

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

“Design principles transcend local contexts and cultures.”

POWER OF THE SITE

Design Principle # 1.1: Location & Organizational Structure

Locating schools on a college campus is integral to student motivation and success and to an enduring collaborative partnership. It is a visible symbol to the community of dual accountability for student outcomes and academic success. Students are treated as college students and see themselves as college completers. The organizational structure reflects the shared responsibility of the high school, college and school district.

Evidence of Mature Implementation

- School and all of its students are located on a college campus.
- A written document is in place that includes agreed understandings with regard to facilities, resources, finances and other matters.
- Schools display the following characteristics:
 - Student schedules and school calendar are aligned with the college to permit students to take college classes at convenient times.
 - Students regularly use college services such as tutoring programs, theater facilities, labs, gym, etc.
 - The high school principal has a role in the college’s governance structure.
 - A collaboration committee of college and high school personnel advises on school implementation.
 - The committee may include a “college liaison” who is highly placed in the college administration.
 - All students take college classes for dual enrollment. Early College students earn 30 credits by the end of the 12th grade and an Associates degree by the end of the 13th grade.

At the advanced level of implementation there is evidence that schools use college students as tutors and role models, high school students have a role in student government at the college and get priority enrollment for college courses.

POWER OF THE SITE

Design Principle # 1.2: Partnerships

High schools depend on the formation of strong partnerships and collaborations in order to develop schools that minimize the boundary between high school and college and lead to high quality educational and employment opportunities. These require the development of relationships among administrators, faculty and staff at the secondary and postsecondary levels, as well as business representatives, parents and community members.

Evidence of Mature Implementation

- Opportunities exist for the college and school district to work with the school on planning for the future.
- College and high school faculty, counselors and administrators meet and communicate regularly with their counterparts.
- Parents belong to a membership/association group.
- Partnerships are formed with community members and businesses that can contribute to student achievement.
- Information-sharing systems have been created between the college and the high school regarding individual students.
- Educational outcomes of students are recognized as the joint responsibility of the high school and the college.

At the advanced level of implementation there is evidence that faculty and staff from the high school and the college participate in joint in-service training, business partners offer students internship and/or job opportunities, parents actively and enthusiastically participate in the life of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Design Principle # 2:

Schools regularly engage students in rigorous, in-depth academic work, use active intellectual inquiry and sustained writing and revision in all classes. High standards are set for all students and teachers. Developing students' literacy skills is a priority.

Evidence of Mature Implementation

- High expectations and standards for all students are established and publicized in an educational plan developed by high school and college faculty.
- Curricula emphasize literacy, numeracy, communication, analysis and application in all disciplines.
- Curricula, projects and assessments emphasize student-centered intellectual inquiry and ask students to make meaning of knowledge, apply it and create or construct new knowledge.
- Real-world learning experiences such as career oriented classes, internships, community service, help students build their own bridges between school and the world of work.
- Students are comfortable using technology and a variety of media to gather information and are expected to present their learning and make their work public.
- Classes are small and heterogeneously grouped and class time is lengthened for in-depth exploration of topics and sustained learning.
- The school meets the needs of challenging learners.

At the advanced level of implementation there is evidence of higher order thinking reflected in student work, of creative, excitement-generating curricula and of regular interdisciplinary teaching.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Design Principle # 3:

Schools design a system of assessment that provides multiple opportunities for students to publicly exhibit what they know and can do. Assessments grow out of classroom work and provide on-going feedback to the school community, the teacher, the student and the parent on a student's progress toward achieving academic proficiency.

Evidence of Mature Implementation

- Assessment is continuous, on-going and interwoven with classroom activities.
- Student outcomes are measured using multiple assessments, including performance-based assessment.
- Assessments may be determined by teachers, student peers, self and local/state/national measures.
- Assessment information is useful to the school, teachers, students and parents. Students use assessment information to measure their progress toward meeting standards of college readiness.
- Assessments inform school-based decisions regarding pedagogy, school structures and systems.
- Projects and assignments are scaffolded, providing structure, feedback and support in progressive stages so that all students achieve at higher levels.

At the advanced level of implementation there is evidence that students receive feedback that leads to better performance, that technology is used to enhance the assessment process, that exit portfolios or oral defenses provide opportunities for students to publicly demonstrate learning and that assessment strategies are regularly reviewed and improved.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Design Principle # 4:

“Smallness,” less than 100 students per grade level, helps to create a learning community for students and teachers and provides opportunities for flexible and innovative structures to support students academically, socially and emotionally. All students are known well not only because the school is small but is also guidance-focused. Students know that adults care.

Evidence of Mature Implementation

- Schools are orderly and safe.
- All adults see themselves as counselors and mentors.
- All administrators and teachers meet at least once a week with the same small group of students (house/advisory/focus) for one to four years. Informal conversations cover academic and family, and social concerns.
- Classes are small and meet for a lengthened period of time.

- Instruction and assignments are scaffolded to provide structure, feedback and support in progressive stages so that all students achieve at higher levels and are helped to meet college expectations.
- Daily seminar for concurrently enrolled students is provided to help them “unpack” college-level work, navigate college systems and provide personal and social support.
- Mixed-ability student groupings and classes enable the academically “stronger” to help the less prepared.
- The school’s guidance office includes at least one professional school counselor; counseling is structured for small groups as well as for individuals.
- Help is provided for students with special needs including English language learners.
- Student progress and needs is regularly communicated to parents.

At the advanced level of implementation there is evidence that students are trained and serve as peer mediators or mentors, that parent voice is heard through the P(I)A, that parent-support groups meet to discuss teen rearing issues and challenges, and that students have multiple adults they can count on for help including one-on-one mentoring to help students prepare for their graduation oral defense.

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Design Principle # 5:

Purposefully designed structures provide for everyone’s voice to be heard and respected in the decision-making process with regard to hiring personnel, managing budgets, determining curriculum and pedagogy, developing students’ activities and any other policies that affect the daily life of students and faculty.

Evidence of Mature Implementation

- There are clear written descriptions of staff roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- School committees (e.g. student activities, curriculum and assessment, personnel) include administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, students and college and community representatives.
- Shared decision-making supports the intellectual quality of instruction and strengthens the professional community of the school.
- Using the peer review process, a ‘personnel committee’ assumes the responsibility for mentoring and supporting staff.
- Teachers are members of instructional teams or committees that create program designs, develop curricula and select classroom materials. Issues of teaching and learning are at the center of all discussions and decisions.
- Professional development is offered to help staff gain knowledge of governance practices and issues.
- Students represent their schools at Consortium-sponsored annual student conferences to discuss significant social issues with students from across the country.

At the advanced level of implementation there is evidence that high levels of trust exist among all school staff, that positive outcomes associated with democratic school governance (high morale, low turnover) exist and that collaborative relationships are developed with local educational unions,

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Design Principle # 6:

Staff participates in on-going, embedded professional development that focuses on student success and provides training for unfamiliar roles they play as counselors/mentors and as school leaders/decision-makers. Reflective practice is seen as the center of professional development. New teachers are helped to understand and implement the goals of the community.

Evidence of Mature Implementation

- Every five years schools participate in the Consortium's Critical Friends Review (CFR) process.
- Professional development goals are set by the school staff based on student assessment data, school needs and 'questions for consideration' raised by the CFR team.
- Meeting time for professional teacher groups/learning communities is built into the school's weekly schedule. Working in small groups, teachers focus on their instructional practice and offer mutual assistance, regularly reviewing and giving feedback to each other with regard to teacher constructed class projects, assignments, and assessment tools.
- New hires participate in a formal mentoring system designed by the school.
- Faculty members are involved in local and national conferences and associations.

At the advanced level of implementation there is evidence that each staff member has a written professional development plan based on personal and school needs, that teachers regularly review each others' teaching and student work, and that staff express high levels of satisfaction and engagement with their professional development opportunities, see themselves as a learning community involved in reflective practice and demonstrate ways that they have applied new knowledge and skills.

Rev.2/07