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03-01-07 Small School

March 01, 2007

Small School Generates Big Results

Story and Photo By Morris Workman

The Little School That Could
Pahranagat Valley High School is one of the few schools in the state to achieve an "Exemplary" rating in the Federal AYP program, which is the program's highest honor.

It's not quite the one-room schoolhouse from a bygone era, but it's also not the enormous educational institution that has become the norm elsewhere in Las Vegas and other districts in Southern Nevada.

With approximately 80 students in grades nine through 12, Pahranagat Valley High School can hardly be considered large.

However, their results are.

Following the 2005-06 school year, PVHS was deemed “Exemplary” in the Federal AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) grading system, which is a part of the “No Child Left Behind” initiative.

The “Exemplary” designation is the highest rating possible under the program.

No other school in Lincoln County received this rating, which was achieved by only a handful of schools in the entire state.

Also, the school’s excellence goes beyond the classroom, as the tiny Alamo school has had tremendous success is athletics.

The football team won the 1A State championship this year, while the girls volleyball team was the state runner-up in volleyball.

Recently, the girls basketball team went undefeated during the regular season and finished second in the state.

The school’s success is no accident.

It is the result of a dedicated staff, which includes just eight teachers, and careful decision-making by the administration.

“Our biggest challenge is trying to do everything the best we can,” said PVHS principal Steve Hansen.

“Sometimes the challenge is to say no in certain areas. We can’t do it all, so we have to pick and choose.”

The choices so far have led to positive results.

Because of the student population, and the small budget that accompanies lower enrollment, there are a lot of things the school can’t do.

“We can’t offer too much beyond the basics,” Hansen explained during an interview last Tuesday.

“Our challenge is to offer variety. We can’t offer a wide range of subjects, can’t offer advanced placement and honors classes.”

“We’re currently trying to improve our music and arts programs, but we don’t have the resources or kids.”

The school did manage to get a music teacher this year, using a grant.

The small size also means that the extracurricular offerings are limited.

It is not uncommon to see the same kids involved in several of the school’s clubs and organizations, while simultaneously playing on a sports team.

The same names also show up on the rosters of more than one team each year, as the low numbers require most of the athletes to play during all three seasons.

However, with specific focus, and a student-to-teacher ratio of 10 kids to one

teacher, the athletics and academics that the school does offer has resulted in high marks from the state and federal education apparatus.

In 2004-05, the school was deemed a “High Achieving” school, one click below “Exemplary.”

Since it was built in 1980, the school has seen a wide swing in enrollment.

During the “boom” years of 1982-84 when Union Carbide was operating in the area, the student count swelled to 125.

Now, with kids coming in from Alamo, Hiko, and even a few making the 65-minute one-way bus ride from Rachel, the numbers have stabilized.

Hansen observed that the population of the community has increased, but that increase hasn’t translated into more students.

“The town has gotten bigger. There are more mailboxes. But they are mostly retired, with no children in the household.”

As the school located closest to the Coyote Springs development, there is a chance PVHS might see a bump in enrollment, but that’s still well down the road.

Until then, the “little school that could” will continue chugging along, cranking out top scholars, excellent athletes, and a quality education for the community.

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Pahranagat Valley High School

Grades: 9-12
Type: public
Enrollment: 88
P.O. Box 298
Alamo, NV 89001
Lincoln County
Phone: (775) 725-3321
Fax: (775) 725-3334
District: Lincoln County School District
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HSPE Results

Scale: % meeting or exceeding standards

Grade 10

Reading

The state average for Reading was 81% in 2006.

Math

The state average for Math was 47% in 2006.

Source: NV Dept. of Education, 2005-2006

Grade 11

Writing

The state average for Writing was 89% in 2006.

Source: NV Dept. of Education, 2005-2006

About the Tests

- In 2005-2006 Nevada used the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) to assess high school students in reading, math and writing.
- The HSPE is a high school graduation requirement.
- The HSPE is a standards-based test, which means it measures specific skills defined for each grade by the state of Nevada.
- The goal is for all students to score at or above the state standard.

More about the tests

Compare with test results from nearby schools

HSPE Results By Subgroup

The test results by subgroup show how the designated group of students is performing in comparison to the general population.

Scale: % meeting or exceeding standards

Grade 10

Reading	This School

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All Students	92%
Female	90%
Male	93%
Black/African American	n/a
Asian/Pacific Islander	n/a
Hispanic	n/a
American Indian/Alaska Native	n/a
White/Caucasian	92%

Math	This School
All Students	68%
Female	80%
Male	60%
Black/African American	n/a
Asian/Pacific Islander	n/a
Hispanic	n/a
American Indian/Alaska Native	n/a
White/Caucasian	67%

Source: NV Dept. of Education, 2005-2006

Grade 11

Writing	This School
All Students	100%
Female	100%
Black/African American	n/a
Asian/Pacific Islander	n/a
Hispanic	n/a
American Indian/Alaska Native	n/a
White/Caucasian	100%

Source: NV Dept. of Education, 2005-2006

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- In 2005-2006 Nevada used the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) to

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assess high school students in reading, math and writing.

- The HSPE is a high school graduation requirement.
- The HSPE is a standards-based test, which means it measures specific skills defined for each grade by the state of Nevada.
- The different student groups are identified by the Nevada Department of Education. If there are a small number of students in a particular group, the state doesn't report data for that group.
- The goal is for all students to score at or above the state standard.

More about the tests

Nevada schools > Alamo schools > Lincoln County School District > Pahranagat Valley High School

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