

# Schools Calculate VHS Value

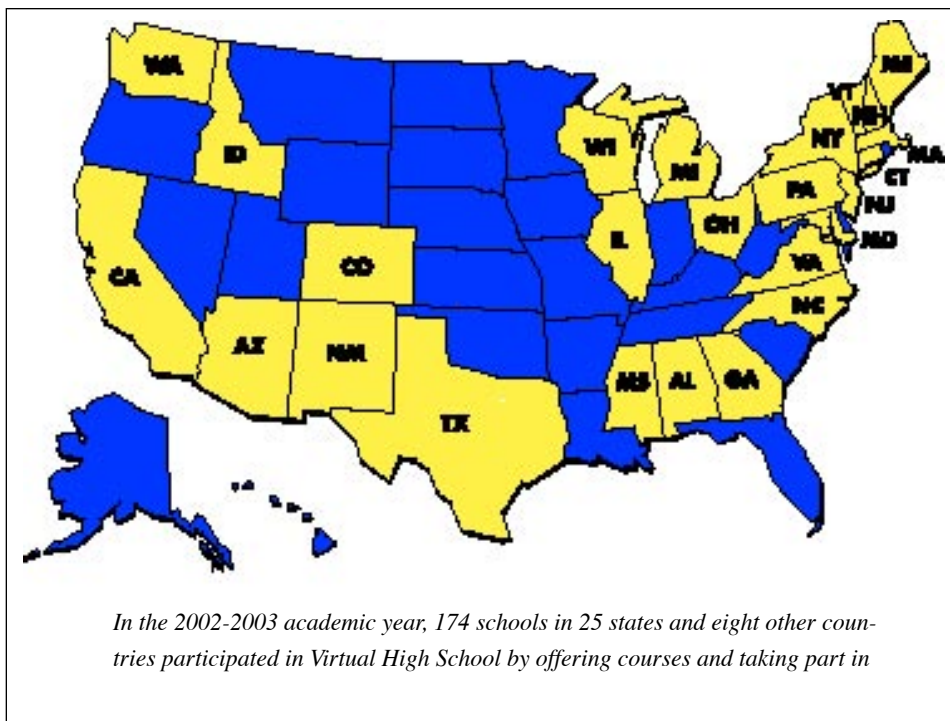
## Making the Decision to Join in Challenging Times

~ by Liz Pape, CEO, VHS Inc.

VHS recognizes that numerous schools are feeling the effects of a slowing economy and that many school administrators are presently reviewing their budgets, searching for cost-cutting measures. During these tough economic times, participation in the Virtual High School is even more compelling for schools, teachers, and students. Our country is in a critical period of educational reassessment, and numerous educators and parents are looking for innovative programs with demonstrated achievement success records. Schools do not have the time nor do they have the resources to endure a painfully long learning curve or to experiment with untested programs. The VHS achievement record and our award winning expertise help schools hit the ground running. We multiply benefits through participation in the VHS Collaborative by maximizing the economic value of the annual membership fee, and by increasing learning opportunities for students.

### Maximizing economic value

Many schools are facing the dilemma of declining resources while at the same time being held accountable for higher standards. VHS online courses are a proven, economical solution for schools needing an expanded curriculum, teachers seeking new horizons, parents wanting more involvement with their children's education, and a society grappling with ways to offer opportunities to all citizens. VHS offers schools financial economies through the cooperative pooling of teacher resources and student interests.



- ❖ No Child Left Behind requires all students, regardless of their location or family income, to have first class opportunities. The VHS course catalog allows schools to offer challenging courses taught by certified professionals in all disciplines, without a proportional increase in costs.
- ❖ In a time when schools are cutting under-enrolled courses from their offerings, VHS gives schools the flexibility to enroll students in an additional 120 full-semester courses, meeting the unique educational interests of all students.
- ❖ Many schools are forced to eliminate summer school programs as a cost-saving measure. VHS summer school courses can fill the void at no additional program cost to the school.
- ❖ The administration of any school undergoing accreditation within the next three years should know that VHS course offerings are recognized by the regional accrediting agencies as a legitimate means of providing students the scope and depth of offerings that visiting committees want to see. (NEASC, for example, commends schools for participation in VHS.)
- ❖ VHS has increased the number of seats for each participating school from 20 to 25 per semester, while maintaining the annual membership fee at the same level, giving schools even greater value for their money.

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## VHS Value

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### **Increasing learning opportunities**

VHS member schools are delivering online courses to students in 25 states and eight international countries, giving students enhanced learning opportunities.

- ❖ In an era when “global learning” is increasingly important, VHS provides schools an opportunity to make this a reality. Students engage in online collaboration with students from a variety of socio-economic and geographic backgrounds.
- ❖ VHS provides accredited courses for both credit recovery and enrichment to meet the needs of students on all levels of the educational spectrum.
- ❖ VHS provides AP courses (nine in 2003-2004) at a time when many schools either don't have teachers capable of teaching AP courses, or don't have enough students enrolled in AP courses to make them financially feasible to offer.
- ❖ VHS provides online IB courses to our students at a time when offering students the highest-caliber course offerings is critical to their future success in college and the workplace.
- ❖ VHS provides courses that prepare them to be 21st century learners by giving them skills in online collaboration, online presentation and communication, and the ability to use the Internet effectively.

### **Multiplying participation benefits**

Several years ago state departments of education and other educational organizations financially supported the entry of several schools into Virtual High School through grant funds for professional development, equipment, and teacher stipends. Many of those schools are still part of VHS, and they have built membership costs into their ongoing school budgets. The benefit of the initial grant money, used to seed a school's entry into the original Virtual High School Collaborative, has been multiplied many times over. Years of investment have made it possible for us to increase the number of teachers teaching online through VHS, to maintain courses that reflect the latest in online course design and delivery, and to expand the course catalog to include a wider variety of courses. This investment has paid off in benefits to VHS students

through more and varied course offerings, the acquisition of 21st century learning skills, and participation in national and global communities of learners. The investment has paid off in benefits to VHS teachers through participation in online professional development, continued improvement in online teaching skills, and collaboration with an international community of peers.

### **Continuing to expand**

As the economy contracts, VHS is expanding. Why? Because school districts realize that the money spent to participate in VHS is returned exponentially in cost-saving benefits. Indeed, it is exactly when money is tight that the collaborative pooling of resources and the economies of scale that VHS offers is most beneficial.

As a non-profit organization, our focus is on providing high-quality, online education to schools and providing those services cooperatively through our member schools in the most cost-effective manner possible. Our success as a non-profit is directly related to the success of our member schools. ▲ ▼