

January 15, 2023

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER), which provides key information on the 2021-22 educational progress for Kalamazoo RESA's Valley Center School. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Mary Pickett, principal, for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following website <https://bit.ly/3WqeABq> , or you may review a copy in the main office at your child's school.

For the 2021-22 school year, schools were identified based on previous years' performance using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that had at least one underperforming student subgroup in 2021-22. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that had a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state in 2021-22. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance was in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or had a graduation rate at or below 67% in 2021-22. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given. Our school has not been given one of these labels.

Valley Center School serves students who are identified as special education students and they all have individualized educational plans, IEPs. The largest percentage of our student population have an educational diagnosis/label of emotional impairment. We also serve students' with educational labels of autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment, learning disability and otherwise health impairment. Related, more than 50% of enrolled students also have at least one mental health diagnosis. In all cases students who attend Valley Center have been enrolled through a process of determining the least restrict environment and the IEP team has determined the placement of Valley Center to be appropriate to support the significant emotional and behavioral needs of the student.

The key challenge that we face is the percentage of students who score below proficiency levels on state testing. We are committed to insuring that each of our students continues to learn and achieve their goals. State testing is one measure of learning, and we measure student progress in many ways. Given the severity of the emotional and behavioral needs of the student, many have large gaps in their learning, often due to absence from the instructional environment from behavioral/emotional reasons. Related, due to lagging emotional regulation skills, students often perform poorly on "demand tasks" and assessments. Our key initiatives include:

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- Targeting specific needs in reading and mathematics, as well as social emotional learning through consistent instruction with evidence-based curriculum and materials.
- Positive Behavior Supports implemented schoolwide.
- Family involvement at family/student conferences and IEP team meetings, and promotion of positive school attendance. Regular family engagement with the school and attendance at school supports consistent instruction to help students make progress.

Additionally, we are challenged because our student population is so small, the data found in these required state reports does not inform our practice well. In order for data to be reported, a subgroup must have at least 10 students. An example would be, we would need at least 10 5th graders to take the same test for there to be a reportable data point. Therefore, we must rely on individual analysis of performance on state tests, as well as other assessments given at the school level.

State law requires that we also report additional information:

1. **PROCESS FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO THE SCHOOL:** Placement of students from local/resident school districts occurs through a process of determining least restrictive environment, LRE. The IEP team placement decision and offer of a free and appropriate public education determines if students may or may not be enrolled at Valley Center. Valley Center School does not enroll students independent of local, resident school district involvement. If an individual family is interested in the programming at Valley Center School, their first contact should be with the local resident district special education director or supervisor.
2. **THE STATUS OF THE 3-5 YEAR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN:** The professional staff consisting of teachers, social worker, psychologist, teacher consultant and administrator, along with support staff consisting of paraprofessionals work collaboratively to identify and target areas for improvement. The past two years students have met individual goals related to achievement in reading, mathematics and social emotional learning.

Our most recent school continuous improvement goals include:

- Cultivating a welcoming, safe and inclusive school environment built upon Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist principles through staff professional development.
- Preparing students for their next phase of learning and life by maximizing cognitive, physical, emotional, and social growth through social emotional teaching and learning of regulation strategies.
- Providing opportunities for parents, families, and educators to build their competencies to support students' positive, sustainable outcomes through active involvement in the IEP team process including identification of meeting roles, hearing and addressing family concerns and determination of shared student outcome goals.

The goal areas will be aligned to the state curriculum standards and support our Vision and Mission:

Our Vision

Contributing members in homes, schools and communities

Our Mission

To support academic, social and emotional growth of students with emotional and behavioral challenges through collaboration with families, and school and community partners.

3. **SCHOOL DESCRIPTION:** Valley Center is the specialized/center-based program for Kalamazoo RESA which serves students in Kalamazoo county with emotional impairments or unique behavioral needs as identified by their IEPs. Students who attend Valley Center School currently range in age from 8 – 18.
4. **CORE CURRICULUM:** Valley Center School's curriculum was created in cooperation with multiple center-based programs throughout Michigan. The curriculum includes a focus on social and emotional skills and the core academic areas of English language arts, math, science, social studies and technology. The Valley Center School curriculum is aligned to the Michigan Curriculum Framework and the Common Core. Independent Educational Planning Meetings determine a customized focus for each student which may include differentiation, remediation or modification of grade level standards.
Information about the Michigan Academic Standards can be found here:
<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/academic-standards>
5. **ACHIEVEMENT TESTS:** Since the 2010-2011 school year Valley Center School has had too few students in each grade level to create reportable sub-groups for all of the MEAP, MEAP Access, M-Step or MI-Access assessments for English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. With less than 10 students per grade level, a sub-group defining those students is not created, so the results cannot be disaggregated and are not included in this report.
6. **STUDENTS REPRESENTED BY PARENTS AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES:** Valley Center Schools hosted parent-teacher conferences twice during the 19/20 and 20/21 school years. More than 85% of the students were represented in person by parents and/or guardians, via phone conference or by the attendance of a community mental health worker. In addition, parents, guardians and community members are encouraged to be involved at Valley Center School by participating in IEP team meetings and attending school events and programs.
7. **POST SECONDARY ENROLLMENT/COURSES:** Since the 2009-2010 school year, Valley Center has not had students taking part in dual enrollment, AP classes, college equivalent courses or course resulting in college credit.

On behalf of the staff and Valley Center School, we are thrilled to have the opportunity to continue to serve your child and look forward to continued educational opportunities that lead to personal growth and academic achievement.

Sincerely,

Mary Pickett, Valley Center School Principal
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