



DESIGN ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

Small Learning Community: *How do we connect with young people in a democratic learning community?*

- Small learning communities of 150 students
- Highly personalized setting; every student treated as an individual – *No Child Left Unknown*
- Positive, caring relationships; respect and responsibility modeled and practiced
- Multiage advisories in place; meet twice daily; advisors fully responsible for no more than 20 students
- Mentoring available to all students
- Restorative justice practiced
- Parents and community at large actively engage with students to support learning
- Democratic student government supports active engagement in decision making process
- Students experience value of citizenship as they contribute to greater community

Self-directed Project-based Learning: *How do we facilitate the work of youth as self-directed producers and learners?*

- Self-directed, project-based learning primary focus; driven by constructivist pedagogy
- Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) for all students emphasizing student needs and interests
- Personalized work space for each student; Internet access
- Technology-infused environment; technology used as tool
- Individual/group projects complemented by multiple teaching and learning approaches based on student needs and interests
- Achievement demonstrated publicly; highest work place standards are quality goal
- All students prepared for post-secondary education, workplace, and active citizenship
- All students and staff engage in quiet reading every day

Authentic Assessment: *How do we know that we are achieving our intended results?*

- Plan for how projects will be assessed by more than one adult, with opportunities for students to improve products to meet quality standards
- Demonstrated achievement, with plan for public presentations including community involvement
- Electronic standards tracking/reporting system and electronic student portfolios
- Standardized testing; results inform Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) and continuous improvement
- Value-added measures including assessment of life skills and results from Hope Study enhance PLPs and continuous improvement
- Post-secondary plans for all students beginning at ninth grade
- Graduation includes standards met as well as project credits, life skills gained, and a senior project

Teacher-Ownership/Democratic Governance: *How do we engage “Teachers as Owners” of a democratic learning community?*

- Autonomous school management with control over budget and staffing; individual responsibility and accountability for school finance and educational success
- Teachers model ownership and demonstrate democratic leadership; inspire students, parents and community to take ownership and actively engage in decision making; incorporate consensus model
- Teacher evaluations by peers, students, and parents; performance-based pay, at-will employment (if applicable)
- Evaluations inform individual Professional Development Plans; focus on self and school improvement
- Coaching/mentoring plan for incorporation of new members and continuous improvement