

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

“Design principles transcend local contexts and cultures.”

POWER OF THE SITE

Dynamic High School College Partnerships – Location, Collaboration & Organizational Structure

Locating schools on or near a college campus is integral to student motivation and success. Proximity fosters enduring collaborative partnerships and mutual accountability. 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 for student outcomes. High school and colleges create curriculum alignment that leads to high quality educational and employment opportunities. Middle and Early College High Schools, not located on the physical campus, maintain a transparent and robust interaction and access to college facilities, classes and faculty for the teachers and students of the high school. Relationships among administrators, faculty, and staff at the secondary and postsecondary levels, as well as business representatives, parents and members of the community all work to support student success.

- A written document is in place that includes agreed understandings with regard to facilities, resources, finances and dual enrollment opportunities.
- Student schedules and school calendar are aligned with the college to permit students to take college classes at convenient times.
- 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.
- There is a highly placed MC liaison at the college.
- All students take college classes for dual enrollment and have the opportunity to earn 30 college credits at no cost to them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Outcome Driven Teaching and Learning

Middle and Early College High Schools engage students in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum which promotes active intellectual inquiry. High standards are set for all students and teachers. As students move towards College Readiness, developing literacy, numeracy, and 21st Century skills is a priority.

- High expectations and standards for all students are established and publicized in an educational plan developed by high school and college faculty.
- Curricula, projects and assessments emphasize student-centered intellectual inquiry.
- Students use 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 adapted for in-depth exploration of topics and sustained learning.

- Scaffolded Instruction and assignments provide structure, feedback and support in progressive stages so that all students achieve at higher levels and are helped to meet college expectations.
- Mixed-ability student groupings and classes enable the academically “stronger” to help the less prepared.
- The school meets the needs of challenging learners.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Multiple Performance-Based Student Assessment

Middle and Early College High Schools design systems of assessment that provide multiple opportunities for students to exhibit what they know and can do. Assessments grow out of classroom work and provide ongoing information of student progress to the school community.

- Assessment information is used by the school, teachers, students and parents to measure student progress toward meeting standards of college readiness.
- Assessments inform school-based decisions regarding pedagogy, school structures and systems.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Comprehensive Student Support

Enabling students to attain high standards requires that attention be paid to students’ academic and affective needs. All students are known well because schools are small. They recognize and value guidance as a key to success. Students know that adults care. There are flexible and innovative structures to support students academically and socially.

- 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.
- Classes are small.
- Seminars for concurrently enrolled students provide help to “unpack” college-level work, navigate college systems and provide personal and social support.
- The school’s guidance office includes at least one professional school counselor; counseling is structured for small groups as well as for individuals.

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Ensuring better outcomes by hearing every voice

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

- There are clear written descriptions of staff roles, responsibilities and expectations in decision making as well as professional development to gain knowledge and skill for leadership.

- Using the MCNC a peer review process, a ‘personnel committee’ assumes the responsibility for mentoring and supporting staff.
- Teachers are members of instructional teams that design programs, develop curricula and select classroom materials. Issues of teaching and learning are at the center of all discussions and decisions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Research Based, Collaborative Professional Development

Staff participates in on-going, embedded professional development focused on student success. Reflective practice is the center of professional development. New teachers are helped to understand and implement the goals of the community.

- Meeting time for professional teacher groups/learning communities is built into the school’s weekly schedule. Working in small groups, teachers focus on instructional practice and offer mutual assistance.
- Each staff member has a written professional development plan based on personal and school needs.
- Teachers regularly review each others’ teaching and student work.
- Staff exhibits high levels of satisfaction and engagement with their professional development opportunities.
- Staff apply new knowledge and skills to their work in a continuous cycle of improvement.