

THE CHALLENGE:

Valley High School serves approximately 3,000 students in Grades 9–12. More than 60% are Hispanic and 50% qualify for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program. In 2004, the school did not make Adequate Yearly Progress for failing to get enough students to meet reading expectations on the Nevada High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Reading Test. Only 59% of Valley High School’s tenth- and eleventh-grade students met or exceeded the standards in reading.

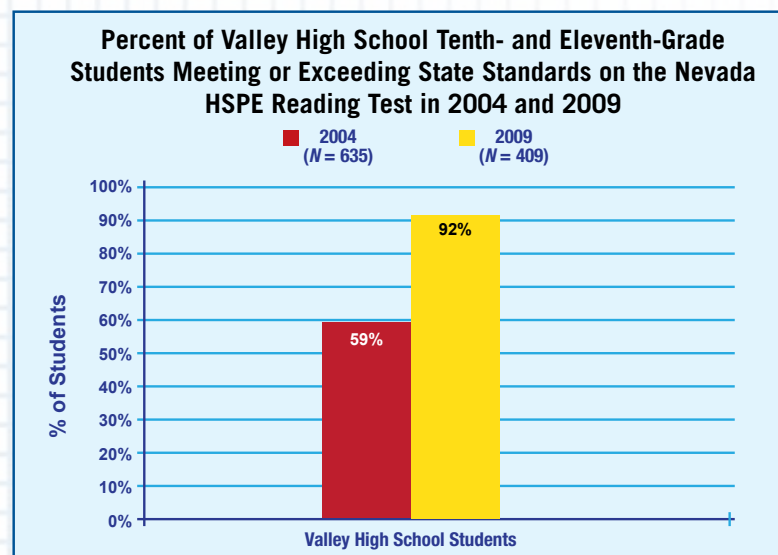
LITERACY IN ACTION:

Valley High School’s literacy improvement plan included the following elements:

- ✓ **Assessment** that pinpoints students’ literacy deficiencies and strengths;
- ✓ **Research-based literacy intervention** to accelerate students’ reading achievement;
- ✓ **Data** to benchmark and monitor student literacy performance;
- ✓ **Professional development** to help educators improve reading instruction;
- ✓ **Small learning communities** to give students more individualized attention;
- ✓ **Tutoring** programs and summer vacation “Boot Camp” to foster literacy skill development;
- ✓ **School culture** initiatives to boost student morale and decrease teacher turnover;
- ✓ **Customized educational planning** focused on increasing special education, English-learner, and non-proficient students’ reading achievement; and
- ✓ **Fundamental skill development** to improve reading performance on the state test.

THE RESULTS:

Data from the Nevada HSPE Reading Test were analyzed for tenth- and eleventh-grade students in 2004 and 2009. After implementing the literacy turnaround initiative, Valley High School was designated a “high-achieving turnaround” school. This distinction is for schools that make Adequate Yearly Progress two years in a row after failing to do so for three prior consecutive years.



From 2004 to 2009, the percentage of Valley High School students meeting or exceeding state standards on the Nevada HSPE Reading Test increased 33 percentage points. While just over half (59%) fell in the meeting or exceeding state standards range in 2004, nearly all (92%) did in 2009.



Valley High School:

Las Vegas, Nevada

LITERACY: A KEY SCHOOL TURNAROUND STRATEGY

Valley High School, in partnership with Scholastic, accomplished the following:

- Implemented Scholastic's READ 180® intervention with struggling students;
- Provided training and support through on-site coaching;
- Facilitated capacity-building initiative by training the READ 180 coordinator and other literacy leaders; and
- Identified key performance indicators and conducted monthly program data reviews to monitor progress, highlight successes, and resolve challenges.

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