare an annual Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) as a basis for

prioritizing allocation of funds. The following is intended to be illustrative of the goals and actions we anticipate at this point in time.

| LCFF STATE PRIORITIES  |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
|--|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| GOAL #1  |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| <p><b>CONDITIONS OF LEARNING</b></p> <p><b>All VHGA students will have access to a high-quality education program taught by highly qualified teachers.</b></p>   | <p>Related State Priorities:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">☐ 1</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">☐ 4</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">☐ 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">☐ 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">☐ 5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">☐ 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">☐ 3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">☐ 6</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Local Priorities:</p> <p>☐:</p> <p>☐:</p> | ☐ 1 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 5 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 6 |  |
| ☐ 1  | ☐ 4  | ☐ 7 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| ☐ 2  | ☐ 5  | ☐ 8 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| ☐ 3  | ☐ 6  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Specific Annual Actions to Achieve Goal  |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| <p><b>Priority 1 (Basic Services)</b></p> <p><i>Priority 1 Outcome 1 - Degree to which teachers are appropriately assigned pursuant to Education Code section 44258.9, and fully credentialed in the subject areas and for the pupils they are teaching.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VHGA will hire, supervise, evaluate and retain qualified teaching staff.</li> <li>- VHGA will ensure verification of proper credentials and DoJ clearance prior to start of employment.</li> <li>- VHGA will actively recruit qualified teachers reflecting student ethnic demographics</li> </ul> <p><i>Priority 1 Outcome 2 - Pupils have access to standards-aligned instructional materials pursuant to Education Code section 60119.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VHGA will provide appropriate, standards-aligned (including CA CCSS and the academic content and performance standards) textbooks/curriculum materials.</li> <li>- VHGA will review alignment of instructional materials to standards.</li> <li>- VHGA will maintain an annual inventory of instructional materials and respective purchase of materials.</li> <li>- VHGA budget will be reviewed every year to ensure adequate budget for instructional materials is in place.</li> </ul> <p><i>Priority 1 Outcome 3 - School facilities are maintained in good repair pursuant to Education Code section 17002(d).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VHGA facilities will be maintained and cleaned by custodial staff</li> <li>- VHGA will do annual and monthly facility inspections to screen for safety hazards.</li> <li>- VHGA will utilize Site Inspection Lists and provide daily general cleaning and spot checks by custodial staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Priority 2 (Implementation of State Standards)</b></p> <p><i>Priority 2 Outcome 1 - Implementation of academic content and performance standards and English language development standards adopted by the state board for all pupils, including English learners.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VHGA will participate in ongoing professional development on the implementation of CCSS and new CCSS-aligned assessments.</li> <li>- VHGA will provide CCSS-aligned ELA and math instruction using integrated ELD and designated instructional strategies to all students, including ELs.</li> <li>- VHGA will provide PD to teachers examining CAASPP, Illuminate, and other state and internal assessment scores, into reports and regularly review progress to build on our data driven</li> </ul> |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |

decision making.

**Priority 7 (Course Access)**

Priority 7 Outcome 1 - Pupil enrollment in a broad course of study that includes all of the subject areas described in Education Code section 51210 and subdivisions (a) to (i), inclusive, of Section 51220, as applicable. (Priority 7)

- VHGA will ensure all academic areas will be available to all students, inclusive of all subgroups, and all grades.
- VHGA will provide 1:1 technology (Chromebook/iPads) to ensure access to web resources and curriculum tools.

**Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes**

**Priority 1 Outcome 1:** All teachers will be properly certified and assigned.

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** % of courses and Teachers at VHGA appropriately assigned and with appropriately credentialed personnel.

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | 100%     | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      |

**Priority 1 Outcome 2:** All VHGA students (including all statistically significant subgroups) will have access to standards-aligned materials and technology

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** % of VHGA students who will have sufficient access to standards-aligned instructional materials.

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | 100%     | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      |

**Priority 1 Outcome 3:** VHGA facilities will be maintained and cleaned through a contract with the STEM Prep custodial staff and include daily spot checks and Site Inspection Lists, pursuant to Education Code section 17002(d).

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** % of items on the Site Inspection Lists and daily spot checks that are in compliance/good standing

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | ≥ 90%    | ≥ 90%     | ≥ 90%     | ≥ 90%     | ≥ 90%     | ≥ 90%     |

**Priority 2 Outcome 1:** VHGA will ensure the implementation of academic content and performance standards for all core subjects with 100% math and ELA Common Core Implementation.

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** Purchased textbooks/curriculum; curriculum pacing and lesson plans; teacher observations.

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | 100%     | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      |

**Priority 7 Outcome 1:** All VHGA students, including all significant subgroups, will have access to a broad course of student (English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, Health/PE, visual/performing arts) outlined in the charter petition.

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** % of access to all available programs and services outlined in charter

petition.

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | 100%     | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      |

### LCFF STATE PRIORITIES

#### GOAL #2

#### PUPIL OUTCOMES

**Every VHGA student will have the right to a personalized and individualized education.**

#### Related State Priorities:

- ☐ 1      ☐ 4      ☐ 7
- ☐ 2      ☐ 5      ☐ 8
- ☐ 3      ☐ 6

#### Local Priorities:

- ☐:
- ☐:

#### Specific Annual Actions to Achieve Goal

- *Priority 4 (Pupil Achievement)*
- 
- *Priority 4 Outcome 1 – Performance on standardized tests and overall schoolwide assessments such as the new state dashboard (or whatever comparable metrics are developed to replace API/AYP)*
- *VHGA will provide highly qualified instructional personnel and Resource Specialists to implement high-quality instruction with continuous monitoring by the Principal and central office personnel.*
- *VHGA will provide comprehensive professional development to support student achievement.*
- *VHGA will analyze CAASPP and other state and internal assessment scores at least quarterly to review progress towards annual targets.*
- 
- *Priority 4 Outcome 2 – Share of English learners that become English proficient*
- *See above; plus: VHGA will implement the Vista Public Schools English Learner Master Plan.*
- *VHGA will provide high qualified and experienced teachers with appropriate EL authorization who will continuously monitor instruction and achievement of ELs*
- *VHGA will identify English Learners by proficiency level, ensure ELD instruction is aligned to the new standards, and monitor student progress in program implementation.*
- *VHGA will provide professional development related to EL support, including ELPAC training and re-designation criteria.*
- *VHGA will ensure re-designated ELs will continue to be supported via a multi-tiered system including support for struggling readers.*
- 
- *Priority 4 Outcome 3- English learner reclassification rate*
- *Same as Priority 4 Outcome 2 above, plus:*
- *VHGA budget will be reviewed every year to ensure adequate budget for appropriate EL instructional materials is in place.*
- *VHGA will add additional supports for our EL students through exam preparation, differentiation, teacher coaching, and additional tutoring to meet EL student instructional needs*
- 
- *Priority 8 (Other Pupil Outcomes)*
- *Priority 8 Outcome 1 - VHGA will offer all students, including all subgroups, a rigorous, high-quality STEAM curriculum in partnership with Project Lead the Way (PLTW).*



- VHGA will provide professional development to teachers on integrating STEAM-themed projects and hands-on learning across the curriculum, including training with PLTW.
- VHGA will provide resources, time and materials for all students to engage in meaningful, hands-on learning in STEAM activities via PLTW curriculum and other “best practices” STEAM learning opportunities.
- VHGA will educate its students to be globally competent through its partnership and resources with Asia Society’s International Studies Schools Network. Through this model students will learn to 1) Investigate the World, 2) Recognize different perspectives, 3) Communicate their ideas, and 4) Take Action.

**Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes**

**Priority 4 Outcome 1:** VHGA students, including all significant subgroups, will meet or exceed targets for growth once set by the State on the CAASPP (and comparable assessments for students with special needs) in the areas of ELA and Mathematics.

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** Scale scores and proficiency/growth targets for all students, including all numerically significant student subgroups, in ELA and Math on the CAASPP assessment system based on prior year data.

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline                    | 2020-2021  | 2021-2022  | 2022-2023  | 2023-2024  | 2024-2025  |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | TBD with 2019 CAASPP scores | School-wide and all significant subgroups will meet or exceed annual targets for growth on the CAASPP in ELA and Math. | School-wide and all significant subgroups will meet or exceed annual targets for growth on the CAASPP in ELA and Math. | School-wide and all significant subgroups will meet or exceed annual targets for growth on the CAASPP in ELA and Math. | School-wide and all significant subgroups will meet or exceed annual targets for growth on the CAASPP in ELA and Math. | School-wide and all significant subgroups will meet or exceed annual targets for growth on the CAASPP in ELA and Math. |

**Priority 4 Outcome 2:** EL students will advance at least one level on the ELPAC each year.

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** EL proficiency rates will meet or exceed the rates of nearby comparison schools as demonstrated on ELPAC assessments

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS | Baseline                     | 2020-2021   | 2021-2022   | 2022-2023   | 2023-2024   | 2024-2025   |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| English Learners          | TBD with 2019 ELPAC results. | Percentage of students who achieve one level of growth on the ELPAC each year will meet or exceed rate of | Percentage of students who achieve one level of growth on the ELPAC each year will meet or exceed rate of | Percentage of students who achieve one level of growth on the ELPAC each year will meet or exceed rate of | Percentage of students who achieve one level of growth on the ELPAC each year will meet or exceed rate of | Percentage of students who achieve one level of growth on the ELPAC each year will meet or exceed rate of |

|   |   | <i>nearby comparison on schools.</i>  | <i>nearby comparison on schools.</i>  | <i>nearby comparison on schools.</i>  | <i>nearby comparison on schools.</i>  | <i>nearby comparison on schools.</i>  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Priority 4 Outcome 4:</b> VHGA will ensure EL reclassification rate will meet or exceed the local District's reclassification rate.  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Metric/Method for Measuring:</b> EL reclassification rates   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS   | Baseline                                    | 2020-2021   | 2021-2022   | 2022-2023   | 2023-2024   | 2024-2025   |
| English Learners  | <i>TBD with 2019 reclassification rate.</i> | <i>Percentage of students reclassified each year will meet or exceed local District rate.</i> | <i>Percentage of students reclassified each year will meet or exceed local District rate.</i> | <i>Percentage of students reclassified each year will meet or exceed local District rate.</i> | <i>Percentage of students reclassified each year will meet or exceed local District rate.</i> | <i>Percentage of students reclassified each year will meet or exceed local District rate.</i> |
| <b>Priority 8 Outcome 1:</b> All VHGA students will participate in a rigorous, high-quality STEM curriculum in partnership with Project Lead the Way (PLTW).  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Metric/Method for Measuring:</b> % of access to PLTW curriculum and STEM-themed learning; teacher PD logs/receipts; materials inventory lists and receipts; teacher lesson plans; classroom observations |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS   | Baseline                                    | 2020-2021   | 2021-2022   | 2022-2023   | 2023-2024   | 2024-2025   |
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups)   | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  |

| LCFF STATE PRIORITIES  |  |
|--|--|
| GOAL # 3   |  |
| <b>ENGAGEMENT</b><br><br><b><i>VHGA student academic achievement is supported by parents.</i></b>  | Related State Priorities:<br><input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 7<br><input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 8<br><input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
|  | Local Priorities:<br><input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/>  |
| Specific Annual Actions to Achieve Goal  |  |
| <b>Priority 3 (Parental Involvement)</b><br><b>Priority 3 Outcome 1 –Efforts to seek parent input in decision making.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VHGA will engage parents in a series of relevant and interesting workshops related to their child's success.</li> <li>- VHGA will maintain school website as a communication tool for the community.</li> <li>- VHGA will communicate the most important website items via a monthly newsletter that is sent to their home via a hardcopy.</li> </ul> |  |

- The VHGA Principal holds monthly Coffee with the Principal meetings to engage and inform parents of important and relevant school-based items and events.

**Priority 5 (Pupil Engagement)**

*Priority 5 Outcome 1 – School attendance rates and Chronic absenteeism*

- VHGA parent outreach and communications will continue to stress the importance of attendance and arriving at school on time each day
- VHGA’s School Psychologist oversees student attendance and works with the Office Manager and Administrative Team to help improve attendance and decrease habitual truants through home calls, meetings with students and families, home visits, and positive reinforcement incentives.

*Priority 5 Outcome 2 – Middle school dropout rates*

- VHGA will offer an engaging and meaningful program that motivates students to stay in school, including electives in the arts, technology and World Languages, and an engaging after-school program and clubs.
- VHGA’s Principal and the MTSS team will carefully monitor student achievement data on a continuous basis and will identify students who are at-risk of dropping out in order to provide comprehensive intervention and support via our MTSS program.

**Priority 6 (School Climate)**

*Priority 6 Outcome 1 - pupil suspension rates*

- VHGA will provide training and support for restorative justice practices and Way of Council
- VHGA will establish classroom management procedures, foster positive relationships, and help create an atmosphere of trust, respect, and high expectations.

*Priority 6 Outcome 2 – pupil expulsion rates*

- VHGA will provide training and support for restorative justice practices and Way of Council
- VHGA will establish classroom management procedures, foster positive relationships, and help create an atmosphere of trust, respect, and high expectations.

*Priority 6 Outcome 3 – other local measures including surveys of pupils, parents and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness*

- VHGA will implement annual surveys to assess stakeholder satisfaction

**Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes**

**Priority 3 Outcome 1:** VHGA will increase the number of parents who attend at least 2 events each year (specific goal to be set annually in LCAP).

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** # of parents attending 2+ events annually

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline               | 2020-2021   | 2021-2022   | 2022-2023   | 2023-2024   | 2024-2025   |
|---|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | TBD with 2019-20 rate. | Increase parent participation rate annually (target estimated at 2-3% annually) | Increase parent participation rate annually (target estimated at 2-3% annually) | Increase parent participation rate annually (target estimated at 2-3% annually) | Increase parent participation rate annually (target estimated at 2-3% annually) | Increase parent participation rate annually (target estimated at 2-3% annually) |

**Priority 3 Outcome 2:** VHGA Parent and Community Engagement Committee will be promoted, and supported to be fully operational and self-sustaining

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** analysis of attendance, Sign In sheets, consistent membership.

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | 100%     | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      | 100%      |

**Priority 5 Outcome 1:** VHGA maintain a high attendance rate and low rate of students who are chronically absent

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** Attendance and chronic absenteeism rates

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline                       | 2020-2021   | 2021-2022  | 2022-2023  | 2023-2024  | 2024-2025  |
|---|--------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | <i>TBD with 2019-20 rates.</i> | <i>Maintain high attendance rate (&gt;95%); Maintain low chronic absenteeism or decrease annually as needed (estimated target of 1-2% annually)</i> | <i>Maintain high attendance rate (&gt;95%) or increase annually as needed; Maintain low chronic absenteeism or decrease annually as needed (estimated target of 1-2% annually)</i> | <i>Maintain high attendance rate (&gt;95%) or increase annually as needed; Maintain low chronic absenteeism or decrease annually as needed (estimated target of 1-2% annually)</i> | <i>Maintain high attendance rate (&gt;95%) or increase annually as needed; Maintain low chronic absenteeism or decrease annually as needed (estimated target of 1-2% annually)</i> | <i>Maintain high attendance rate (&gt;95%) or increase annually as needed; Maintain low chronic absenteeism or decrease annually as needed (estimated target of 1-2% annually)</i> |

**Priority 5 Outcome 2:** VHGA will maintain a low middle school dropout rate

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** Dropout rate

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline                       | 2020-2021   | 2021-2022   | 2022-2023   | 2023-2024   | 2024-2025   |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | <i>TBD with 2019-20 rates.</i> | <i>Maintain low middle school dropout rate that is the same or lower than nearby comparison</i> | <i>Maintain low middle school dropout rate that is the same or lower than nearby comparison</i> | <i>Maintain low middle school dropout rate that is the same or lower than nearby comparison</i> | <i>Maintain low middle school dropout rate that is the same or lower than nearby comparison</i> | <i>Maintain low middle school dropout rate that is the same or lower than nearby comparison</i> |

|  |  |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|--|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|  |  | <i>schools.</i> | <i>schools.</i> | <i>schools.</i> | <i>schools.</i> | <i>schools.</i> |
|--|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|

**Priority 6 Outcome 1:** VHGA will maintain a low suspension rate that is  $\leq 2\%$ .

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** % of student suspensions

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline                      | 2020-2021  | 2021-2022  | 2022-2023  | 2023-2024  | 2024-25    |
|---|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | <i>TBD with 2019-20 rate.</i> | $\leq 2\%$ | $\leq 2\%$ | $\leq 2\%$ | $\leq 2\%$ | $\leq 2\%$ |

**Priority 6 Outcome 2:** VHGA will maintain a low expulsion rate that is  $\leq 0.5\%$ .

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** % of student expulsions

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline                      | 2020-2021    | 2021-2022    | 2022-2023    | 2023-2024    | 2024-25      |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | <i>TBD with 2019-20 rate.</i> | $\leq 0.5\%$ | $\leq 0.5\%$ | $\leq 0.5\%$ | $\leq 0.5\%$ | $\leq 0.5\%$ |

**Priority 6 Outcome 3:** VHGA will have high student, parent, and staff participation rates in the school experience survey and high approval rating on school experience surveys of students, parents, and staff.

**Metric/Method for Measuring:** % of participation in school climate survey and survey results

| APPLICABLE STUDENT GROUPS                               | Baseline                      | 2020-2021  | 2021-2022  | 2022-2023  | 2023-2024  | 2024-25  |
|---|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| All Students (Schoolwide and all Significant Subgroups) | <i>TBD with 2019-20 data.</i> | <i>Increase rate of participation (overall and by stakeholder group) as needed over previous year (estimated target 2-3% annually); Increase stakeholder approval ratings as needed on school climate (estimated target 2-3% annually)</i> | <i>Increase rate of participation (overall and by stakeholder group) as needed over previous year (estimated target 2-3% annually); Increase stakeholder approval ratings as needed on school climate (estimated target 2-3% annually)</i> | <i>Increase rate of participation (overall and by stakeholder group) as needed over previous year (estimated target 2-3% annually); Increase stakeholder approval ratings as needed on school climate (estimated target 2-3% annually)</i> | <i>Increase rate of participation (overall and by stakeholder group) as needed over previous year (estimated target 2-3% annually); Increase stakeholder approval ratings as needed on school climate (estimated target 2-3% annually)</i> | <i>Increase rate of participation (overall and by stakeholder group) as needed over previous year (estimated target 2-3% annually); Increase stakeholder approval ratings as needed on school climate (estimated target 2-3% annually)</i> |



## **ELEMENT 3 – METHOD BY WHICH PUPIL PROGRESS TOWARD OUTCOMES ARE MEASURED**

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*“The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured. To the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(C).)*

### **MEASURE FOR MEASURING PUPIL PROGRESS TOWARD OUTCOMES: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

VHGA implements a comprehensive assessment system to measure progress toward our vision for student success, which includes tracking student mastery of grade-level standards and requisite skills in each subject area. We believe strongly that teaching to deep understanding and mastery is complex and that teachers cannot approach this task formulaically. The following chart illustrates the types of assessments administered by subject, grade level, and frequency. VHGA affirms that its methods for measuring pupil outcomes for the Eight State Priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(C).

#### **ASSESSMENT, PURPOSE, GRADE LEVELS AND ADMINISTRATION TIMELINE**

| <b>Assessment</b>  | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Administration Timeline</b> |
|--|--|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Internally-Created Tests and Rubrics and Performance-Based Tasks | Measure standards mastery in each subject and progress against IIP and IEP goals (as applicable) | 6-8          | Daily and /or weekly.          |
| Publisher-Designed Assessments (Online and paper-based)          | Assess standards mastery and progress against digital portfolio goals                            | 6-8          | End of each unit               |
| Writing Rubrics  | Assess mastery of grade-level writing standards  | 6-8          | Daily and/or weekly            |
| CAASPP   | State Criterion-Based Assessment in ELA and Math   | 6-8          | Once a year                    |
| California Science Test (CAST)                                   | State Assessment in Science  | 8            | Once a year                    |
| California Alternative   | Alternative assessment in ELA,   | 6-8          | Once a year                    |

|  |   |     |   |
|--|---|-----|---|
| Assessment (CAA)                           | Math and Science  |     |   |
| CAASPP Interim Assessments (IABs and ICAs) | Determine standards mastery in ELA and Math               | 6-8 | Interim comprehensive administered at beginning and middle of year.<br>The Interim Blocks are used 4 times per year at end of instructional units               |
| Fountas & Pinnell                          | Reading Assessment for targeted literacy interventions    | 6-8 | Beginning, middle and end of year   |
| Renaissance STAR 360                       | Diagnostic Reading and Math Assessment                    | 6-8 | Beginning, middle and end of year   |
| ELPAC                                      | Measure English language acquisition                      | 6-8 | Upon enrollment and once annually for all ELs   |
| Physical Fitness Test (FitnessGram)        | Comprehensive state physical fitness exam                 | 7   | Once a year   |
| Portfolio Presentations                    | Presentation of work samples from across the school year. | 6-8 | 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> grades present to their classrooms more informally; 8 <sup>th</sup> graders present more formally to a panel of VHGA staff. |

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING**

VHGA's teachers and administrators analyze trends, significant changes, apparent conflicts, and anomalies to track individual student growth over time, evaluate specific aggregated and disaggregated groups of students, measure performance on the state tests and school-based growth data and authentic assessments to gauge the whole school from year to year. Our data analysis also includes attendance rates and comparative data, as appropriate. School leaders and staff use this data analysis to address challenges and areas of improvement. All results are reported to the Board and school community to ensure transparency and accountability.

Access to information and transparency are key for all stakeholders. Parents/guardians and students have access to a comprehensive Student Information System (SIS) Power School, to house student and family data, track student growth and learning, and make information available in real-time to all appropriate stakeholders. As such, students and their families may access up-to-date information at school or at home through email and on the school website. Recognizing that not all families have internet access at home, VHGA also sends regular paper communication home to families, makes phone calls home to discuss concerns with families, and regularly discuss learning and growth with



students in their classes. The Vista's Superintendent, in collaboration with the Vista's District Data Coordinator (home office) and all school staff, are responsible for maintaining the SIS in accordance with the school's mission and vision.

As part of this inquiry process, teachers and administrators at VHGA are engaged in an ongoing process of data review, analysis, and evaluation in connection with student learning outcomes. Teachers analyze data both individually, and do so regularly in teams to build their knowledge and understanding of student needs and progress. Data helps to inform teachers about student performance and to identify areas of focused instruction and potential intervention for individual students and entire classes.

Grade-level teams meet regularly to discuss data with each other as well. Student achievement data is disaggregated annually to clearly identify the academic performance of students by subgroups (e.g., ethnicity, gender, English Learners, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities.)

VHGA compiles the necessary data to create a SARC at the end of each school year. State law requires that the SARC contain all of the following information:

- Demographic information
- School safety and climate for learning information
- Academic data
- School completion rates
- Class sizes
- Teacher and staff information, including data about Highly Qualified Teachers
- Curriculum and Instruction descriptions
- Postsecondary preparation information
- Fiscal and expenditure data

## **GRADING, PROGRESS REPORTING AND PROMOTION/RETENTION**

VHGA commits strongly to creating a two-way dialogue between the school staff and our parents/guardians. Parental involvement and commitment to the school is necessary if their children are to succeed. We expect, encourage, and train them through parent seminars to be actively involved in supporting their children's education. Dialogue with the teacher and Principal are ongoing for parents/guardians as they support their child through each academic year. At student-led conferences, parent/guardians review the progress of their child, sharing and discussing test scores, projects, schoolwork and areas for improvement. At these meetings, home and school strategies are discussed so that the student has the best chance of continuously improving his/her performance.

## **PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENTS & STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES**

In addition to subject-area specific assessments and state-mandated tests, VHGA uses Portfolio Assessments to assess student learning in content knowledge as well as deeper learning skills and non-cognitive skills. Portfolio Assessments require students

to compile a variety of work products in various subjects throughout the year and then make a presentation of their work: in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, this is a formal presentation to a panel of VHGA staff, while in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, the presentations are more informally made to their classroom. The portfolio work products represent a sample of students' accomplishments, academic progress, interests, and reflections. In addition to content, portfolio assessments allows for the assessment of more complex learning skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and agency. They also allow a teacher to understand the student's growth over time versus their performance on a given day.

VHGA uses an online student portfolio for organizing and archiving student achievements from each grade. At the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students participate in a Portfolio Defense and choose work samples from the portfolio that highlight their progress toward the student global outcomes outlined earlier in the petition.

Student-led parent/teacher/student conferences take place twice a year at the end of each semester, and portfolios are the basis for discussion in each student's conference. Before each conference, students compile their work for the semester, reflect on their learning successes, challenges, and goals, create new goals moving forward, and prepare to lead their family member(s) and teacher through that work. Class instruction allows preparation time for student-led conferences, so students are ready for the conference and derive meaningful learning from the experience.

### **REPORT CARDS**

Twice annual student report cards summarize student performance, progress, and assessment at the end of each semester. VHGA report cards are designed to give meaningful feedback to students and capture their progress regularly. They capture content-specific mastery, as well as skills and dispositions aligned to the VHGA Global Competencies: (1) Investigate and research the world, (2) Recognize and weigh different perspectives, (3) Effectively communicate ideas, (4) take action to make a difference, and (5) Apply learning to real and relevant situations.

Report cards contain numerical scores (1 to 4) based on key measurable outcomes:

*Indicates student progress towards achievement of grade-level California content standards thus far in the school year.*

4 = Exceeds grade-level standards

3 = Meets grade-level standards

2 = Progressing toward meeting grade-level standards

1 = Minimal progress toward grade-level standards

N/A = Not assessed in current reporting period\*

✓ = Assessed during reporting period

They also contain narrative sections where teachers detail examples of a student's level of development and mastery based on observations, student-work, portfolio

submissions, project rubrics, and/or various classroom-based and school-wide assessments. Report cards act as a teacher's commentary on a student's holistic accomplishments, performance, and growth areas for a given semester, and students have an opportunity to comment and reflect on them during their student-led conference.

VHGA meets with families during orientation each year to share the school's assessment philosophy and to show families how to access information independently. Families have access to standardized testing data and ongoing formative assessment and portfolio assessment results through the SIS. Additionally, they receive formal updates regarding SARC data and be consulted regarding the development of the annual LCAP update, as required by Education Code Section 47606.5. Families also have regular and meaningful contact with their child's teacher through phone calls, emails, and by receiving materials their children.

### **RETENTION**

Despite various interventions and extra supports, if scholars are still far below grade level, another possible intervention is retention. Parents are an integral part of the decision making process for retaining their child through the Student Success Team meetings and in written reports of scholar progress and the possibility of retention by the end of March). Although parents are informed throughout the process, the final decision for retention rests with the administration.

## **ELEMENT 4 – GOVERNANCE**

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*“The governance structure of the charter school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the charter school to ensure parental involvement.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(D).)*

### **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

VHGA is a directly-funded independent Charter School and operated by Vista Charter Public Schools, Inc. (VCPS or the Corporation) a California non-profit public benefit corporation, pursuant to California law. VHGA is governed by the VCPS Board of Directors (“Board”) in accordance with the Charter Schools Act, California law, the MPS Bylaws, and the terms of this charter. MPS shall comply with the Brown Act and the Public Records Act. Copies of the VCPS Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Conflict of Interest Code are in Appendix 2.

VHGA operates autonomously from OCDE with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by statute and other contracted services as negotiated between OCDE and VHGA.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), OCDE shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of VHGA, nor will OCDE be liable for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by VHGA as long as the OCDE has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

All of the VCPS corporate officers shall serve in a volunteer capacity and shall not be compensated for their services as an officer. The VCPS Superintendent shall serve as the President of the corporation, but no other VCPS employees shall serve as corporate officers. All of the other officer positions may be filled either by members of the Board or other volunteers, with a preference for non-Board members in order to ensure that the Board has oversight over the officers. The roles and duties of the officers are as established in the Bylaws and in any resolutions adopted by the Board of Directors.

VCPS and its Board of Directors shall comply with the Charter, the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and the California Corporations Code, and all laws controlling charter schools. VCPS, its Board of Directors, administrators, managers and employees, and any other committees of the Board, shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws and nonprofit integrity standards regarding ethics and conflicts of interest, including the Public Records Act (Government Code section 6250 et seq.), the Political Reform Act of 1974 (Gov. Code Section 81000 et seq.), the Brown Act (Government Code sections 54950 et seq.), and the requirements described at Government Code Section 1090 et seq. and any attendant regulations as they may be amended from time to time, and any other applicable conflict of interest prohibitions. VCPS shall not have any employees on its Board of Directors. By the terms of its Charter, VHGA is obligated to comply with the requirements of the Public Records Act, the Brown Act, Government Code Section 1090 et seq. and the Political Reform Act to the same extent as if VHGA were a non-charter California public school district, regardless of any arguments regarding the applicability of those laws to California

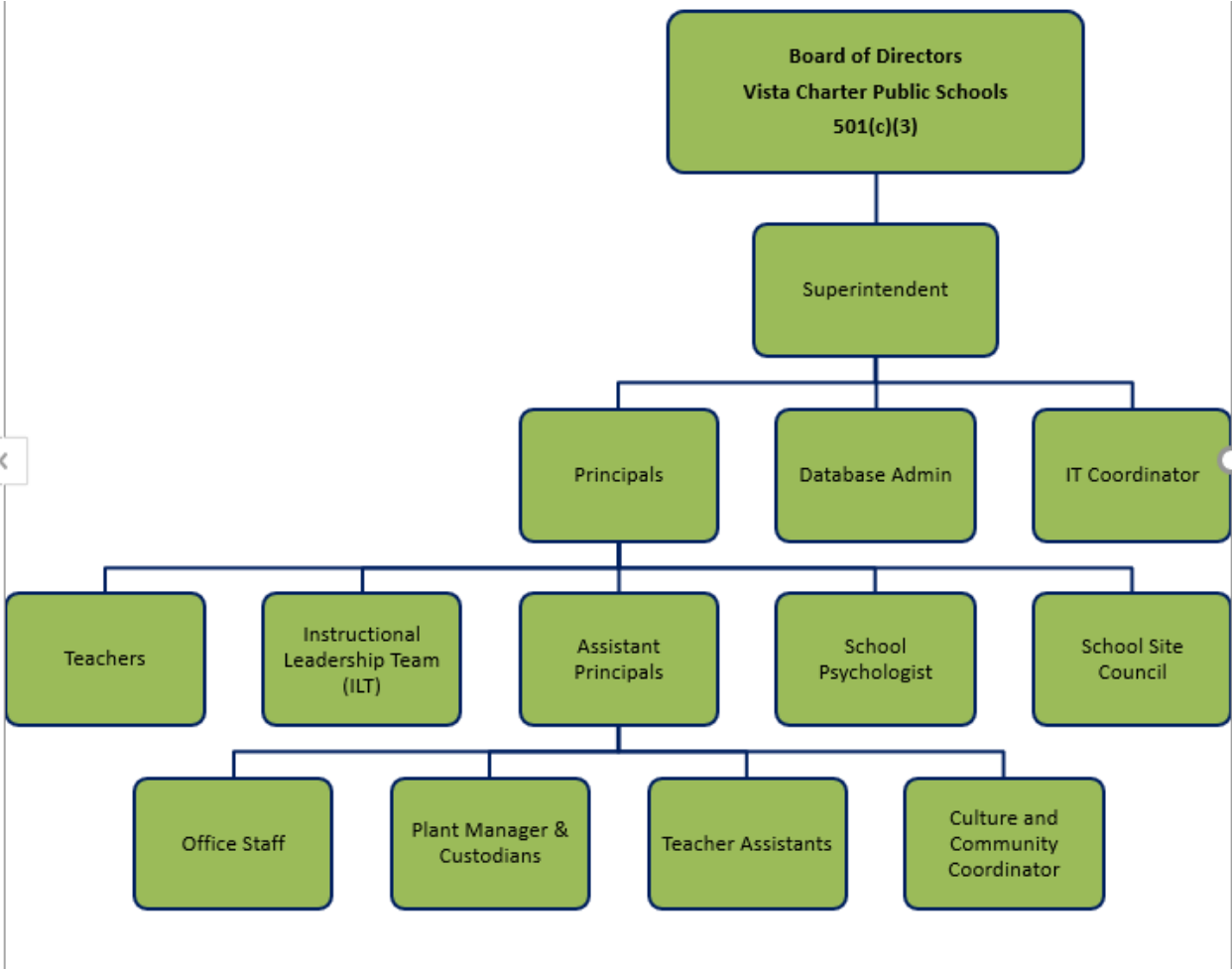
charter schools. However, should a law, regulation, or applicable court decision clarify which conflicts of interest laws apply to charter schools, the OCDE and Charter School agree to comply with the updated law or decision.

VCPS has adopted a Conflict of Interest Code, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 2, Section 18730, including the formal designation of reporters and reporting categories and the forms to be filed thereunder. VCPS shall review, revise and maintain that Code as current throughout the term of the Charter, and shall require all affected VCPS officers, employees, representatives, consultants, and governing board members to comply therewith.

VHGA shall comply with the provisions of Education Code Section 52176(b) for the establishment and operation of an English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC), as applicable to the Charter School.

In the case of a conflict between the requirements of this Charter and provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and/or Bylaws, action taken in accordance with such Articles or Bylaws which conflicts with or is inconsistent with the requirements of the Charter shall be deemed a violation of this Charter. Should the provisions of the Charter conflict with the policies, practices, or terms of any collective bargaining agreement or other agreement of VCPS, the provisions of the Charter shall prevail.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



**MAJOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Board Responsibilities**

The VCPS Board of Directors (“Board”) is fully responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of VHGA including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hire and evaluate the Superintendent
- Approve all contractual agreements and purchases over \$25,000. The Superintendent approves invoices and purchases for \$25,000 or less.
- Approve and monitor the implementation of general policies of VHGA.
- Approve and monitor VHGA’s annual budget.
- Act as a fiscal agent. This includes the receipt of funds for the operation of Charter School in accordance with its laws and the receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of VHGA and the establishment of investment procedures.

- Contract with an external auditor to produce an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices. An Audit Committee may be convened for this purpose.
- Regularly review progress of both student and staff performance. Develop, review, or revise VHGA's accountability and mission.
- Approve the school calendar and schedule of Board meetings.
- Develop Board of Directors policies and procedures.
- Participate in the dispute resolution procedure and complaint procedures when necessary.
- Approve charter amendments.
- Approve annual fiscal audit and performance report.
- Appoint an administrative panel to act as a hearing and determining body on recommended student expulsions.
- Execute all other responsibilities provided for in the California Corporations Code.

The Board may initiate and carry on any program or activity or may otherwise act in a manner which is not in conflict with or inconsistent with or preempted by any law and which is not in conflict with the purposes for which VHGA is established.

The VCPS Board of Directors attends an annual in-service for the purposes of training individual Board members on their responsibilities, including compliance with the Brown Act, Conflicts of Interest, and fiscal and academic oversight.

The implementation of the Board's decisions is carried out by the Superintendent and Principal.

The Superintendent reports to the Board and is specifically responsible for:

- Recruit, hire, prepare and support school leaders meeting all state and federal requirements
- Oversee HR practices
- Develop and maintain a cohesive culture
- Develop clear decision-making guidelines to support the administrative team and the Board in securing focused and well-informed decisions
- Assist in student recruitment and community outreach
- Evaluate school administrators
- Develop annual budgets with school site stakeholders for Board approval, oversee finance, payroll and other fiscal operations
- Support annual audit
- Negotiate all service providers' contracts (with Board approval over \$25,000)
- Oversee compliance including special education, insurance, HR and more
- Oversee securing and maintaining facilities
- Charter advocacy
- Serve as SELPA liaison

- Lead organizational PR/Media and partnerships with community members, stakeholders and organizations
- WASC Accreditation support
- Develop and manage strong business functions (finance, operations, budgeting, compliance, human resources, facilities management, marketing, IT)
- Develop and manage school programs, procedures, and policies in alignment with organizational mission
- Build and manage a growing team of staff and school leaders

The Principal's primary responsibility is the strategic development, implementation, and management of all aspects of the Charter School's performance and operations.

The Principal reports to the Superintendent and is responsible for:

- Implementing, motivating, leading and mentoring teachers to better instructional practices and increase content expertise, performance and rigor or lesson implementation
- Providing teachers professional and instructional support through reviewing instructional documents, observing and providing feedback for classroom observations, designing and reviewing professional growth plans and facilitating weekly professional development/staff meetings
- Developing and implementing a plan that ensures student achievement which is supported by evidence through assessments such as benchmarks, classroom data, parent and student feedback and a plan to address students who are struggling
- Collaborating with the Assistant Principal and Committee Chairs to use appropriate data to establish rigorous and concrete goals in the context of student achievement and instructional programs.
- Providing individual student support by designing and evaluating student intervention plans, attending IEPs and designing a process for measuring and evaluating student growth
- Working to build and maintain a strong, positive, results-oriented school culture
- Developing a plan that fosters the relationships and ensure all stakeholders are addressed based on the clear vision of the desired culture for the school
- Planning, facilitating and attending school functions such as parent meetings, open house, parent teacher conferences, fundraisers, etc.

Full job descriptions and Qualifications for each position are included in Element 5, below.

### **GOVERNING BOARD COMPOSITION AND MEMBER SELECTION**

The Board of Directors are composed of highly qualified individuals who, first and foremost, actively support and promote VCPS and who are dedicated to its educational outcomes. The Board includes individuals with diverse expertise, experience and ethnic backgrounds. Each year, the Board participates in training on fiscal oversight and legal compliance issues (Brown Act, Conflicts of Interest, any changes in relevant laws, etc.).



Officers are elected by the Board of Directors. Neither the secretary nor the treasurer may serve concurrently as the president.

The VCPS Board consists of 5-9 directors, each serving a two-year term; terms are staggered in alternating years. In addition, the District reserves the right to appoint a single representative to the VCPS governing board pursuant to Education Code section 47604(b). No employees of VCPS will serve on the Board and no persons serving on the Board may be an “interested person” as specified in the bylaws. All directors shall have full voting rights, including any representative appointed by the District as consistent with Education Code Section 47604(b). If the District appoints a representative to serve on the Board of Directors, the Board may appoint an additional director to ensure that the Board is maintained with an odd number of directors. All directors, except for the representative appointed by the District, shall be designated by the existing Board of Directors.

**VCPS Board of Directors**

| <b>Board Member</b> | <b>Position</b>      | <b>Professional Expertise</b>           |
|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| Jose Rubio          | Board President      | Elementary education and administration |
| Judy Molodow        | Secretary, Treasurer | Special education                       |
| Michele Bauer-Bean  | Member               | Elementary Education and Lawyer         |
| Paul Vieyra         | Member               | Real estate, commercial banking         |
| Mimi Kim            | Member               | Entrepreneur, Finance                   |

Directors shall be selected at an annual meeting of the Board of Directors. When a vacancy occurs, as detailed in the VCPS Bylaws, a Nominating Committee, comprised of two or more directors, will be appointed by the Chairman of the Board at least thirty days prior to the election date, to identify qualified candidates from the community. Any member of the community may recommend a candidate for consideration to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall review the qualifications of candidates, interview them, and determine if the candidate’s qualifications meet the current needs of the Board. The Nominating Committee will present a report to the Board with qualifying candidates no later than seven days prior to the Board election. Directors shall hold office for terms prescribed in the Corporation’s Bylaws, or until a

successor has been elected, unless the director has been removed from office. Additional information on the Board Member Selection is found in the VCPS Bylaws.

The qualifications for directors are generally: the ability to attend Board meetings, a willingness to actively support and promote VCPS, and a dedication to the VCPS educational goals. Board members must also bring a desired strength to the Board, which the Board of Directors may identify (i.e. experience in educational leadership, a background in law, finance or business, organizational management or experience with non-profit organizations).

## **GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS**

Board meetings shall be held using real-time video communication at each of the VCPS charter school sites to ensure community, stakeholder and parent participation and attendance at the meetings. This technology allows participants at all school sites to see, hear and speak to each other.

All meetings (regular and special) of the Board and its committees shall be called, noticed, and held in compliance with the Brown Act. The Board sets its regular calendar of meetings at the Board's annual meeting. The regular board meeting dates are posted on the Charter School's website, as well as in the Charter School's main office. The Board's regular meeting shall occur on the last Monday of each month, unless otherwise specified in the Board's annual calendar.

As such, the following takes place prior to a Board meeting:

1. An agenda is created and reviewed by the Superintendent and Board President, generally one week prior to the scheduled board meeting.
2. The agenda is prepared in full compliance with the Brown Act and includes, but is not limited to, a brief description of each item the Board will consider for action or discussion, the location address for the public meeting, instructions regarding how to request any special accommodations, and a notice whether any member will participate by teleconference. Teleconference participation by any board member will be conducted in full compliance with the Brown Act.

The agenda is posted at least 72 hours prior to any regular board meeting at VHGA and each VCPS school site (in locations, including each school's main office, where it is visible to parents, visitors, students, and staff), and on the school's web site.

1. An e-mail with the agenda and all pertinent attachments is sent to all VCPS Board Members and all VHGA employees. Hard copies of the agenda and meeting materials are made available at the meeting location.
2. The specific procedure for calling a Special Board meeting with 24-hours advance notice is outlined in VCPS's Bylaws and is in compliance with the Brown Act.

## **BOARD DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

A majority of the board members in office shall constitute a quorum. Every decision made by a majority of the board members present at a meeting, duly held, at which a quorum is present is an act of the Board. Board members may take action by voting yes, no, or abstaining from voting.

To the extent permitted under the Brown Act, members of the Board may participate in a meeting through the use of conference telephone, electronic video screen communication, or other communications equipment. Participation in a meeting through use of conference telephone constitutes presence in person at that meeting, so long as all members participating in the meeting are able to hear one another. Teleconference participation complies with all requirements of the Brown Act (i.e., agendas specifying location of teleconference participants and providing opportunity for the public to address the Board, posted at publicly accessible location with teleconference capabilities, at least a quorum of directors must participate from within OCDE boundaries, all votes must be by roll call).

### Board Professional Development

Board members receive training during the board recruitment and orientation process, as well as annual refresher training in the following topics:

- The Ralph M. Brown Act
- California State Accountability Dashboard
- School budget and compliance
- Reading and understanding financial reports
- Roles and responsibilities of board members and school staff

## **STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT**

VHGA believes that parent involvement translates into increased student achievement. VHGA encourages, honors, and respects parent voice. Parent involvement and the inclusion of the parent voice are essential and are ensured in the following ways:

### School Site Council

The School Site Council (SSC) is composed of a minimum of 6 members as follows:

- 2 Classroom teachers and/or school staff
- 1 administrator
- 3 Parents or community members

VHGA's SSC assists in developing, reviewing and making annual updates to the Charter Schools' Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). The SSC participates in

developing recommendations for school policies and share in efforts to engage the support of the community. The SSC makes recommendations about issues related to the school and participate in reviewing parental and community concerns, especially as it relates to categorical funding as described in the SPSA. The Principal is responsible for submitting the minutes of each School Site Council meeting to the VCPS Board. All SSC members, along with all employees and community members, are encouraged to attend and voice their desires and opinions at the school's governing board meetings.

School Site Council teacher representatives are selected by the teaching staff on an annual basis. The classified representative and the parent representatives are selected on an annual basis by vote of their respective peers.

School Site Council meetings are scheduled in advance for the entire year, and are held monthly.

Each year, the Site Administrator also engages parents, teachers and staff in formulating the school's annual LCAP updates and goal setting through focus groups, surveys and open meetings in which stakeholders are invited to participate in reviewing the school's annual progress and establishing goals – and allocating resources – for the coming years. The Charter School solicits feedback from parents, teachers and staff via annual surveys, meetings regarding the LCAP, SARC and other reports of progress, and a variety of web based applications like PowerSchool. The Charter School website is used to house all-important documents (LCAP, SARC etc.) providing 24/7 access.

#### English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)

State law mandates each school site with 21 or more students of Limited English Proficiency in attendance, regardless of language, to form a functioning English Learner Advisory Committee. The ELAC will be formed at VHGA when the site has 21 or more students of LEP. The ELAC membership will include: Parents of ELs (at least the same percentage of the ELAC membership as ELs constitute of the Charter School's total student population), Charter School staff, and /or community members as long as the minimum percentage requirement for EL parents is maintained. The ELAC will advise the Principal and staff on programs and services for English Learners, and participate in annual goal setting and evaluation of EL achievement and needs (including the LCAP).

#### Parent Meetings

School-parent meetings are held regularly while the school is in session, and more frequently, as necessary, in order to facilitate the communication process between parents and the governing board. We have monthly standing Coffee with the Principal meetings and hold additional meetings, as necessary.

Parents meet with staff and administrators for report card conferences three times throughout the year (November, February, June). Parents are advised that the

administrators and teaching staff are available for additional conferences as needed or as requested by parents. Parents are encouraged to serve on the School Site Council. Parents are consulted and advised through meetings and informational bulletins regarding the school's educational programs and student progress on an ongoing basis.

## Workshops

VHGA provides parent workshops and education classes in English and Spanish to help parents feel connected to the school community. The content of these workshops are designed to assist parents in the educational development of their children. The Principal, teachers, and staff maintain open lines of communication at all times with all parents.

Workshop topics may include the following:

- English as a Second Language
- Monitoring the Use of the Internet by your Child
- Child Psychology and Behavior
- Helping Your Child with Homework
- Planning Educational Family Outings
- Planning Your Child's Educational Future (High School and College)

## Surveys

An annual parent survey is sent home and collected to inform the development of VHGA programs for the Local Control Accountability Plan and to obtain a sense of parent and student satisfaction. The results of this survey are made available to all VHGA stakeholders including: parents, VHGA staff, the School Site Council, and the Board of Directors.

## Volunteer Opportunities

No parent or guardian of a VHGA student are ever required to perform volunteer hours as a condition of their student's attendance at VHGA. Parents, however, are provided many opportunities for volunteering at VHGA. Parents may provide service to the school in areas that enhance the educational development of their children. Service opportunities include but are not limited to assistance in classrooms, tutoring, supervision, clerical support, supervision of student field trips, and supporting and organizing parent meetings. Parents determine the type of service they contribute to VHGA based on their particular interests, strengths, and availability.

VHGA will comply with the requirements of Ed. Code section 52064.1 that requires all charter schools to provide a local control funding formula budget overview for parents based on the State Superintendent's template.

## **ELEMENT 5 – EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS**

***“The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the charter school.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(E).)***

Teachers and all paraprofessionals will meet the requirements for employment of California Education Code section 47605(l) and the applicable provisions of federal law. All teachers at VHGA will be required to have credentials equivalent to those required by the District as applicable and required by law for Core and College-preparatory courses.

VHGA prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, national origin, immigration status, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law. VHGA is a School of Choice and no employee will be forced to work at the Charter School. VHGA will comply with all applicable state and federal laws regarding background checks and clearance of all personnel and will comply with all State and federal laws concerning the maintenance and disclosure of employee records. VHGA will comply with all State and federal mandates and legal guidelines relative to ESSA.

### **EMPLOYEE POSITIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Staffing Plan**

School-site staff are further supported and overseen by the VCPS Superintendent and Database Administrator along with additional contracted services such as a speech therapist, physical therapist, etc.

#### **Superintendent (Certificated)**

The Superintendent’s primary responsibility is the strategic development, implementation, and management of all aspects of the Charter School performance and operations including the administration of the Charter School. The Superintendent fosters a collaborative and stimulating community culture for a diverse group of stakeholders including students, parents, faculty members, board members, and community partners.

Responsibilities:

#### ***Leadership and Human Resources***

- Recruit, hire, prepare and support school leaders
- Develop and maintain a cohesive culture which reflects VCPS’s Values
- Develop clear decision-making guidelines to support the administrative team and the Board in making focused and well-informed decisions.
- Oversee Student Recruitment

- Evaluate the on-site administrator (Principal)

#### *External Responsibilities*

- Oversee Budget development and school finance
- Oversee Audit Procedures
- Negotiate all service provider contracts; secure Board Approval as required
- Manage Legal matters (District/Authorizer, Personnel, Special Education, Insurance, etc..)
- Oversee maintenance of facilities
- Implement Charter advocacy & policy legislation
- Oversee PR-Media for VHGA
- Oversee Payroll
- Develop relationship with media to support strong, positive local presence in the community

#### *Strategic Planning*

- Provide support through WASC Accreditation processes
- Develop partnerships with community organizations
- Develop strong partnerships to ensure sustainability
- Develop and manage strong business functions (finance, operations, budgeting, compliance, human resources, facilities management, marketing, IT)
- Develop and manage school programs, procedures, and policies in alignment with organizational mission
- Build and manage a growing team of staff and school leadership

#### Qualifications:

- 5 years of experience as a senior leader in a charter school or in an educational organization
- Experience in guiding school processes and procedures
- Experience in creating and delivering compelling presentations to diverse groups of stakeholders.
- Experience in leading an organization through strategic planning
- Entrepreneurial, positive problem-solving, ability to see opportunity in challenges
- Clear judgment, a mature interpersonal style and the ability to drive collaborative decision-making process

#### **Database Administrator (Classified)**

The Database Administrator reports to the Superintendent. The Database Administrator's primary responsibility is the strategic development, implementation, and management of all aspects of the charter school's data and informational systems. The Database Administrator is passionate about the mission and commitments of VCPS and exhibits this through his/her execution of all their responsibilities and relations with all stakeholders. The Database Administrator fosters a collaborative and stimulating

community culture for a diverse group of stakeholders, including administration, faculty members, board members and community partners.

Responsibilities:

- Assist in the installation and testing and operational maintenance of the student information system for the purpose of ensuring expected results. This includes the management of CALPADS: SSID, Students Enrollments and information, Courses, Staff, Reports, Certifications
- Communicate with district personnel, outside software vendors and contractors for the purpose of serving as a main point of contact for obtaining information, resolving problems and ensuring accurate management of student demographic data for the completion and submission of various mandated reports and information requests.
- Coordinate with district staff and departments for the purpose of ensuring the integrity and accuracy of student demographic data.
- Work with administration to meet testing and assessment compliance requirements for the purpose of ensuring appropriate and safe testing protocols.
- Work with administration to meet master schedule requirements for the purpose of ensuring appropriate student scheduling.
- Work with office staff to provide an efficient and accurate enrollment process for incoming and outgoing students.
- Develop a variety of user support materials for the purpose of providing unified protocols.
- Maintain and manage user security for student demographic data to ensure security and data integrity.
- Maintain student attendance data collection in coordination with the District to ensure compliance with state attendance regulations.
- Manage student information system database (e.g. integrate data systems, update system design, complete dataset extraction, etc.) to achieve optimal use of student data and maintaining data integrity.
- Manage user accounts and access privileges for the student information system for the purpose of establishing security of data.
- Research trends, products, equipment, etc. in order to recommend procedures and/or purchases.
- Remain current in state and federal student data reporting requirements and district testing and assessment data requirements to ensure accurate and compliant data submission.
- Work with administration to ensure proper and efficient system usage and system changes.
- Works with IT staff on system integrity and maintenance functions to ensure student data security and access.
- Performs other related duties as assigned to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of optimal learning conditions.

Qualifications:

- B.A./B.S. degree preferred



- Must have knowledge in the use of a copier and fax machine
- Ability to communicate effectively (verbal and written)
- Must be computer literate and have extensive experience with various information systems specific to the school site.
- Bilingual in Spanish preferred
- Must have excellent organizational skills and a positive attitude

### **IT Coordinator (Classified)**

The IT Coordinator is responsible for supervising school site IT coordinators and school site IT operations. Ensure stability of site networks and educational software – hosted licensed applications and on-site purchased applications as well as ensuring all IT equipment is in excellent working condition. Address various site issues as directed by School Site Principals/Superintendent and assist educational staff as needed to implement and administer software programs.

#### Responsibilities:

- Supervise School Site IT Coordinators in their job of supporting site IT operations
- Ensure all site Principal and educational staff issues are addressed
- Ensures consistency and stability of all working IT services at school sites and district office
- Work with community partners to create school site collaborations and partnerships
- Assist school site coordinators in creating parent and student classes, clubs, field trips, and educational opportunities
- Assist in district website updates
- Co-chair VCPS Technology Committee and assist with strategic planning

#### Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree preferred
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Windows operating system
- Working knowledge of MS Office products and applications as applies to education
- Working knowledge of Google domain and all related applications
- Knowledge of internal network operations & Microsoft Windows Server Operating system
- Classroom and instructional experience beneficial
- Comfortable in educational environment
- Clear communications ability to both classified and certificated staff
- Supervisory experience preferred
- Google and Microsoft certifications beneficial

### **Principal (Certificated)**

The Principal reports to the Superintendent and his/her primary responsibility is the strategic development, implementation, and management of all aspects of the Charter Schools' performance and operations. The Principal is passionate about the mission and commitments of VCPS and exhibits this through his/her leadership and execution of

school culture, staff development, student rigor, and operational responsibilities. The Principal fosters a collaborative and stimulating community culture for a diverse group of stakeholders, including students, parents, faculty members, board members and community partners.

Responsibilities:

#### *Staff Leadership & Development*

The Principal implements, motivates, leads, and mentors teachers to strengthen instructional practices and increase content expertise, performance, and rigor.

The Principal provides teachers professional and instructional support. The Principal:

- Reviews instructional documents
- Observes and provide feedback for classroom observations
- Designs and review professional growth plan goals
- Facilitates weekly professional development/staff meetings.

#### *Academic Rigor*

The Principal:

- Develops and implements a plan that ensures high levels of student achievement for all students and includes: benchmarks, assessments, classroom data, parent and student feedback.
- Develops and implement a plan to address students who are struggling.
- Collaborates with others to use appropriate data to establish rigorous, concrete goals in the context of student achievement and instructional programs.
- Provides individual student support by designing and evaluating student intervention plans, attending IEP's, and designing a process for measuring and monitoring individual student growth.

#### *School Culture*

The Principal:

- Works to build and maintain a strong, positive, results-oriented school culture where teachers believe and reflect in action that all students can achieve.
- Leads via assessing and developing processes for improving the VHGA school climate and culture.
- Develops a plan based on the vision of the desired culture of VHGA that fosters strong relationships and meets the needs of all stakeholders (students, parents, and teachers) as it pertains to the VHGA culture.
- Plans, facilitates, and attends school functions such as parent meetings, open house, parent teacher conferences, sporting events, fundraisers, etc.

Qualifications:

- 5 years' teaching experience
- Proven record of improving urban schools by increasing student achievement

- A current California teaching credential. Master's degree, and an Administrative credential are desired
- Previous leadership experience (department chair, assistant principal, dean, etc.).
- Proven leadership and team building skills.
- Excellent interpersonal communication and writing skills.

### **Assistant Principal (Certificated)**

The Assistant Principal reports to the Principal and Superintendent. His/her primary responsibility is to aid the Principal in the strategic development, implementation, and management of all aspects of the Charter School's performance and operations. The Assistant Principal is passionate about the mission and commitments of VCPS and exhibits this through his/her leadership and execution of school culture, staff development, student rigor, and operational responsibilities. The Assistant Principal helps foster a collaborative and stimulating community culture for a diverse group of stakeholders, including students, parents, faculty members, board members and community partners.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Implement, motivate, lead and mentor teachers to better instructional practices and increase content expertise to improve student performance and rigorous expectations.
- Provide teachers professional and instructional support through reviewing instructional documents, observing and providing feedback for classroom observations, designing and reviewing professional growth plan goals and facilitate weekly PD/staff meetings.
- Implement a plan that ensures student achievement, which is supported by evidence through assessments such as benchmarks, classroom data, parent and student feedback and a plan to address students who are struggling.
- Collaborate with others to use appropriate data to establish rigorous, concrete goals for student achievement.
- Provide individual student support by designing and evaluating student intervention plans, attending IEP's and designing a process for measuring and monitoring individual student growth.
- Work to build and maintain a strong, positive, results- oriented school culture where teachers believe and promote that all students can achieve by providing leadership for assessing and developing processes for improving climate and culture.
- Develop a plan that fosters the relationships and ensure all stakeholders (students, parents, and teachers) are addressed based on the clear vision of the desired culture for the school.
- Plan, facilitate and attend school functions such as parent meetings, open house, parent teacher conferences, sporting events, fundraisers, etc.

#### Qualifications:

- 5 years' teaching experience with a history of improving urban schools, increasing student achievement and demonstrating a passion for education reform.
- Must have a current California credential.
- Master's degree & an Administrative credential preferred
- Previous leadership experience (e.g., department chair, assistant principal, dean).
- Proven leadership and team building skills.
- Detail-oriented, multi-tasking and problem-solving skills.

#### **School Psychologist (Certificated)**

The School Psychologist reports to the Principal and provides psychological services to general education students and students with disabilities; develops individual case studies of students to determine eligibility for special programs; assists in the development of behavior support plans and functional behavior assessments; consults with school personnel, parents, and others concerned with the progress of students; and provides both individual and group counseling as well as case management for counseling services. The School Psychologist integrates the educational program to fit a fully inclusive special education program.

#### Responsibilities:

- Conduct psychological assessments and develop case studies of individual students to determine educational needs, learning characteristics, and social behavior relevant to educational placement and instructional planning.
- Interpret the findings of individual case studies to the IEP team.
- Participate in the process required by federal, state, and local regulations for the identification, placement, and review/re-evaluation of students with special needs.
- Assist in developing a written individual educational plan for students who are determined eligible for special education placement and/or service; assist in developing recommendations regarding eligibility and program placement.
- Assist in developing behavioral objectives for individual students and special class groups; suggest implementation strategies as appropriate; confer with teachers and parents regarding strategies for the solution or amelioration of individual learning or adjustment problems of students.
- Counsel students individually and in groups to assist them in educational achievement and personal or social adjustment. Assist with implementing school-wide social emotional programs (Way of Council).
- Assist with the organization of, and serve as a leader in, staff development activities in the field of psychological services.
- Participate in Student Study Team meetings and the MTSS process as needed.
- Other duties as assigned

#### Qualifications:

- An earned Bachelor's degree from an accredited university, and
- An earned Master's degree in School Psychology from a regionally accredited university, OR
- Current enrollment in a School Psychology Master's degree program in a regionally accredited university with Internship eligibility.
- One of the following California credentials or combination of credentials authorizing K-12 service must be in force and on file:
  - General Pupil Personnel Services Credential authorizing service as a school psychologist;
  - Service Credential with a specialization in pupil personnel services designating service as a school psychologist;
- Knowledge of the growth and development of children and adolescents, learning theory, and mental health concepts.
- Sensitivity to, and understanding of, the unique differences and needs of disabled students and their parents.
- Knowledge of uses and limitations of standardized individual and group tests, and semi-projective devices.
- Ability to assume leadership in teacher/staff development activities.
- Understanding of the relationship between the total education program as well as counseling and psychological services.
- Facility in oral and written communication.
- Appropriate manner including poise, tact, good judgment, and ability to work effectively with VCPS personnel, community representatives, and students.

#### **Classroom Teachers (Certificated)**

The teacher reports to the site administrator and is responsible for the development and performance of the courses they instruct. The teacher fosters a collaborative and stimulating classroom environment for a diverse group of students, as well as foster a strong collaboration between parents, faculty members, board members and community partners.

#### Responsibilities:

- Foster a safe and nurturing learning environment
- Organize classroom systems/procedures and manage student behavior to ensure that all students are fully engaged in learning
- Establish an environment where students are excited about learning
- Develop lesson plans according to the CA CCSS and CA State Content Standards
- Build strong relationships with students and parents
- Identify students' areas for improvement and be able to work with students, families, and internal resources to suggest options for improvement

- Provide continual assessment of student progress, maintain student records, and complete assigned paperwork in provided timeframes
- Collaborate with the Resource Specialist to meet the needs of all students
- Attend and implement professional development training throughout and beyond the school year
- Demonstrate support and knowledge of school's goals and mission
- Attend and participate in school-based meetings and activities

**Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- Master's degree in subject matter field or Education (strongly preferred)
- Must possess, or be in the process of completing, a current California teaching credential

**Skills:**

- Solid knowledge of subject matter, including CA CCSS, CA State Content Standards and subject-specific frameworks and assessments
- Ability to analyze qualitative and quantitative student data
- Ability to communicate effectively (verbal and written)
- Must be computer literate

**Educational Specialist**

The Educational Specialist reports to the site administrator and is responsible for the development and performance of the students they serve by upholding and abiding by the special educational laws and regulations in the state of California. The Educational Specialist aides in fostering a collaborative and stimulating classroom environment for a diverse group of students, as well as foster a strong collaboration between parents, faculty members, board members and community partners.

**Responsibilities:**

- Maintain SPED program that is in place including calendar of meetings, staff trainings, deadlines and program needs
- Organize and maintain service provider services, services for all students identified or in the process of being identified; Maintains compliance to records, documenting, SPED timelines and program deadlines
- Function as the case manager for all students in process of being established as a Special Education Student and current Special Education Students
- Participate in the SST Processes by developing and maintaining organization of services to pupils
- Provide information to staff and parents to facilitate student success with their specific needs
- Utilize strong communication and multitasking skills; build relationships; problem solve effectively
- Coordinate special education services with the regular school programs for Students with Disabilities enrolled in the resource program.

- Provide or coordinate classroom supports that include (but are not limited to): behavior support, basic academic skills, organization and study skills, social skills, use of cognitive strategies and fostering a safe and nurturing learning environment
- Demonstrate strong organization and management in
  - Preparing for all student and staff meetings related to student services or professional development
  - Student Service minutes, change of services, change of placement, ESY, etc
  - Student assessment for annual, triannual, or other student assessment designated by the IEP team
  - All SPED timelines as aligned to FAPE or IDEA
- Participate as a collaborative member of the faculty and in ongoing staff development and trainings

#### Qualifications:

- Candidate must possess a current California credential in Special Education appropriate to program needs
- Solid knowledge of State and Federal guidelines for Special Education
- Bachelor's degree; Master's degree is preferred
- Must be flexible and team-oriented
- Excellent written and communication skills
- Bilingual in Spanish preferred

#### Teacher's Aide (TA)

The Teacher's Aide reports to an administrator and is responsible for assisting in the development and performance of the classes they assist in. The TA foster a collaborative and stimulating classroom environment for a diverse group of students, as well as foster a strong collaboration between parents, faculty members, board members and community partners.

#### Responsibilities:

- Foster a safe and nurturing learning environment
- Assist the teacher in maintaining classroom systems/procedures and manage student behavior to ensure all students are fully engaged in learning
- Support differentiation or other instructional strategies implemented to ensure that needs of all learners are met
- Establish an environment where students are excited about learning
- Support teachers with data tracking and progress monitoring
- Build strong relationships with students and parents and teachers
- Demonstrate support and knowledge of school's goals and mission
- Attend and participate in school-based meetings and activities
- Develop or assist in the development of lesson plans according to the CA CCSS and CA State Content Standards

- Identify student areas for improvement and be able to work with the student and family and internal resources to suggest options for improvement
- Provide continual assessment of student progress, maintain student records and complete assigned paperwork in provided timeframes.
- Collaborate with the Educational Specialist and other staff to meet the needs of all students
- Attend and implement professional development training throughout and beyond the school year
- Demonstrate support and knowledge of school's goals and mission
- Participate, attend and plan field trips
- Participate in school events during, before and after school
- Attend and participate in school-based meetings and activities

**Qualifications:**

- Prior experience working with students in a learning environment
- Bilingual in Spanish preferred
- Intermediate proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook
- Must be flexible, positive, detail-oriented, a team player, patient and willing to learn.
- Must be able to work in a fast-paced work environment with flexibility and dedication

**Office Manager**

The Office Manager reports to the Site Administrator. The Office Manager's primary responsibility is the aide and support of all functions of the charter school site with direction given by the site administrator. The Office Manager is passionate about the mission and commitments of VCPS and exhibits this through his/her execution of all their responsibilities and relations with all stakeholders. The Office Manager fosters a collaborative and stimulating community culture for a diverse group of stakeholders, including administration, faculty members, board members and community partners.

**Responsibilities:**

- Greet and assist parents, students, and visitors to the school in a friendly and professional manner.
- Answer the phone in a professional and courteous manner.
- Coordinate substitute teacher coverage as needed and in communication with teachers.
- Supervise and delegate duties to Office Assistants.
- Manage quotes and relationships with vendors.
- Maintain accurate records of all distributed school assets such as keys, technology or other equipment.
- Ensure accurate financial records as needed including: Credit Card Logs, Purchase Orders, Teacher Check Requests and Paid Time Off Forms.
- Sort through mail and distribute accordingly.



- Work with site administrators and teachers regarding any projects or special requests.
- Oversee parent correspondence and mailings.
- Maintain, store and secure all student files ensuring confidentiality.
- Manage student meal applications.
- Track student attendance and tardies using SIS (PowerSchool).

**Qualifications:**

- B.A./B.S. degree preferred
- Must have 3-5 years of Management experience
- Must be proficient in operating a copy machine and fax machine
- Ability to communicate effectively (verbal and written)
- Must be computer literate and have demonstrated proficiency with: MS Office, Word & Excel
- Bilingual in Spanish preferred
- Must have excellent management and organizational skills and a positive attitude

**Office Clerk (Classified)**

The Office Clerk reports to the Office Manager. The Office Clerk's primary responsibility is the aide and support of all functions of the charter school Office Manager in conjunction with the needs and directions given by the site administrator. The Office Clerk is passionate about the mission and commitments of VCPS and exhibits this through his/her execution of all their responsibilities and relations with all stakeholders. The Office Clerk fosters a collaborative and stimulating community culture for a diverse group of stakeholders, including administration, faculty members, board members and community partners.

**Responsibilities:**

- Provide excellent customer service
- Greet and assist staff, parents, students, and visitors to the school in a friendly and professional manner.
- Answer phones using a professional and courteous manner.
- Route calls appropriately.
- Take messages and distribute in a timely manner.
- Reply to general information requests with the accurate information
- Assist with proper documentation and accuracy of attendance
- Fax and make copies
- Assist with typing and composing correspondence and letters
- Responsible for making phone calls to parents.
- Assist with collecting the lunch count.
- Assist with the preparation of parent meetings.
- Translate for teachers, parents and counselors.
- Make student files.
- Organize cumulative student files.

- Other duties as assignment by site administrator

Qualifications:

- BA/BS degree preferred
- Prior experience working with students in a learning environment
- Strong Math skills is strongly preferred
- Bilingual in Spanish preferred
- Intermediate proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook
- Must be flexible, positive, detail-oriented, team player patient and willing to learn.
- Must be able to work in a fast-paced work environment with flexibility and dedication

**Plant Manager (Classified)**

The Plant Manager reports to the Site Administrator. The Plant Manager is responsible for ensuring that the facility is well maintained and running appropriately to maintenance standards. The Plant Manager helps maintain a school environment and culture by being able to communicate and work with a diverse group of students, parents, faculty members, board members and community partners.

Responsibilities:

- Maintaining the quality of school facilities.
- Supervise and evaluate all non-instructional classified staff at the site responsible for maintaining the quality of school facilities.
- Manage all school scheduling, special events, cafeteria, maintenance, playgrounds and cleaning.
- Manage community use of school site.
- Assist in the school safety plan: disaster preparation, fire drills, student, staff and public safety, and student health.
- Maintain equipment, textbook and supply inventories.
- Coordinate with administration to maintain a positive, safe learning environment for students.
- Assist with school public relations and communications plan: promote the school and district through positive relations with community, businesses, parents and students.
- Perform other duties as assigned.
- Maintain regular attendance.
- Coordinate and work with Site Administrator (s) and Office Assistant/Manager for orders for campus facilities and maintenance
- Maintain on-going communication with community partners/ leaseholders where shared occupancy space is occurring
- Coordinate and communicate with after school groups or outside vendors who use the school
- Must understand and follow practices, policies and procedures regarding:
  - o Laws, rules and regulations related to assigned activities.
  - o District operations policies, procedures and objectives

- o Health and safety regulations.

Qualifications:

- Must have prior experience working with students in a learning environment
- Bilingual in Spanish preferred
- Intermediate proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook
- Must be flexible, positive, detail-oriented, a team player, patient and willing to learn.
- Assist in maintaining standards of school safety and civility and ensuring the observance of rules and procedures by students and staff on a school campus at the direction of the school administrator.

**Custodian (Classified)**

The custodian reports to the Plant Manager and/or Site Administrator. Custodians are responsible for ensuring that the facility is well maintained and running appropriately to maintenance standards. Custodians help maintain a school environment and culture by being able to communicate and work with a diverse group of students, parents, faculty members, board members and community partners.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain the quality of school facilities.
- Assist Plant Manager with all school scheduling, special events, cafeteria, maintenance, playgrounds and cleaning.
- Assist in equipment maintenance and textbook and supply inventories.
- Coordinate with administration to assist in maintaining a positive, safe learning environment for students.
- Perform other duties as assigned.
- Maintain regular attendance.
- Maintain ongoing communication with community partners/ leaseholders where shared occupancy space is occurring
- Assist with the coordination and communication with after school groups or outside vendors who use the school
- Must understand and follow practices, policies and procedures regarding:
  - o Laws, rules and regulations related to assigned activities.
  - o District operations policies, procedures and objectives
  - o Health and safety regulations.

Qualifications:

- Must have prior experience working with students in a learning environment
- Bilingual in Spanish preferred
- Intermediate proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook
- Must be flexible, positive, detail-oriented, team player patient and willing to learn.

- Assists in maintaining standards of school safety and civility and ensuring the observance of rules and procedures by students and staff on a school campus at the direction of the school administrator.

### **Supervision Aide (Classified)**

The Supervision Aide reports to the Site Administrator or his/her designee and is responsible for ensuring the observance of the rules and procedures by students and others on a school campus. The Supervision Aide fosters a collaborative and stimulating school environment for a diverse group of students, as well as foster a strong collaboration between parents, faculty members, board members and community partners.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Supervise non-classroom areas: in hallways, indoor assembly areas, outdoor eating areas, restrooms, playground and other areas as assigned
- Enforce Charter School rules and expectations
- Report problems of serious nature, including recurring behavioral problems and safety hazards, to site administrators
- Collaborate with school staff to alleviate behavioral problems occurring during supervision periods
- Assume responsibilities in inclement weather as assigned by site administrators
- Conduct campus safety checks during breaks, lunch, before and after school
- Maintain constant movement and active supervision throughout campus
- Communicate to school administrators regarding causes and effects of campus and community tension.
- May assist in record-keeping regarding student discipline (ex: BIFs, 30 Day Contracts, Class Dojo Reports, Powerschool Logs).
- Provide supervision personnel in inclement weather as assigned by site administrators
- May direct students and others and take action, as necessary, to prevent injury to persons or damage to property.
- May assist a certificated employee in supervising students during field trips and special events.
- May deliver, set up, lay out, or collect equipment and other materials.
- May assist school administrators in contacting parents regarding students with behavioral problems and in discussing campus security with parent and community groups.
- May work with groups authorized to be on the campus before and after school and keep the campus free of unauthorized persons.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Prior experience working with students in a learning environment is preferred
- Bilingual in Spanish preferred

- Must be flexible, positive, detail-oriented, a team player, patient and willing to learn in a fast-paced environment
- Understand and follow oral and written directions

### **Other Certificated Staff**

A list of day-to-day and qualified substitutes are established and maintained.

## **ELEMENT 6 – HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**

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***“The procedures that the charter school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall require all of the following:***

***(i) That each employee of the charter school furnish the charter school with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237.***

***(ii) The development of a school safety plan, which shall include the safety topics listed in subparagraphs (A) to (H), inclusive, of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 32282 and procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents.***

***(iii) That the school safety plan be reviewed and updated by March 1 of every year by the charter school.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(F).)***

The health and safety of VHGA staff and students is the highest priority for the Charter School. As such, VHGA adopts and implements full health and safety policies and procedures and risk management policies at its school site in consultation with its insurance carriers and risk management experts once the facility is secured.

VHGA trains all staff at least annually in these Policies and Procedures. Emergency response drills will be held regularly for all students and staff. VHGA will periodically review, and modify as necessary, its Health and Safety Policies and Emergency Policies and Procedures, and keep these documents readily available for use and review upon request.

The Health and Safety Policies and Procedures will continue to address, at a minimum, the following:

- Child Abuse Reporting
- Child predators (gates, walls, child pick-up and drop-off, etc.)
- Sexual/Other Harassment Reporting
- Asbestos management
- ADA adherence
- Food service safety
- Blood borne pathogens
- Pest management
- FERPA
- Immunizations
- Tuberculosis Risk Assessment and Examination
- Medication in school
- Vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening
- Student Illness & Injury Policies

Emergency Policies and Procedures will continue address, at a minimum, the following:

- Earthquake
- Fire
- Terror threats

- Hostage situations
- School lock-down procedures
- Evacuation plans
- Safety drills
- Annual testing of sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms

The following is a summary of the Health and Safety Policies and Procedures of VHGA:

### **PROCEDURES FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All employees of VHGA, all volunteers who will be performing services that are not under the direct supervision of a credentialed VHGA employee, and any onsite independent contractors or vendors having unsupervised contact with students, will be required to submit to criminal background checks and fingerprinting in accordance with Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1. All non-credentialed applicants for employment must submit two sets of fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. The Charter School shall not hire any person, in either a certificated or classified position, who has been convicted of a violent or serious felony except as otherwise provided by law, pursuant to Education Code Sections 44830.1 and 45122.1. Volunteers who will be outside the direct supervision of a credentialed employee shall be fingerprinted and receive background clearance prior to volunteering on campus. The Superintendent of VCPS shall monitor compliance with this policy (the Board President shall monitor fingerprinting and background clearance of the Superintendent) and make quarterly reports to the Board. VHGA will maintain on file and available for inspection evidence that the school has performed criminal background checks for all employees and documentation that vendors have conducted required criminal background checks for their employees prior to any unsupervised contact with students. VHGA shall also ensure that the Principal receives subsequent arrest notifications of all individuals subject to background checks from the Department of Justice to ensure the ongoing safety of its students.

### **ROLE OF STAFF AS MANDATED CHILD ABUSE REPORTERS**

In accordance with state law, all VHGA employees will be mandated to report any suspected child abuse and will follow all applicable reporting laws. Staff members will receive in-service training in accordance with Education Code Section 44691 and sign a document verifying notification and understanding regarding this responsibility.

### **BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS**

VHGA shall meet state and federal standards for dealing with blood-borne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the workplace. VHGA will establish a written "Exposure Control Plan" designed to protect employees from possible infection due to contact with blood-borne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV). Whenever exposed to blood or other body fluids through injury

or accident, students, and staff should follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures.

### **TUBERCULOSIS RISK ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION**

Employees, and volunteers who have frequent or prolonged contact with students, will be assessed and examined (if necessary) for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and working with students, and for employees at least once each four years thereafter, as required by Education Code Section 49406.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

VHGA will adhere to all laws related to legally required immunizations for entering students as is required of public schools pursuant to Health and Safety Code §120325-120375, and Title 17, California Code of Regulations §6000-6075. All rising 7<sup>th</sup> grade students must be immunized with a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine booster.

### **MEDICATION IN SCHOOL**

VHGA will adhere to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school. VHGA will adhere to Education Code Section 49414 regarding epinephrine auto-injectors and training for staff members.

### **AUXILIARY SERVICES**

School staff will conduct annual reviews to ensure all auxiliary services are safe by developing appropriate policies and awareness training.

### **VISION/HEARING/SCOLIOSIS SCREENINGS**

VHGA shall adhere to Education Code §49450, *et seq*, to provide screening of students' vision, hearing, and scoliosis to the same extent required of non-charter public schools, as applicable to the grade levels served by VHGA.

### **DIABETES**

VHGA will provide an information sheet regarding type 2 diabetes to the parent or guardian of incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.7. The information sheet shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type 2 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that students displaying or possibly suffering from risk factors or warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes should be screened for type 2 diabetes.



4. A description of treatments and prevention methods of type 2 diabetes.
5. A description of the different types of diabetes screening tests available.

### **SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY**

VHGA shall maintain a policy on student suicide prevention in accordance with Education Code Section 215.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

VHGA shall adhere to an Emergency Preparedness Handbook containing procedures for safety, drafted specifically to the needs of the school facility. This handbook shall include but not be limited to the following responses: fire, flood, earthquake, terrorist threats, and hostage situations. All staff members will receive detailed training on emergency procedures. The handbook shall be kept on file for review.

Staff shall receive training in emergency response, including appropriate "first responder" training or its equivalent.

### **DRUG FREE/ALCOHOL FREE/SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT**

VHGA shall function as a drug, alcohol and tobacco-free environment.

### **FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS**

The Charter School will stock at least 50% of its restrooms with feminine hygiene products, and shall not charge students for these products, pursuant to Education Code Section 35292.6.

### **FACILITY SAFETY**

VHGA shall comply with Education Code Section 47610 by utilizing facilities that are either compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the California Building Standards Code. The Charter School agrees to test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. The Charter School shall conduct fire drills as required under Education Code Section 32001 and in conjunction with the District (if at District facilities).

### **COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

VHGA is committed to providing a school that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon the actual or perceived characteristics of race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ancestry, ethnic group identification, genetic information, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual

orientation, sex and pregnancy, physical or mental disability, childbirth or related medical conditions, military and veteran status, denial of family and medical care leave, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. VHGA shall develop a comprehensive policy regarding discrimination or harassment (including employee to employee, employee to student, and student to employee misconduct). Misconduct of this nature is very serious and will be promptly addressed in accordance with VHGA's policies.

## **FERPA**

VHGA, its employees and officers, will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) at all times.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

VHGA will establish and adhere to procedures related to confidentiality and privacy of student records. VHGA will keep student records in a locked file cabinet to which only designated staff will have keys, in accordance with VHGA policies. Student special education files will be kept in separate locked cabinets to which only staff designated to have access shall have keys. Electronic student information systems will use password protected accounts to ensure the same limits on access to student files. In the event that a student enters the school upon transfer from an existing district school, the student's records will be requested from the respective district.

## **CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS**

In accordance with California Department of Justice requirements, the Superintendent and Principal shall serve as VHGA's Custodians of Records.

## **IMMIGRATION POLICY**

VHGA will comply with the requirements of AB 699 by adopting policies consistent with the guidance and model policies issued by the California Attorney General.

## **FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS**

If required by Ed. Code section 35292.6, VHGA will stock at least 50% of its restrooms with feminine hygiene products, and shall not charge students for these products, pursuant to the requirements of Education Code Section 35292.6.

## **CALIFORNIA HEALTHY YOUTH ACT**

VHGA will comply with the California Healthy Youth Act, which requires charter schools to teach sexual education and HIV prevention to students in grades 7 to 12 at least once in junior high or middle school and at least once in high school.

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

VHGA shall provide information to students about how social media and mobile device applications are used for human trafficking in compliance with Assembly Bill 1861 and Senate Bill 1104.

## **STUDENT DEBTS**

The Public School Fair Debt Collection Act mandates that a pupil can never owe or be billed for a debt owed to a charter school.

VHGA shall not take any negative actions against a pupil because of a debt and will not sell debt to a debt collector.

## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

VHGA will notify parents and pupils at least two times per school year about how to access pupil mental health services on campus or in the community or both per the requirements of Assembly Bill 2022.

## **PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS**

VHGA shall provide an annual notice to students about their rights regarding pregnancy or when parenting in compliance with Assembly Bill 2289.

## **BULLYING**

VHGA shall adopt procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying, and shall make available to certificated schoolsite employees and all other schoolsite employees who have regular interaction with pupils an online training module developed by the California Department of Education regarding bullying and bullying prevention in compliance with Assembly Bill 2291.

## **SEXUAL HEALTH AND HIV PREVENTION**

VHGA shall provide “age appropriate” comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education in grades 7 to 12 (at least once in middle school and once in high school).

## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

VHGA is committed to providing a school that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon the actual or perceived characteristics of race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, national origin, ancestry, ethnic group identification, genetic information, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, sex and

pregnancy, physical or mental disability, childbirth or related medical conditions, military and veteran status, denial of family and medical care leave, immigration status, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. VHGA shall develop a comprehensive policy to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about discrimination or harassment at the Charter School (including employee to employee, employee to student, and student to employee misconduct). Misconduct of this nature is very serious and will be addressed in accordance with VHGA's anti-discrimination and harassment policies.

VHGA will require all employees to undergo sexual harassment and abusive conduct training for the duration and frequency as required by California law.

### **SAFE PLACE TO LEARN ACT**

VHGA shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Safe Place to Learn Act, Ed. Code section 234 et seq.

## **ELEMENT 7 – MEANS TO ACHIEVE RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE**

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*“The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(G).)*

### **COURT-ORDERED INTEGRATION**

VHGA makes every effort to recruit students of various racial and ethnic groups in order to achieve a 70/30 or 60/40 balance reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of OCDE. In our efforts to serve all students, admissions outreach is designed to attract a diverse student population. Parents should have options to best meet the needs of their children. As a result, it is our responsibility to make families aware of the educational options for their children. VHGA is committed to serving all students. We therefore recruit an ethnically and academically diverse population from the area immediately surrounding the school. Additionally, we recruit students and families through outreach efforts with local non-profit organizations who serve homeless children, children in the foster-care system, and other children whose circumstances put them at risk for school failure. These organizations are encouraged to refer families to VHGA via flyers and phone conversations with local community-based organizations. All community recruitment outreach is conducted throughout the year on an ongoing basis.

VCPS works very closely with the non-profit Blessings in a Backpack to feed homeless, foster, and at risk students during the weekend. Our efforts currently provide 150 students at VCPS food for 38 weekends each year. VCPS works closely with Blessings in a Backpack to gather referrals of potential at-risk students who are not yet enrolled in VCPS. We offer information on enrollment procedures to these at-risk students and encourage them to submit a Lottery Application Form, or join the existing wait list for the current school year if one exists. VCPS also works with PATH, People Assisting the Homeless, to identify and seek out homeless and foster youth to enroll at VCPS. In addition, we conduct targeted outreach in the community with organizations such as the following:

Boys & Girls Club of America  
Buena Clinton Youth & Family Center  
Orange county on Track  
Waymakers Promise  
Neutral Ground  
M & M Youth Mentor Program H. O. P. E.  
KidWorks  
Nicholas Academic Center II  
El Salvador Center  
Jerome Center  
Centennial Regional Park  
Albert D. Saldago Community Center at Rosita Park

Thomas House Temporary Shelter  
 Teen Challenge  
 Episcopal Church - The Messiah  
 Victory Outreach Santa Ana  
 Our Lady of Pillar Church  
 Johhson Chapel AME Church  
 Our Lady of La Vang Church  
 Community Temple Church  
 Graceland Community Baptist Church  
 Wintersburg Presbyterian Church

VHGA notifies parents and students in the community through the following methods:

1. Information handouts provided to businesses frequented by local community members. The flyers will include the VHGA enrollment period and lottery information (location, date, time).
2. Community outreach efforts including communication with local public libraries, park and recreation centers, community-based organizations, and churches.
3. Flyers in Spanish and English distributed to local elementary and middle schools. The flyers will include enrollment period and lottery information (location, date, time).
4. VHGA's web site contain current information about the school. The website will include enrollment period and lottery information (location, date, time).

All outreach is done in both English and Spanish.

VHGA maintains an accurate accounting of the ethnic and racial balance of students enrolled in the school. VHGA also documents the efforts made to achieve racial and ethnic balance in accordance with the charter petition and standards of charter legislation.

| Meeting   | Location  | Date   |
|---|---|--|
| Meeting with Parents and community              | VHGA (or, if not yet available, VHGA)   | Monthly - December through March (Recruitment efforts are secured and aligned to budgets, hiring of staff, etc.) |
| Outreach to local elementary and middle schools | Local elementary and middle schools, foster and homeless youth organizations. | January, February, March: Review posted available dates and provide flyers, information and presence.            |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Community Organizations                                       | Neighboring organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Libraries</li> <li>• Parks &amp; Rec programs</li> <li>• After-School programs</li> <li>• Organizations including faith- based organizations</li> <li>• Local Businesses including laundromats, health clinics, shops, restaurants</li> </ul> | January, February, March: Review posted available dates and provide flyers, information and presence. |
| Residents within the zip code surrounding the school location | Mailings, door-to-door contacts (canvassing)   | January, February, March: Review posted available dates and provide flyers, information and presence. |

## **ELEMENT 8 – ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

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*“Admission policies and procedures, consistent with [Ed. Code section 47605] subdivision (d).”*  
(Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(H).)

“(1) In addition to any other requirement imposed under this part, a charter school shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate against a pupil on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220. Except as provided in paragraph (2), admission to a charter school shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the pupil, or of the pupil’s parent or legal guardian, within this state, except that an existing public school converting partially or entirely to a charter school under this part shall adopt and maintain a policy giving admission preference to pupils who reside within the former attendance area of that public school.

(2) (A) A charter school shall admit all pupils who wish to attend the charter school.

(B) If the number of pupils who wish to attend the charter school exceeds the charter school’s capacity, attendance, except for existing pupils of the charter school, shall be determined by a public random drawing. Preference shall be extended to pupils currently attending the charter school and pupils who reside in the school district except as provided for in Section 47614.5. Preferences, including, but not limited to, siblings of pupils admitted or attending the charter school and children of the charter school’s teachers, staff, and founders identified in the initial charter, may also be permitted by the chartering authority on an individual charter school basis. Priority order for any preference shall be determined in the charter petition in accordance with all of the following:

(i) Each type of preference shall be approved by the chartering authority at a public hearing.

(ii) Preferences shall be consistent with federal law, the California Constitution, and Section 200.

(iii) Preferences shall not result in limiting enrollment access for pupils with disabilities, academically low-achieving pupils, English learners, neglected or delinquent pupils, homeless pupils, or pupils who are economically disadvantaged, as determined by eligibility for any free or reduced-price meal program, foster youth, or pupils based on nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

(iv) In accordance with Section 49011, preferences shall not require mandatory parental volunteer hours as a criterion for admission or continued enrollment.

(C) In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the charter school and shall not take any action to impede the charter school from expanding enrollment to meet pupil demand.

(3) If a pupil is expelled or leaves the charter school without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the charter school shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil’s last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including report cards or a transcript of grades, and health information. If the pupil is subsequently expelled or leaves the school district without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the school district shall provide this information to the charter school within 30 days if the charter school demonstrates that the pupil had been enrolled in the charter school. This paragraph applies only to pupils subject to compulsory full-time education pursuant to Section 48200.



(4) (A) A charter school shall not discourage a pupil from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the charter school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the characteristics described in clause (iii) of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2).

(B) A charter school shall not request a pupil's records or require a parent, guardian, or pupil to submit the pupil's records to the charter school before enrollment.

(C) A charter school shall not encourage a pupil currently attending the charter school to disenroll from the charter school or transfer to another school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the characteristics described in clause (iii) of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2). This subparagraph shall not apply to actions taken by a charter school pursuant to the procedures described in subparagraph (J) of paragraph (5) of subdivision (b).

(D) The department shall develop a notice of the requirements of this paragraph. This notice shall be posted on a charter school's internet website. A charter school shall provide a parent or guardian, or a pupil if the pupil is 18 years of age or older, a copy of this notice at all of the following times:

(i) When a parent, guardian, or pupil inquires about enrollment.

(ii) Before conducting an enrollment lottery.

(iii) Before disenrollment of a pupil." (Ed. Code § 47605(d).)

In accordance with AB 699 enacted on October 4, 2017, the school's non-discrimination provision shall include immigration status.

**CHARTER SCHOOL SHALL NOT REQUIRE A PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN/STUDENT TO PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING A STUDENT'S DISABILITY, GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY, GENDER EXPRESSION, NATIONALITY, LEGAL OR ECONOMIC STATUS, PRIMARY LANGUAGE OR ENGLISH LEARNER STATUS, RACE OR ETHNICITY, RELIGION, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, IMMIGRATION STATUS, OR ANY OTHER CHARACTERISTIC THAT IS CONTAINED IN THE DEFINITION OF HATE CRIMES SET FORTH IN SECTION 422.55 OF THE PENAL CODE, OR ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAT WOULD VIOLATE FEDERAL OR STATE LAW, PRIOR TO ADMISSION, PARTICIPATION IN ANY ADMISSIONS OR ATTENDANCE LOTTERY, OR PRE-ENROLLMENT EVENT OR PROCESS, OR AS A CONDITION OF ADMISSION OR ENROLLMENT. CHARTER SCHOOL MAY REQUEST, AT THE TIME OF, AND AS PART OF, CONDUCTING ITS LOTTERY PROCESS, THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY TO APPLY SPECIFIC ADMISSIONS PREFERENCES SET FORTH IN THIS CHARTER.**

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

VHGA admits all pupils who wish to attend the school as outlined in Education Code 47605 (d)(2)(A) up to enrollment capacity. There are no admission requirements for the school (e.g., minimum grade point average, test scores, discipline records, etc.). Parents and students admitted to the school are requested to attend an orientation session to review school policies and procedures and learn about the opportunities provided by the school, but their attendance or lack of attendance does not impact their student's admission. The principal works to ensure that all families understand these expectations and that they are aware of the different ways they can be involved in the school.

## **STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

As detailed in Element 7, VHGA, in order to recruit low-achieving, economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities, does the following:

- Recruit students from the surrounding community where the public schools are characterized by low achievement and a predominantly Title 1 population.
- Distribute flyers in Spanish and English to the local elementary and middle schools with the consent of that school's administration. The flyers include enrollment period and lottery information (location, date, time).
- Ensure potential students and families understand there are no qualifications required for admission to VHGA and encourage all students to apply.

## **LOTTERY PREFERENCES AND PROCEDURES**

VHGA is an open enrollment, tuition-free public school with no specific requirements for admission (e.g., minimum grade point average, test scores, discipline records, etc.). Enrollment to the Charter School shall be open to any resident of the State of California. VHGA admits all pupils who wish to attend VHGA to the extent that space allows. CA Ed. Code § 47605(d)(2)(A).

Lottery Application Forms are accepted during a publicly advertised open enrollment period. An explanation of the enrollment process and the rules to be followed during the lottery are available at all times on our web site in English and Spanish and in the office (and additional languages if needed). The process is also verbally explained to any families who call, or hand-deliver a paper Lottery Application form in-person. Parents can also apply on-line.

Following the open enrollment period each year, and after accounting for existing students who are guaranteed enrollment in the following school year, applications shall be counted to determine whether the Charter School has received more applications than availability. If the number of students applying for enrollment exceeds the Charter School's capacity, admission shall be determined by random public drawing (lottery).

Public notice is posted at the Charter School location, on the Charter School web site and on distributed informational flyers regarding the application deadline and the date, time and location of the public drawing (typically at the end of January), encouraging people to attend (time is weekday evening to maximize attendance; the location is at the school site). If the lottery cannot reasonably be held at the VHGA site (or one of our sister school sites), it is held in a large community center, church, auditorium, or any public venue capable of seating all applicants comfortably. Parents are notified on the Lottery Application Form of the date and time of the public drawing, and invited to attend, though parent attendance at the lottery is not required in order to secure

enrollment for a student. VHGA includes details on the school website and in promotional materials about the enrollment timeline, rules, and procedures to be followed during the open enrollment and lottery processes.

Students who are currently enrolled are exempted from the lottery. Charter School offers the following enrollment priority in the lottery:

1. Siblings of admitted students, to help families and build community at the site
2. Children of teachers and staff (up to a cap of 10% of enrollment) to benefit our hard-working teachers and staff.

Lottery preference is given to residents of SAUSD in accordance with state law.

No other exemptions or preferences shall be given.

The lottery is conducted by a non-interested member of the staff who draws the pupil names and verifies lottery procedures are fairly executed. Application Forms, the manual record of all lottery participants and their assigned lottery numbers, and other lottery-related documents are physically filed on campus, and lottery results and waiting lists (determined in the order names are drawn in the lottery) are readily available in the Charter School's main office for inspection upon request. Each applicant's admissions application is kept on file for the academic year with his or her assigned lottery number in the school database and on his or her lottery application.

Those who apply after the lottery deadline are added to the end of the lottery waitlist in the order they are received. In the event that no such wait list exists where the space is available, the space is made available on a first come, first served basis to the next interested family at the appropriate grade level.

The waitlist for the current school year remains active until the end of the school year and does not "roll over"; applicants must reapply for the lottery annually if the school is unable to offer them admission for the current year. Once the drawing is at Charter School's capacity, applications continue to be drawn for position on a wait list. Students who are not granted admission for that school year remains on the waiting list until the end of the school year for which the lottery was conducted unless otherwise requested by the parent to be taken off. Students must reapply for the following year.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

Within two weeks of the lottery, families are notified in writing by the Principal of their enrollment status (offered enrollment or placement on waiting list). Each student offered a space in the following year are required to complete an enrollment packet within two weeks of receiving the letter indicating that a spot is available for the student. The Charter School holds a Pre-Enrollment informational session after the lottery and before the registration date to supply additional information and to assist families in filling out forms.

The enrollment packet is comprised of the following:

- Student Enrollment Form
- Proof of Immunizations
- Home Language Survey
- Emergency Medical Information Form

The waiting list includes contact information of the families not admitted through the lottery. If a position opens during the course of the year, the VHGA Office Manager contacts the family of the student on the top of the waiting list by phone or email to offer their student admission to the Charter School. If a family is notified by phone or email prior to August 1st, the family has ten (10) days to confirm enrollment and return a completed enrollment packet. If a student is notified after August 1st, they have 72 hours to confirm enrollment via phone call or email, and submit an application by mail or email to the Office Manager. Should the family decline the position, the next family on the list is contacted until the open position is filled.

A copy of all enrollment forms, waiting lists, and lottery results are kept on file in the VHGA administrative office and will be readily available for inspection by District representatives.

## **ELEMENT 9 – ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDITS**

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*“The manner in which annual, independent financial audits shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(l).)*

An annual independent financial audit of the books and records of VHGA shall be conducted as required by Education Code Sections 47605(b)(5)(l) and 47605(m). The books and records of VHGA shall be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and as required by applicable law, the audit will employ generally accepted accounting procedures. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with applicable provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller’s K-12 Audit Guide.

### **ANNUAL AUDIT PROCEDURES**

Each fiscal year an independent auditor conducts an audit of the financial affairs of VHGA to verify the accuracy of the Charter School’s financial statements, attendance and enrollment accounting practices, and internal controls.

Procedures:

- The Board of Directors appoints an Audit Committee by January 1 of each year.
- The Audit Committee may include persons who are not members of the board, but may not include any VHGA staff, including the Superintendent. In addition, any person with expenditure authorization or recording responsibilities within the organization may not serve on the committee.
- The Audit Committee is responsible for contracting with an audit firm from the State Controller’s list of approved charter school auditors by March 1 of each year, unless the existing contract is a multi-year contract. The Superintendent is responsible for working with the auditor to complete the audit.
- The Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing the results of the annual audit and developing a corrective action plan to address all relevant findings noted by the auditor.
- The Board of Directors reviews and approve the audit no later than December 15.
- The Superintendent is responsible for submitting the audit to all required agencies no later than December 15.

The audit committee reviews any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report recommendations on resolution to the Board of Directors. The Board reports to OCDE regarding how exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. It is understood that exceptions and deficiencies will be resolved to the satisfaction of OCDE.

## **ELEMENT 10 – SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION PROCEDURES**

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*“The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled from the charter school for disciplinary reasons or otherwise involuntarily removed from the charter school for any reason. These procedures, at a minimum, shall include an explanation of how the charter school will comply with federal and state constitutional procedural and substantive due process requirements that is consistent with all of the following:*

*(i) For suspensions of fewer than 10 days, provide oral or written notice of the charges against the pupil and, if the pupil denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence that supports the charges and an opportunity for the pupil to present the pupil’s side of the story.*

*(ii) For suspensions of 10 days or more and all other expulsions for disciplinary reasons, both of the following:*

*(I) Provide timely, written notice of the charges against the pupil and an explanation of the pupil’s basic rights.*

*(II) Provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate.*

*(iii) Contain a clear statement that no pupil shall be involuntarily removed by the charter school for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the pupil has been provided written notice of intent to remove the pupil no less than five schooldays before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the pupil or the pupil’s parent or guardian or, if the pupil is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the pupil’s educational rights holder, and shall inform the pupil, the pupil’s parent or guardian, or the pupil’s educational rights holder of the right to initiate the procedures specified in clause (ii) before the effective date of the action. If the pupil’s parent, guardian, or educational rights holder initiates the procedures specified in clause (ii), the pupil shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the charter school issues a final decision. For purposes of this clause, “involuntarily removed” includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions specified in clauses (i) and (ii).” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(J).)*

## **SCHOOL CLIMATE AND STUDENT DISCIPLINE SYSTEM**

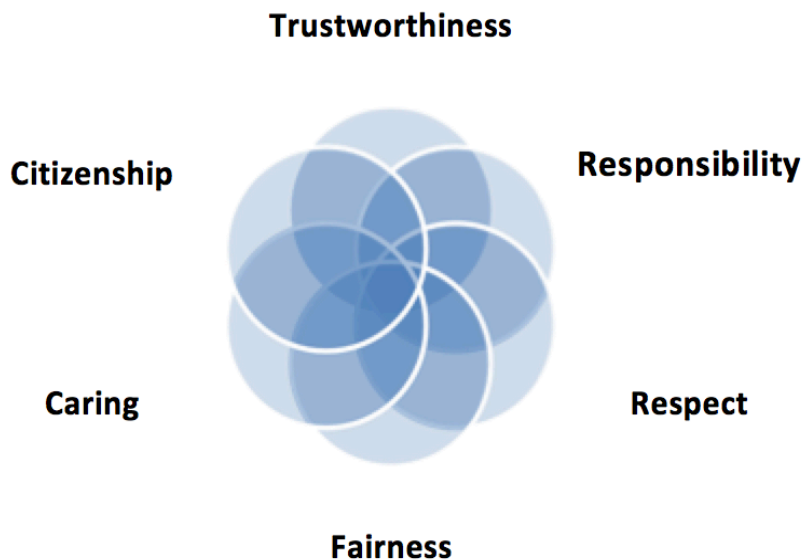
Positive behaviors have been associated with positive academic outcomes (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1987; Wentzel, 1993), while negative behaviors (e.g., inattention, distractibility, and withdrawn behaviors) have been associated with negative academic outcomes (Akey, 2006; Kane, 2004). VHGA cultivates a positive school environment that is characterized by mutual respect. Students are introduced to the school’s expectations during the student orientation days, and they are also reviewed on the first day of school.

At VHGA we believe that high, clearly defined, and consistent expectations support students’ self-confidence and that their efforts lead to success in school. Research demonstrates that schools in which students achieve high levels of performance tend to set high expectations and standards (Marzano, 2011). VHGA takes a proactive school-wide approach to behavior management. As a Character Counts school, VHGA focuses

on the Six Pillars of Character (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship). These pillars apply to most behavioral situations and are shared with students and families. The Six Pillars of Character are proactively taught, and are consistently reinforced throughout the school.

VHGA's discipline policy combined with the Six Pillars of Character are practices aligned with the OCDE District's Discipline Foundation Policy, requiring every school within VCPS to adopt and implement a school-wide positive behavior support discipline plan. Under the District policy, "all school level plans will include: teaching school rules and social emotional skills; reinforcing appropriate student behavior; using effective classroom management and positive behavior support strategies by providing early intervention for misconduct and appropriate use of consequences."

VHGA is a Character Counts School. That means that everything we do is centered on basic values called the Six Pillars of Character, which are shown in the following chart:



Good character is a result of parents and teachers who lay a strong foundation of character development.

What is character?

- Moral character uses our ethical values (like the Six Pillars) in order to be our best self.
- Performance character focuses on values that enable us to do our best work (diligence, imagination, work ethic, dependability).
- Your character is defined by what you do, not by what you say or believe.
- Good character requires doing the right thing even when it's costly or risky.
- You don't have to take the worst behavior of others as a standard for yourself.

You can choose to be better than that.

- The payoff for good character is that it makes you a better person and it makes the world a better place.

## **VHGA's School-wide Restorative Behavior Plan**

“Do what is right, not what is easy.”

### **Philosophical Foundation**

- The behavior vision is based on the **6 Pillars of Character**. We want our students to grow and develop characteristics such as: Responsibility, Respect, Caring, Fairness, Trustworthiness, and Citizenship.
- **The Tipping Point:** “the moment when something small, or even obscure, changes into something big.” (Malcolm Gladwell)

### **Key Elements to a School-wide Program**

To have a successful program, we must have:

- Teacher Collaboration and Coherence
- Clarity and Consistency for Students
- Parent Communication and Documentation

### **Our System**

#### **Character, College, Community**

Students build **character** that drives them to be **college** and career-bound and develop into effective citizens of their **communities**.

#### **School-wide Proactive Interventions**

Restorative Justice Practices and Way of Council

VHGA is committed to a holistic approach to student discipline and development. First and foremost we apply restorative practice and Way of Council to address social emotional development and any disciplinary actions as outlined earlier in this petition.

#### **Right Tickets**

Tickets rewarded for doing what is right. Students are going above and beyond to encompass the Six Pillars of Character.

- Students earn Right Tickets for the following positive behaviors:
  - Demonstrating Random acts of kindness
  - Demonstrating Random act of service
  - Following routines/instructions without adult prompts
  - Maintaining Organized materials
  - Completing homework consistently



- Outstanding or improved test scores
- Using courtesy properly
- Self-monitoring to improve behavior
- Taking initiative to improve academics
- Having a positive attitude/ Being a positive role model to peers
- Participating consistently in class

Examples of positive praise that could earn a Right Ticket:

“I noticed...

- that you did all of your homework this week.”
- that your materials are organized.”
- that you motivated your neighbor to participate in the group project.”
- that you raised your hand more this week.”

Google Docs is used to track positive behavior.

- Students earn 1 Right Ticket per random act or behavior.

### Right Ticket Reward System

\*calculated per year, rolls over at the semester

\*On the LAST FRIDAY of every month, students can redeem tickets for rewards in the office during Advisory.

| # Right Tickets | Reward   |
|-----------------|--|
| 5               | Positive phone call home, take away one Easy Ticket (see below for Easy Ticket definition), free school supply |
| 10              | Sweet treat, out of class first pass, first in lunch line pass   |
| 15              | Free top pass  |
| 20              | Free dress pass  |
| 25              | Lunch with teacher   |
| 50              | “50 Ticket Club”(e.g.. dinner with the Principal, movie tickets, iTunes gift card, bowling etc.)               |

### Interventions

- Verbal/written reprimand
- Community beautification (classroom or yard)
- Time-out activity (sent outside room or to another teacher)
- Written Reflection
- Changing seats
- Meaningful public or private apology
- + Choice / - Choice (Love and Logic)
  - Example: You can either choose to be quiet and work with the class or work outside on your own.

These policies are distributed in the school’s student handbook and describe the school’s expectations regarding mutual respect, safety, personal responsibility, work

habits, attendance, and more. Each family receives a copy of these policies and is required to verify that they have reviewed them with their children at the time of enrollment or at the beginning of the school year.

The discipline policy is not discriminatory or arbitrary. The process follows general principles of due process. Students sign agreements related to their understanding of and responsibility to the standards set forth in the discipline policy within the handbook. Students who do not live up to their responsibilities and who violate the school rules may expect some consequences for their behavior, such as:

- Alternatives to Suspension:
- Warning
- Loss of Privileges
- Notices to parents by telephone or letter
- Referral to the administrator
- Request for parent conference
- Way of Council
- Harm Circle- restorative

Should the previous interventions not be successful, suspension or expulsion may occur.

- In-school suspension
- Suspension
- Expulsion

VHGA monitors student behavior in a variety of means such as such as classroom observations, data gathered using the system presented in this petition, analysis of suspension and expulsion data, and Power School.

VHGA is exempt from Education Code requirements and procedures related to student suspension and expulsion; however, VHGA is committed to the student discipline, suspension, and expulsion policies as outlined in this petition. Therefore, references in this charter to the Education Code are used as a guideline.

### **Jurisdiction**

A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the acts enumerated in Education Code § 48900, except for willful defiance and/or disruption, related to school activity or school attendance that occurs at any time including, but not limited to:

- While on school grounds.
- While going to or coming from school.
- While using school-owned computers and servers.
- During the lunch period whether on or off the campus.
- During, or while going to or coming from, a school-sponsored activity.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

For students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from assigned school activities, alternatives to suspension or expulsion are attempted first.

### **In-School Suspension**

In-school suspensions are given as an alternative to out of school suspensions and are held in the Principal's office or other location designated by the Principal. A certificated/credentialed staff member supervises the student during the in-school suspension. During in-school suspensions, teachers provide the students with assignments to complete by the end of the school day. If the student has questions about the assignments, the teachers provide support. During the day of the suspension, the student's teachers address behaviors that may have contributed to the student's in-school suspension. In addition to completing assigned work, the student is required to complete a reflection addressing why the behavior occurred and what can be done in the future to ensure that the offense is not repeated. Parents/guardians are notified of the in-school suspension in writing by the Principal or his/her designee in the parent/guardian's native language. The notice contains the reason for the in-school suspension, as well as the length of time for the in-school suspension. The maximum number of days of in-school suspension per incident in one academic year is 6, and the maximum number of consecutive days is 3. In-school suspensions would always be subject to an administrative decision regarding the severity and nature of the underlying offense. In the case of a student who causes or attempts to cause hate violence, engages in harassment or threats or intimidation against students or staff, or who makes terrorist threats against school officials or school property, the administration would review the facts to determine if in school suspension would pose a threat to the safety of students, staff and visitors to the school. In many situations, in school suspension may not be an appropriate disciplinary option if a credible threat to school safety exists.

### **GROUNDINGS FOR SUSPENSION, OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

A single suspension may not be issued for more than 5 consecutive school days. The total number of days for which a student, including students with a 504 Plan, may be suspended from school shall not exceed 20 days. Students with an IEP shall not be suspended for more than 10 school days in any school year.

### **ENUMERATED OFFENSES**

**Discretionary Suspension Offenses:** Students *may* be suspended for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:

1. Causing, attempting to cause or threatening to cause serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense.
2. A pupil in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive, may be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion if the principal determines that the pupil has caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of, hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233.
3. Unlawfully possessed, used, or was under the influence of any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
4. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5.
5. Using tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, et al.
6. Harassed, threatened or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
7. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a responsible person to conclude that the replica is a firearm unless, in the case of possession of any object of the type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certified school employee, with the administrator's or designee's concurrence.
8. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
9. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
10. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
11. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
12. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing as defined in Education Code Section 32050.
13. Aided or abetted the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.
14. Engaged in sexual harassment as defined in Education Code Section 48900.2.
15. Engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation directed against school district personnel or pupils as defined in Education Code Section 48900.4. The harassment, threats, or intimidation directed at school personnel or pupils must be on the bases of:
  - a. Race/color/national origin
  - b. Disability

- c. Other factor
- d. Against school district personnel.
- 16. Made terrorist threats against school officials, school property or both as defined in Section 48900.7.
- 17. Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act, as defined in subdivisions (f) and (g) of Section 32261, directed specifically toward a pupil or school personnel.

### **RECOMMEND FOR EXPULSION OFFENSES**

The Principal or Designee must recommend the expulsion of a pupil for any of the following acts committed at school or at a school activity off school grounds, unless the Principal or Designee determines that expulsion is inappropriate or that an alternative means of correction would address the conduct:

- 1) Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense.
- 2) Possession of any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the pupil.
- 3) Unlawful possession of any controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code section 11053 et seq. (except one ounce of marijuana or over the counter medications or medication prescribed to student).
- 4) Robbery or extortion.
- 5) Assault or battery (as defined in Penal Code section 240 and 242) upon any school employee.

### **IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION AND MANDATORY RECOMMENDATION FOR EXPULSION OFFENSES**

Principal shall immediately suspend and recommend expulsion when the following occur at school or at a school activity off campus:

It is a federal mandate that a school expel, for a period of not less than one year (except on a case-by-case basis), any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school. In accordance with California Education Code § 48915, the following reasons shall constitute mandatory grounds for immediate suspension and recommended expulsion:

- 1. Causing serious physical injury to another person
- 2. Brandishing a knife
- 3. Possession, selling, or furnishing of a firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object
- 4. Robbery or extortion, offering, negotiating a sale or selling a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind.
- 5. Violation of the Federal Guns Free School Act
- 6. Pupil has committed sexual harassment as defined in Section 212.5. The conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a

negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall not apply to pupils enrolled in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive.

## **OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

A student may receive an out-of-school suspension if it is determined that the student's presence would be a danger to others at school and their removal from school is necessary.

## **SUSPENSION PROCEDURES**

Suspensions (whether in-school or out-of-school) shall be initiated according to the following procedures. The Principal, Assistant Principal, and Superintendent are authorized to suspend students. The procedures for investigating incidents and collecting evidence shall be fair and thorough.

### **CONFERENCE**

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Principal with the student and his or her parent and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the Principal.

The conference may be omitted if the Principal or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the pupil shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him or her and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense. This conference shall be held within two school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization. No penalties may be imposed on a pupil for failure of the pupil's parent or guardian to attend a conference with school administration. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the pupil's parent or guardian at the conference.

### **NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

At the time of suspension, the Principal or Assistant Principal shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing by the Principal or Assistant Principal of the suspension and the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense(s) committed by the student. In addition, the notice also states the date and time when the student may return to school. If the Principal or Assistant Principal wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent

to the suspension, the notice requests that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

### **LENGTH OF SUSPENSION**

The length of suspension for students shall not exceed a period of 5 consecutive days unless an expulsion is recommended. If a student is recommended for a period of suspension exceeding 5 consecutive days, a second conference is scheduled between the parent/guardian and the Principal to discuss the progress of the suspension upon the completion of the 10th day of suspension. The total number of days for which a pupil may be suspended from school shall not exceed a total of 20 school days in any school year, unless a pupil enrolls in or is transferred to another regular school, in which case the total number of schooldays for which the pupil may be suspended shall not exceed 30 days in any school year. During suspensions, teachers provide the students with assignments to complete by the end of the duration of the suspension. If the student has questions about the assignments, the teacher provides support.

Students with disabilities who are suspended shall continue to receive services so as to provide FAPE and enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP/504. Any discipline that includes removal from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days constitutes a change in placement and a manifestation determination shall be conducted.

An IEP or 504 meeting is required within ten (10) days of initial suspension or placement in an interim alternative educational setting.

### **Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination**

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b. If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504.

## **EXPULSION PROCEDURES**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPULSION**

Students are recommended for expulsion if the Superintendent finds that one of the reasons for expulsion has occurred and at least one of the following findings is substantiated:

- Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct.
- Due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others.

The Principal or the Superintendent have the authorization to recommend to expel a student.

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b. If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504.

### **EXPULSION HEARING**

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether or not the student should be expelled. The hearing is held within 30 days from the date of the recommended expulsion, after the Superintendent determines that an act subject to expulsion has occurred. The hearing is presided over by an Administrative Panel appointed by the Board, consisting of at least three members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the pupil nor a Board member of the School's governing board. A Facts and Findings document that includes dates, times, incidences, people present, and an objective anecdotal record of the events is prepared by the Superintendent to summarize the evidence adduced at the hearing.

The Superintendent or Principal prepares a written notice of the hearing, which is emailed and mailed, within 48 hours of the request for the hearing, and it is forwarded to the student and the student's parents at least 10 calendar days before the date of the hearing. This notice includes:

- The date and place of the hearing
- A statement of the specific facts, charges and offense(s) upon which the proposed expulsion is based
- A copy of the disciplinary rules that relate to the alleged violation
- The opportunity for the student or the student's parents to appear in person at the hearing
- The availability of reasonable accommodations and/or language support
- The opportunity for the student to be represented by counsel

The decision of the Administrative Panel is final and shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a determination regarding the expulsion. The process for appeal is



detailed in the section below. If the Administrative Panel decides not to expel, the pupil shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program.

### **SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION HEARINGS INVOLVING SEXUAL ASSAULT OR BATTERY OFFENSES**

The Charter School may, upon finding a good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations which shall be examined only by the Administrative Panel. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the pupil.

1. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of his/her right to (a) receive five days' notice of his/her scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of his/her choosing present in the hearing at the time he/she testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.
2. The Charter School must also provide the complaining witness a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
3. At the discretion of the Administrative Panel, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.
4. The Administrative Panel may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The Administrative Panel may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the person presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The Administrative Panel may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the Charter School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the Charter School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the

testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.

8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the hearing room during that testimony.
9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in the public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are not alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing by means of closed-circuit television.
10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness's prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the panel conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstances can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

#### **RECORD OF HEARING**

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

#### **PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE**

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A determination by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence presented at the hearing that the student committed an expellable offense.

Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay and sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Administrative Panel or Governing Board on appeal determines that disclosure of their

identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the accused pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

If the Administrative Panel decides not to recommend expulsion, the pupil shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program at the Charter School.

### **WRITTEN NOTICE TO EXPEL**

Following a decision of the Administrative Panel to expel, the Superintendent or Principal shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Administrative Panel's adopted findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following:

1. Notice of the specific offense(s) committed by the student
2. Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the Charter School.
3. Reinstatement eligibility review date
4. Notice of any appeal rights and procedures
5. The type of educational placement during the period of expulsion and/or information about alternative placement options

The Superintendent or Principal shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the education office for the student's district of residence and to the District as required by any operative DRL. This notice shall include the following:

1. The student's name
2. The specific expellable offense committed by the student

### **SUSPENSION/EXPULSION APPEAL**

Parents are notified by the Principal or Assistant Principal through a telephone call and in writing in advance to enactment of the suspension or expulsion and can appeal a student's suspension or expulsion. The suspension of a student are at the discretion of the Principal. A suspension appeal may be made to the Superintendent within ten days of the suspension. Following due consideration of the facts and safety of students, a decision by the Superintendent regarding student suspension are considered final.

An expulsion may be appealed within ten working days and must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent. The student is considered suspended until a meeting is convened by the Superintendent to consider the appeal (within 30 working days). The

appeal is considered by the VHGA Governing Board and the family has a meaningful opportunity to be heard in the appeal process. For a student who is not reinstated upon appeal, the family is sent written notification by the Superintendent, within 24 hours of such decision, including specific reasons why reinstatement was denied, and are given a new eligibility review date. The decision of the VHGA Board of Directors is impartial and final. VHGA creates and maintains records of the expulsion proceedings and make audio records and written findings available to students/parents and provide post-expulsion support to expelled students and their families to facilitate continued access to education.

### **REINSTATEMENT AND READMISSION**

The readmission process includes a meeting with the Principal to determine whether the pupil has met the conditions of the rehabilitation plan and/or whether the pupil continues to pose a danger to campus safety. The Principal shall make a recommendation to the Governing Board for readmission unless there is a finding that the pupil has not met the conditions of the rehabilitation plan and/or continues to pose a danger to campus safety. The Governing Board makes the final determination. These procedures shall be made available to the pupil and the pupil's parent or guardian at the time the expulsion order is issued. VHGA is responsible for reinstating the student upon the conclusion of the expulsion period.

### **REHABILITATION PLANS**

The rehabilitation plan includes improved behavior, attendance and academic performance and shall include a date not later than one (1) year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to VHGA for readmission.

Criteria for the rehabilitation plan includes the following: enrollment in another school; upholding school rules and behavioral expectations; acceptable attendance; completion of school work; and community service hours. VHGA shall mail written notification to parent within 30 days prior to the end of the expulsion term. This notification requests the parent to submit written documentation to the school showing that the student has met the conditions of the rehabilitation plan. VHGA's Governing Board shall review the reinstatement documentation and vote to reinstate or not. If the board votes to reinstate the student, VHGA shall remove record of the student's expulsion from their student records. If the student does not meet the requirements of their rehabilitation plan as determined by the Board, the Board revisits at a later date not to exceed one (1) year.

### **EXPELLED PUPILS/ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

The school helps provide the parent necessary information and a list of placement options. Pupils who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence.

## **ELEMENT 11 – EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEMS**

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*“The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers’ Retirement System, the Public Employees’ Retirement System, or federal social security.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(K).)*

VHGA makes participation in State Teachers’ Retirement System (STRS) available to teachers. VHGA will make a 403b available to classified persons working at the school. VHGA will make any contribution that is legally required of the employer, including social security, and unemployment insurance. All withholdings from employees and the Charter School will be forwarded to the STRS fund as required. The Charter School will continue participation in STRS for the duration of the Charter School’s existence under the CDS code.

### **STAFF RETIREMENT ALLOCATIONS**

1. STRS: All certificated personnel including teachers and Site Administrators
2. 403b option: Classified Staff
3. Federal Social Security: Classified Staff, including the Superintendent, Office personnel

### **RESPONSIBLE STAFF MEMBER**

The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements for the aforementioned coverage is made with approval of the Board.

### **STRS REPORTING**

VHGA submits all retirement data through OCDE and complies with all policies and procedures for payroll reporting. Employees accumulate service credit years in the same manner as all other members of STRS. The Superintendent shall be solely responsible for ensuring that such retirement coverage is arranged and shall forward any required payroll deductions and related data to OCDE as required by Education Code Section 47611.3.

## **ELEMENT 12 – PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES**

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*“The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(L).)*

No student shall be required to attend VHGA. Students who opt not to attend VHGA may attend other district schools or pursue an inter- or intra-district transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of their district or country of residence.

The parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled in VHGA shall be informed during open enrollment on admissions forms that the pupil has no right to admission in a particular school of any local education agency (or program of any local education agency) as a consequence of enrollment in VHGA, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.

## **ELEMENT 13 – EMPLOYEE RETURN RIGHTS**

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*“The rights of an employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(M).)*

No public school district employee shall be required to work at VHGA. Employees of the District who choose to leave the employment of the District to work at VHGA will have no automatic rights of return to the District after employment by VHGA unless specifically granted by the District through a leave of absence or other agreement. VHGA employees shall have any right upon leaving the District to work in VHGA that the District may specify, any rights of return to employment in a school district after employment in VHGA that the District may specify, and any other rights upon leaving employment to work in VHGA that the District determines to be reasonable and not in conflict with any law.

All employees of VHGA will be considered the exclusive employees of VHGA and not of the OCDE. Sick or vacation leave or years of service credit at the OCDE or any other school district will not be transferred to VHGA. Employment by VHGA provides no rights of employment at any other entity, including any rights in the case of closure of VHGA.

## **ELEMENT 14 –DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES**

*“The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(N).)*

### **DISPUTES BETWEEN THE CHARTER SCHOOL AND OCDE**

VHGA recognizes that it cannot bind the District to a dispute resolution procedure to which the District does not agree. The following policy is intended as a starting point for a discussion of dispute resolution procedures. VHGA is willing to consider changes to the process outlined below as suggested by the District.

VHGA and the District will be encouraged to attempt to resolve any disputes amicably and reasonably without resorting to formal procedures.

In the event of a dispute between VHGA and the District, VHGA staff, employees and Board members of VHGA and the District agree to first frame the issue in written format (“dispute statement”) and to refer the issue to the District Superintendent and VHGA Superintendent, or their respective designees. In the event that the District Board of Education believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter in accordance with Education Code Section 47607, VHGA requests that this shall be noted in the written dispute statement, although it recognizes it cannot legally bind the District to do so. However, participation in the dispute resolution procedures outlined in this section shall not be interpreted to impede or act as a pre-requisite to the District’s ability to proceed with revocation in accordance with Education Code Section 47607 and its implementing regulations.

The Superintendent and Principal, or their respective designees, shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute, not later than five (5) business days from receipt of the dispute statement. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties shall identify two Board members from their respective boards who shall jointly meet with the Superintendent and Principal, or their respective designees, and attempt to resolve the dispute within fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the dispute statement.

If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Superintendent and Principal, or their respective designees, shall meet to jointly identify a neutral third-party mediator to engage the parties in a mediation session designed to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The format of the mediation session shall be developed jointly by the Superintendent and Principal, or their respective designees. Mediation shall be held within sixty (60) business days of receipt of the dispute statement. The costs of the mediator shall be split equally between the District and VHGA. If mediation does not resolve the dispute either party may pursue any other remedy available under the law. All timelines and procedures in this section may be revised upon mutual written agreement of the District and VHGA.



## **INTERNAL DISPUTES**

VHGA shall have an internal dispute resolution process to be used for all internal disputes related to the Charter School's operations. VHGA shall also maintain a Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures as required by state law. Parents, students, Board members, volunteers, and staff at VHGA shall be provided with a copy of VHGA's policies and internal dispute resolution process. The District shall promptly refer all disputes not related to a possible violation of the charter or law to VHGA.

## **ELEMENT 15 – CLOSURE PROCEDURES**

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*“The procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the charter school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.” (Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(O).)*

The following procedures shall constitute the “Closure Protocol” and shall apply in the event VHGA ceases to be a charter school or otherwise closes for any reason.

Any decision to close VHGA as a charter school operating pursuant to this Charter shall be documented by official action of the VCPS Board (“Closure Action”), and will identify the person or entity responsible for all closure-related activities and actions. The action will identify the reason for closure (e.g., decision not to renew as a charter school). The Closure Action shall be deemed to have been automatically made if any of the following occur: the Charter is revoked or non-renewed and VHGA has exhausted all appeal procedures to County and State Boards of Education, the VCPS governing body votes to close VHGA, or the Charter lapses. In the event of a Closure Action, the following steps shall be implemented, which follow the procedures and requirements set forth in Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(O) and the California Code of Regulations sections 11962 and 11962.1.

VHGA governing body will notify the authorizer of the determination of the Closure Action and of the effective date of the closure as a charter school within 72 hours of the Closure Action.

VHGA will provide written notification to the home districts of the list of returning students within 72 hours of the determination of the Closure Action.

VHGA will promptly notify parents and students of VHGA, the District, the Orange County Office of Education, VHGA’s SELPA, the retirement systems in which VHGA’s employees participate (e.g., State Teachers’ Retirement System, and federal social security), and the California Department of Education of the closure as well as the effective date of the closure. This notice will also include the name(s) of and contact information for the person(s) to whom reasonable inquiries may be made regarding the closure; the pupils’ school districts of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements.

VHGA will ensure that the notification to the parents and students of the Charter School of the closure provides information to assist parents and students in locating suitable alternative programs. This notice will be provided promptly following the Board's decision to close VHGA.

VHGA will also develop a list of pupils in each grade level and the classes they have completed, together with information on the pupils’ districts of residence, which they will provide to the entity responsible for closure-related activities.

As applicable, VHGA will provide parents, students and the District with copies of all appropriate student records, and will otherwise assist students in transferring to other schools. All transfers of student records will be made in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”), 20 USC §1232g. VHGA will ask the District to store as necessary original records of Charter School students. All student records of VHGA shall be transferred to the District upon school closure. If the District will not or cannot store the records, VHGA shall work with the Orange County Office of Education to determine a suitable alternative location for storage.

As soon as is reasonably practical, VHGA will prepare final financial records. VHGA will also have an independent audit (which may also serve as the annual audit) completed by an independent auditor as soon as is reasonably practical, but in no case later than six months after closure. The audit must include at least the following (i) All information required of in an annual audit; (ii) An accounting of all assets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment and supplies; (iii) An accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans and unpaid staff compensation; (iv) An assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to VHGA, and (v) A delineation of the disposition of all assets and liabilities. Any liability or debt incurred by VHGA shall be the responsibility of VHGA and not the District. VHGA understands and acknowledges that VHGA will cover the outstanding debts or liabilities of VHGA. Any unused special education related funds will be returned to the District or SELPA, as appropriate, and other categorical funds will be returned to the source of funds as required by applicable law.

On closure of VHGA, all assets of VHGA, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending VHGA, remain the sole property of the nonprofit public benefit corporation. Upon the dissolution of the VHGA nonprofit public benefit corporation and, upon dissolution of the nonprofit public benefit corporation, shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation. Any assets acquired from the District or District property will be promptly returned upon Charter School closure to the District. The distribution shall include return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, as well as the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted.

On closure, VHGA shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of VHGA.

As VHGA is operated as a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve with the closure of the Charter School, the Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a non-profit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

For a minimum of six calendar months from the date of the Closure Action or effective date of the closure, whichever comes first, sufficient staff as may be allowed by the budget and remaining assets will maintain employment to take care of all necessary tasks and procedures required for smooth closing of VHGA and student transfers.

In addition to the final audit, VHGA shall also submit any required year-end financial reports to the California Department of Education, the Orange County Superintendent of Schools, and the District, in the form and timeframe required, including, but not limited to, those required by Education Code §47604.33.

VHGA shall use budget reserves normally maintained for contingencies and emergencies to fund closure proceedings.

## **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

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### **FACILITIES**

*The facilities to be utilized by the school. The description of the facilities to be used by the charter school shall specify where the school intends to locate.” Ed. Code § 47605(g).*

VHGA currently has 12 core classrooms, one Music enrichment classroom, three offices, cafeteria/multi-purpose space and green space. In the next five years, the need for space will increase to 18 core classrooms with two additional arts/tech/intervention rooms and multi-purpose/PE space, additional office spaces, with adequate facilities for lunch, P.E., school meetings and outdoor play.

VHGA is located at 2609 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Santa Ana, CA 92703.

While VHGA will make every effort to secure an appropriate private facility for our school (potentially including a temporary facility), VHGA does reserve the right to seek a Proposition 39 facility from the local district.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

*“The manner in which administrative services of the school are to be provided.” Ed. Code § 47605(g).*

VHGA will procure its own administrative services through an appropriately qualified third-party contractor. VHGA plans to contract with qualified experienced charter schools back-office provider (currently ICON School Management). Vista will ensure that its “back office” organization has capacity to provide the following services:

- Budgeting
- Financial reporting and forecasting
- Accounting and bookkeeping services
- Cash management
- Payroll processing and retirement reporting
- Compliance and data management services

VHGA will ensure that all contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders. VHGA shall approve only responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement, and in compliance with conflict of interest laws referenced herein. Consideration will be given to matters such as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources.

## **CIVIL LIABILITY IMPACT**

*“Potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the school and upon the school district.” Ed. Code § 47605(g).*

VHGA shall be operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701(d).

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), an entity that grants a charter to a charter school operated by or as a non-profit public benefit corporation shall not be liable for the debts or obligations of the charter school or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors or omissions by the charter school if the authority has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law. VHGA shall work diligently to assist the District in meeting any and all oversight obligations under the law, including monthly meetings, reporting, or other District-requested protocol to ensure the District shall not be liable for the operation of VHGA.

Further, VHGA will continue to have a memorandum of understanding with the OCDE, wherein VHGA shall indemnify the OCDE for the actions of VHGA under this charter.

The corporate bylaws of VHGA shall provide for indemnification of the VCPS Board, officers, agents, and employees, and VHGA will purchase general liability insurance, Board Members and Officers insurance, and fidelity bonding to secure against financial risks.

As stated below, insurance amounts will be determined by recommendation of the OCDE and VHGA’s insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and student population. VHGA shall be named an additional insured on the general liability insurance of VHGA.

The VHGA Board will institute appropriate risk management practices as discussed herein, including screening of employees, establishing codes of conduct for students, and dispute resolution.

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING, REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

*“The petitioner or petitioners shall also be required to provide financial statements that include a proposed first-year operational budget, including startup costs, and cashflow and financial projections for the first three years of operation.” Ed. Code § 47605(g).*

Attached, as Appendix 3, please find the following documents:

- A five-year projected budget with three-year monthly cash flow projections
- A budget narrative
- VHGA’s Fiscal Policies & Procedures

These documents are based upon the best data available to VHGA at this time.

VHGA shall provide reports to the County Superintendent of Schools as follows in accordance with Education Code Section 47604.33, and shall provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the OCDE:

- By July 1, a preliminary budget for the current fiscal year. For a charter school in its first year of operation, financial statements submitted with the charter petition pursuant to Education Code 47605(g) will satisfy this requirement.
- By July 1, a local control and accountability plan and an annual update to the local control and accountability plan required pursuant to Education Code Section 47606.5.
- By December 15, an interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through October 31. Additionally, on December 15, a copy of the Charter School's annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be delivered to the County Superintendent of Schools, State Controller, and California Department of Education.
- By March 15, a second interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through January 31.
- By September 15, a final unaudited report for the full prior year. The report submitted to the OCDE shall include an annual statement of all the Charter School's receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

VHGA shall provide reporting to the OCDE as required by law and as requested by the OCDE including, but not limited to, the following: California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), actual Average Daily Attendance reports, all financial reports required by Education Code Sections 47604.33 and 47605(m), the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), and the LCAP.

VHGA agrees to and submits to the right of the OCDE to make random visits and inspections in order to carry out its statutorily required oversight in accordance with Education Code Sections 47604.32 and 47607.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.3, VHGA shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries including, but not limited to, inquiries regarding its financial records from the OCDE.

## **INSURANCE**

VHGA shall acquire and finance general liability, workers compensation, and other necessary insurance of the types and in the amounts required for an enterprise of similar purpose and circumstance. Coverage amounts will be based on recommendations provided by the OCDE and VHGA's insurer. The OCDE shall continue to be named as an additional insured on all policies of VHGA.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

VHGA will not provide transportation to and from school, except as required by law.