

## **Guiding Principles for Teaching and Learning- Bloomfield Hills Schools**

Bloomfield Hills has always been a proud leader in educational innovation. We recognize that as the world rapidly changes, we must continually change and innovate with it; evolving our specific practices upon a solid platform of our mission/core values, sound philosophy and educational research.

We take pride in our many successes, yet we must always push for continual growth. If we're NOT making ourselves uncomfortable in our quest for excellence, we're probably not challenging ourselves enough. Ultimately other individuals, schools or circumstances will then do the challenging for us.

New technologies and challenged economies now cause society to question 'schooling' as we know it. At the same time we're reaching the limits of change that can be made to the system of schooling we've inherited. If we continue to accept as a given a system built upon today's paradigm, we won't have a system agile enough to prepare ALL our students for THEIR 'tomorrow.' We must not subjugate the future to the present-- It must be the other way around.

What follows is not a 'new initiative.' It's a framework that honors and builds upon the best of our work to date. Although imperfect and incomplete, what follows is a 'word picture' meant to put some specificity and common language to many of the things to which we've generally referred within our mission/vision/values:

**Preface:** We must stay true to our Mission Statement, Core Values, and Strategic Instructional Goal:

- For Students- '...enable learners to become architects of their futures.' Support their ability to find purpose and meaning by providing high levels of choice in an emotionally safe environment.
- For Adults- Support a passion for learning that relishes wonder, craves knowledge, loves challenge and pursues innovation. Support our responsibility to engage in continuous growth and improvement.
- Strategic Instructional Goal: Ignite passion, fuel dreams and provide a personalized, world-class experience for every student.

### **Guiding Principles:**

- 1) The curriculum makes time for depth by thoughtfully managing the number of standards ('less is more' concept.)
- 2) Content knowledge, while important, ceases to be the primary learning outcome, becoming a vehicle to support higher levels of thinking (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creation.)
- 3) Deep student ownership and control of learning. Teaching shifts to facilitation.
- 4) Strong, caring relationships and very high levels of collaboration among/between staff and students.
- 5) A culture that embraces risk-taking in the learning process believing that sometimes more is learned from failure than success.
- 6) Project-based/Inquiry-based interdisciplinary learning boosts critical thinking and creativity by allowing students to frame problems and construct their own solutions.
- 7) Learners are connected to the world outside the school.
- 8) Engagement in meaningful work that increases learner passion and motivation.
- 9) Technology tools are readily available and easily accessible to support personalization.
- 10) Staff share a commitment to a small set of clearly understood annually identified, generally agreed-upon, non-negotiable instructional goals.

Our successful journey toward these stated ideals can only be undertaken through a strong network of collegiality and support, including personalized professional development that is powerfully resourced to support the above. No one should feel isolated, and top-down directives will not be the norm. By working together and by being committed to a clearly understood set of shared goals, we will create a school district that truly, "...enables our learners to be architects of their own futures."

-Warm Regards, Rob Glass

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