

Innovative District Summary

District Name: Blue Valley USD #229

District Superintendent: Dr. Tom Trigg

Local School Board President: Mrs. Pamela Robinson

District Address: 15020 Metcalf Avenue

Street

Overland Park

66283

City

Zip

Contact Name: Dr. Sue Dole

Title: Deputy Superintendent - Education Services

Email: sdole@bluevalleyk12.org Phone: (913) 239 4221

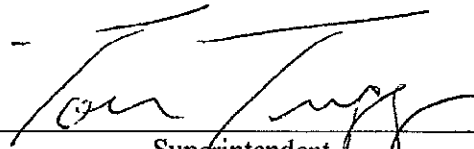
District Classification: Urban Suburban Rural

KSHSAA Rating: 6A

Number of Schools in District: 20 Elementary 9 Middle/Junior 5 High
2 Other (please specify): HS Academy, CAPS

Current District Enrollment: 21,807

Percent of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch: 9 %



Superintendent



Board President

Date: 11-22-13

Innovative District Application

Narrative

The applicant must explain the process as to how the district is being innovative. The narrative must include:

- Description of educational programs;
- Description of parental and community support;
- Specific goals and measurable pupil outcomes to be obtained;
- Explanation of how pupil performance in achieving the specified outcomes will be:
 - Measured
 - Evaluated
 - Reported; and
- Description of what state laws, rules and regulations from which the district is requesting to be exempt.

(Please limit narrative to no more than 10 pages.)

Submit application to:
Office of the Governor
Capitol
300 SW 10th Avenue, Suite 241S
Topeka, KS 66612

Deadline: December 1, 2013

July 1, 2013

**COALITION OF INNOVATIVE DISTRICTS
HB 2319**

The purpose of the designation of innovative districts is to allow up to ten percent of the state's school districts, at any one time, to opt out of most state laws and rules and regulations in order to improve student achievement.

House Bill 2319 authorizes a process where a local board of education may apply for authority to operate as a "public innovative district." The bill limits the number of public innovative districts to no more than ten percent of the state's school districts at any time. In preparation for applying for Innovative District status, the applicant should carefully read House Bill 2319.

In order to apply to become an Innovative District, the applicant should determine what state laws, rules, and/or regulations the district is requesting to be exempt from in order to achieve Innovative District status.

The deadline for this application is **Sunday, December 1, 2013**. Applications must be received at the Governor's office in Topeka by that date in order to be eligible for review. It is suggested that applicants submit an original and five copies of the application.

The application and approval requirements differ based on the application queue, as follows:

- For the first two school districts, a request for approval (containing the same information as the application) must go first to the Governor and the chairpersons of the Senate and House Education Committees. If a majority of these individuals approves the request, the district may submit an application to the Kansas State Board of Education, which is required to review and approve the application within 90 days, if it included the required contents. Requirements regarding notification of both approval and denial are contained in the bill. If an application is denied, the district has an opportunity to submit an amended application
- For the remaining districts, the request for approval goes first to the Coalition Board, which is created by the bill. The Coalition Board has sole discretion to approve or deny the request and may recommend the requesting school district modify the request. Modifications may then be considered by the Coalition Board prior to making a final decision. If the request is approved, the district may submit an application to the Kansas State Board of Education. The same review and notification requirements apply.

The designation of Innovative Districts will not be effective until the 2014-2015 school year and will be acknowledged for five consecutive years, dependent upon district compliance, with the opportunity to renew the status at the end of the five year period.

This application package contains the necessary information and form to apply for Innovative District status. If applicants have any questions or need additional information concerning the Innovative District application process, please contact Christine Macy, KSDE via e-mail: cmacy@ksde.org, telephone (785)296-3287, or visit our website at www.ksde.org.

July 1, 2013

Innovative District Application

Introduction

Blue Valley Unified School District #229 serves 22,000 students in southern Johnson County, Kansas. Recognized by the *Kansas City Business Journal* (October 2013) as the top ranked school district in the KC Metro area, Blue Valley is committed to providing an “*Education Beyond Expectations*” for every student while embracing a fiscally responsible approach to expenditures. Blue Valley ranks in the lowest 15 percent of Kansas school districts in per pupil funding (general and supplemental general, 2012-13 KSDE data).

Strategic Initiatives – Blue Valley students consistently perform at high levels on multiple measures. Because Blue Valley is a district that constantly strives to set high performance bars for our students and faculty, the district has identified three additional Strategic Initiatives to enhance our 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. The newly adopted Initiatives require us to broaden our expectations for achievement and to create and implement innovative programs that support the district’s goals and expectations for student performance. The Strategic Initiatives as adopted by the Board of Education in 2013:

World Class

Blue Valley Schools will create and implement a system that will result in our students being among the world’s leaders in academic achievement.

Exemplary Teachers

Blue Valley Schools will create and implement a system of selection, retention, and professional development that will ensure every Blue Valley student has an exemplary teacher in the classroom.

Digital District/Student Learning

Blue Valley will become a digitally managed system that integrates digital solutions and supports personalized learning.

As an example of our World Class strategic initiative, in 2012/13, students from each of the five high schools in Blue Valley participated in the pilot of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Test for Schools. Based on the Programme for International Student Assessments (PISA) assessment frameworks, the exam was administered to 15 year old students. When comparing Blue Valley scores to those of other nations participating in the 2009 PISA exam, the latest administration date with available scores, the results indicated that the scores of Blue Valley freshmen would have placed our students 4th in reading, 7th in mathematics, and 9th in science. When reviewing the OECD data, the Blue Valley School District is ranked

just below the nation of Finland. As a result of the pilot, and to confirm our commitment to becoming a world class school district, Blue Valley created a campaign dubbed #beatfinland <http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/beatfinland>. During the fall 2013, students will again participate in the OECD Test for Schools. Due to the district's participation in the pilot and interactions with OECD, Blue Valley has been invited to participate with OECD in the National Conference on Student Assessment to share our experiences implementing the OECD Test for Schools results to improve educational outcomes and guide academic goals and expectations.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are the cornerstone of the work in Blue Valley. Since the district adopted PLCs during the implementation of the first Strategic Plan in 2005, Blue Valley has become a recognized leader in the practice and application of the PLC model. Across the district, every teacher participates in a weekly PLC with job-alike colleagues. PLC teams use the weekly meeting to analyze student performance, plan focused instruction, and review formal and informal data collection results. The PLC model allows the district to provide a common experience for all students and has resulted in significant increases in student performance measures. Blue Valley's experience with PLCs has been cited in several books including a case study to be released in December 2013. Blue Valley is one of 19 U.S. districts designated by www.allthingsplc.info as a National Model of PLCs at Work.

Evidence of Blue Valley's commitment to enhancing the quality of our educational program can be seen in the success of our student's performance on the Kansas State Assessment (KSA). A video, the "Dancing Dots," www.bluevalleyk12.org/dots, provides a visual of the district's assessment outcomes from 2005 through 2012. The district believes the outcomes portrayed in the "Dots" video are explicitly linked to the work of PLCs coupled with a clearly articulated district focus.

In order to address the increasingly diverse needs of students, the district has sought to develop a variety of innovative programs and practices to support student learning. This application highlights several innovative programs that support our strategic initiatives and help define Blue Valley as an innovative district.

Innovative Programs

World Class

Blue Valley provides innovative programming to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners. This section of the application highlights a small portion of the programs available to our students.

Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) www.bvcaps.org – The Blue Valley CAPS program is designed for junior and senior students of varying academic abilities. The program allows students to explore areas of professional interest. Courses are provided in four strands: human services (teacher education, law, and medicine), engineering, global business and iMedia, and bioscience. The CAPS Accelerator program supports young entrepreneurs as they explore the power of their ideas. As a result, CAPS students have created multiple LLCs and filed for over 17 patents.

The CAPS program has received multiple honors including the 2011 Edison Foundation Gold Award for Innovation and the 2013 National Business Incubator Association Incubator Innovation Award. With over 250 business partners, CAPS has been named a member of the Kansas Mentors Gold Star Program. The CAPS teacher education program, designed for students interested in the teaching profession, was labeled by *T.H.E. Journal* (October 2012) as the “Best Little Teacher Education Program in Kansas”.

CAPS is currently implementing Vision 2016, a new strategic plan that includes two major goals: (1) creating seamless pipelines from high school to college to career and (2) updating current programming to meet changing industry standards. As part of Vision 2016, CAPS is currently working with business and college/ university partners (Garmin, Cerner, Black & Veatch, Burns & McDonald, and St. Luke’s Medical) along with JCCC, K-State, KU-Edwards, and KU to create seamless pipelines from CAPS to college to career. In 2014/15, CAPS will add instructional strands in veterinary medicine and global food industries. CAPS faculty and staff currently consult with eleven school districts across five states (Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Utah, and Minnesota) to develop programs that align with the CAPS model. Discussion has begun with a number of KC Metro businesses, organizations, school districts, and interested parties regarding expansion of the CAPS model within the region.

Advanced Placement (AP) – Blue Valley offers students multiple opportunities to participate in AP courses. During 2012/13, Blue Valley students took 3242 AP exams with an average score of 3.53 (on a 5 point scale). In 2014/15, the district will add AP Human Geography and in 2015/16 AP Computer Science Principles - focused on computer coding – to the course catalog. The district is currently reviewing the adoption of the AP Cambridge Capstone Credential, which includes a junior level seminar (Interdisciplinary Investigations and Critical Reasoning) and a senior research project combined with a minimum of three AP courses during the junior and senior year. Survey responses from Blue Valley graduates consistently highlighted the significance of the availability of high quality AP courses as a precursor to college success.

Special Education and Early Learning Services – We believe the test of a great school system is the provision of strong, innovative programming that embraces the learning needs of our most challenging learners including students with disability, our youngest learners, and students of

high ability. In this application, we highlight three innovative programs or practices that support our work with these learners.

BV Apple Tree <http://bvappletree.com/> is a collaborative effort of the Blue Valley Parents as Teachers and Early Childhood Special Education programs designed for families with children birth to five years of age. Subscribers to the website have free access to an assortment of fun and educational activities including downloadable original songs, picture books, music videos, family games, activities, and parenting tips for supporting early learning skills. The Blue Valley Apple Tree website and content was chosen by the Kansas Division of Early Childhood (KDEC) for “Recognition of Best Practices in Services - Technology” (2013).

Gifted Data System – Blue Valley supports 1600+ students with gifted Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). A 2008/09 program evaluation revealed discrepancies across the district, especially in the area of identification. In order to establish more uniform practice, the district developed a data system that allows teachers and staff to input student specific eligibility information and retrieve multiple reports that allow for more consistent practice and feedback. The system allows for aggregation of data for district purposes as well as disaggregation by school, grade level, and teacher. The data system has been showcased in presentations at the Kansas Association for Gifted Education and the National Association for Gifted Children.

ACCESS House – Serving students aged 18-21, ACCESS House has drawn national and international attention for its innovative programming. Located in a house constructed through donations from local contractors, the program provides learning support with development of appropriate independent living skills. Students typically spend two half-days per week within the ACCESS House, while receiving other services within the community. The ACCESS House program currently supports 51 students.

Digital District/ Student Learning

Blue Valley Schools are proud of our efforts to provide high quality opportunities for students using a variety of technologies to accelerate and deepen their learning coupled with opportunities for teachers to integrate technologies into instruction. Blue Valley is nationally recognized for our leadership in technology innovation. We are an invited charter member of the national League of Innovative Schools/ Digital Promise consortium <http://www.digitalpromise.org/initiatives/league-of-innovative-schools/>, the Consortium of School Networking (CoSN) Teaming for Transformation II (T4T II) cohort <http://www.cosn.org/TeamingForTransformation>, and recognized as one of the top ten Digital Districts by the Center for Digital Education and the National School Boards Association for five of the seven years since the inception of the award, more than any other district.

Virtual Education program – The district has developed and implemented a virtual education program that serves approximately 1600 students annually. Courses are developed by district teachers and reviewed by a panel of subject matter experts to assure that the courses meet the rigor and content covered in the traditional courses. All virtual supervisory staff maintains Quality Matters (QM) certification and incorporate QM standards into the design of all virtual courses. The current catalog includes 22 traditional and 12 credit recovery courses. Ongoing course development is based upon student requests and continued student enrollment.

Innovation Spaces K-5 www.bluevalleyk12.org/innovationspaces – At the beginning of the 2012/13 school year, Blue Valley opened 30 Innovation Spaces (IS) classrooms in five elementary buildings. The classrooms were part of a pilot designed to gain a better understanding of the supports necessary to insure technology integration in instruction and acceleration of student learning. The district provided additional technology (iPads, iPad Apps, netbooks, document cameras, Wi-Pads, dual touch SMART board, and HDMI projector) in each of the IS classrooms. In 2013/14 the project was expanded to 96 classrooms located in eight elementary buildings. This program will eventually be extended to all 450+ elementary classrooms located in 20 buildings. Ongoing evaluation of the program indicates that teachers require significant support to integrate technology into instruction. With time, support, and collegial collaboration, teachers are able to embed technologies and broaden the quality of student learning. The Innovation Spaces Shared iPad Cart model has been showcased by invitation at the EdTech Teacher iPad Summits (Atlanta and Boston), eMobile Learning conference, KSDE Annual Conference, League of Innovative Schools/ Digital Promise newsletter, and the Technology and Learning Advisory Blog <http://www.techlearning.com/Default.aspx?tabid-67&entryid=5839>.

Digital Learning Centers (DLCs) <http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/dlc> – Blue Valley is in the process of revamping our library media centers to become digital learning centers. The DLCs provide teaching areas (projector and SMART board) for large groups of students. Libraries also provide production centers for students (computers, laptops, and iPads) and opportunities for use of digital materials and research databases (eReaders, electronic books, databases, streaming video, etc.). DLCs are currently located in six libraries (1 HS, 2 MS, and 3 ES). All district libraries will become part of the DLC project within the next three years.

Digital Bridge <http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/digitalbridge> – Each Blue Valley high school contains a state-of-the-art Digital Bridge classroom. The Bridge is our distance learning/ video conferencing system. This project allows us to support low enrollment courses by extending availability to students in all high schools. Using the Digital Bridge classroom, students across all five high schools participate in Latin 1, Latin 3, German 2, and Multivariable Calculus. Teaching on the Bridge requires faculty to maintain a face-to-face classroom while engaging students located in as many as four remote locations. It is anticipated that as enrollment increases, the number of classes offered using this technology will expand.

Exemplary Teachers and Leaders

Creating, implementing and sustaining innovation requires focused leadership. Blue Valley has implemented innovative practices to enhance and develop systemic leadership in order to create and sustain innovation and success. Leadership development initiatives, such as those presented here, are designed to enhance individual and collective skill sets and to communicate the district vision and mission. These programs are directly linked to the district strategic initiative focused on placing and retaining an excellent teacher in every classroom and, by extension, an outstanding principal in every school.

New Teacher Academy (NTA) <http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/nta> – New Blue Valley teachers participate in a five-day induction program and a year-long mentoring program. During the first day of the program, teachers meet with Human Resources staff to focus on the logistics and specifics of becoming a faculty member in Blue Valley. The remaining four days of the NTA are designed to provide new teachers hands-on experiences with district technologies, programs, curriculum materials and classroom procedures. All professional development for new teachers is designed and focused on their role in the district. Teachers leave the program with the first ten days of lesson plans, a year-at-a-glance instructional guide, a network of exemplary teachers for support, and a district mentor who will collaborate with them during their first year in Blue Valley. New teachers also participate in both after school and online Effective Teaching Modules www.bluevalleyk12.org/etm developed and implemented by district staff.

Teacher Leadership Academy (TLA) – The Teacher Leadership Academy annually welcomes 30 teacher leaders from across the district. Participants meet once a month to enhance their leadership skills, learn about district initiatives and build a network of other teacher leaders. Participation in the TLA is strongly encouraged for those wishing to enter school administration.

High Quality Professional Development – The research on teaching clearly articulates the importance of a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. In Blue Valley, we create and provide high quality, on-going, job-embedded professional development for all teaching and administrative staff using a variety of delivery methods – face to face, web-based, job alike, conference mode, and individualized support. Topics are tied to implementations and district initiatives that support achievement of both the strategic plan and strategic initiatives.

Aspiring Principal Academy (APA) – Those wishing to join the district administrative team have the opportunity to apply to the Aspiring Principal Academy. The APA provides a two-year experience for ten candidates. These individuals have the opportunity to shadow district principals, debrief their experiences, and engage in book studies and exercises related to leadership in a

school and district setting. All activities are tied directly to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Program (ISLLC). At the conclusion of the APA, candidates are encouraged to interview for available positions within the district.

New Administrators – Newly hired administrators from all district departments participate in Part I of New Administrators meetings. Part I begins annually in early August and is designed to introduce the newest administrators to Blue Valley, our expectations for administrators, and the district culture. Participants complete a study of *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001), developing an understanding of the content, application to their particular position, and ability to see how the ideas intertwine throughout the work of the district. Part II for new building based administrators begins in November and culminates in the spring. Led by the Executive Directors of School Administration, this section focuses on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for administrators and is designed to enhance the understanding of administrative practice.

Parent and Community Support

When parent and community support is high, students perform better in school. In Blue Valley, education is highly valued. The district is filled with patrons whose support for excellence allows students to experience an *Education Beyond Expectations*.

Support throughout the years is consistent and varied. Blue Valley has a long-time history of passing bond referendums. The most recent election generated \$271 million for technology, safety and reinvestment in all 36 Blue Valley school facilities.

Support also comes in the form of time and mentoring. Hundreds of volunteers, mentors and business partners commit part of their week to supporting staff and students. A recent customer assessment survey conducted by an independent firm indicated that one of the top strengths of the district is parental involvement and volunteering. In this same survey 98 percent of patrons gave the district a grade of A or B, 95 percent gave teachers a grade of A or B, and 98 percent indicated that the district positively impacts property values and economic development in the district.

The high level of trust and support can be felt in any school. When a parent, volunteer or business partner walks into one of the district's schools, the educational atmosphere is one that makes people feel welcomed, respected, trusted, heard, and needed. The atmosphere of trust, the relentless efforts of our staff, and support provided by parents and community are what make Blue Valley a very special place to learn.

Goals and Measurable Outcomes

Blue Valley student data does not lend itself well to traditional goal setting such as closing achievement gaps, increasing the number of students who are proficient, increasing graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment. This is due to the fact that Blue Valley students have already obtained a 96.8 percent (Class of 2012) graduation rate, proficiency rates exceeding 90 percent on Kansas State Assessments, a district ACT average of 25.0, 93 percent of high school graduates (Class of 2013) indicating intent to enroll in college, and 93 percent of college enrollees returning for the second year of college (Class of 2011). Therefore, the specific Goals and Measurable Outcomes proposed below are somewhat unique and are designed to assist the district in maintaining and improving exemplary performance.

OECD Test for Schools (PISA)

Identified 15 year old students will participate in the OECD Test for Schools as an international measure of student progress.

By 2018, the percent of students scoring in Levels 0 – 6 in reading, math and science will change from the 2011/12 base line:

- a. Levels 0-2 will decrease by 5 percent,
- b. Levels 3-4 will increase by 5 percent, and
- c. Levels 5-6 will increase by 2 percent.

The Level performance data is included in the OECD reporting documents through district and individual building reports. This data will be reported to the Board of Education and shared with staff at each participating school.

KCCRS Assessment

Due to the continuing changes to state assessments, it is difficult to determine appropriate success measures until it is clear what assessments will be given, what data from those assessments will look like, and where we will need to focus our work. Blue Valley will continue to hold our students to high standards, and will adjust the success metrics included in this document as information becomes available.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

K-8 students will participate in MAP testing in order to provide diagnostic and progress data.

By 2018, the percent of students scoring Geometry Ready (RIT 245 or above) on the MAP End of Course Algebra Exam will equal or exceed 70 percent.

The MAP performance data will be reported to the Board of Education and shared with staff at each participating school. Parents will receive information regarding their child's performance.

STEM Focus

Middle and High School students will have opportunities to explore STEM career interests through coursework and real world activities.

By 2018, the number of students enrolled in engineering courses will increase as measured from the baseline 2012/13. The number of girls enrolled in engineering courses will increase from the 2012/13 baseline.

By 2018, the number of students involved in real world experiences such as mentoring in an area of potential career interest; participating in projects for business, industry or university partners; or participating in internships will increase from the 2012/13 baseline.

Baseline data and progress will be reported to the Board of Education.

Technology:

The district will extend learning opportunities so students may learn anywhere/anytime they have access to instructional materials.

By 2018, the district will increase the number of K-12 learning spaces containing cutting edge technologies, digital media, digital content, web based resources, online activities, and electronic databases as measured against the 2012/13 baseline.

Baseline data and progress will be reported to the Board of Education as part of the update on Educational Technology implementations within the district.

Laws, Rules and Regulations Exemptions

It is our understanding from reviewing the statute and information materials on HB2319 that qualifying districts will be exempt from "all laws and rules and regulations applicable to school districts", except as noted in the statute. Blue Valley assures continued compliance with the designated laws and rules and regulations.

We believe there are current requirements that limit our ability to pursue further innovation in our district. An example would be licensure regulations. We believe the structure of student learning is changing and outstanding instructors exist who have not had traditional education

backgrounds. The ability to access individuals with experiences and expertise to enrich the classroom experience of students in unique programs (such as CAPS) will enable Blue Valley to expand and support student learning. We believe we can provide a higher quality of education for our students with more flexibility on licensure requirements.

A second example is the identification of state testing instruments. As of the due date of this application, Kansas has not yet determined what assessments will be used to meet the state assessment requirements. We are intrigued with the possibility of local Board of Education selection of an appropriate assessment measure for Blue Valley. This district has already administered assessments such as the OECD Test for Schools (PISA) and the ACT Trilogy (Explore, Plan, ACT) in order to provide a broad range of measures with which to enhance our understanding of student academic progress.

Blue Valley USD #229 believes that we are a good candidate for designation as an Innovative District. Our application provides an overview of some of the innovative programs developed and implemented to increase the quality of the educational experience of every student. This is a district that proactively seeks new ways to measure and understand student progress. Blue Valley is fortunate that we have strong community and patron support as evidenced in the results of our recent customer satisfaction survey. We see this application as an opportunity to springboard our work to the next level. Blue Valley will continue to strive to provide a challenging and innovative educational program that meets the district mission of “unprecedented academic success and unparalleled personal growth for every student”.