HASTINGS HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights in
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

IN THIS ISSUE: PORTRAIT OF A HASTINGS LEARNER

BOLD
Sees constructive risk-taking as a necessary pathway for personal and academic growth and development.

COLLABORATIVE
Works together towards a common goal. Engages in ways that stimulate learning in the classroom and positively affects the school culture and climate.

EMPATHETIC
Seeks to understand the experiences and vulnerabilities of others and foster a sense of inclusion, equity, and belonging in the local community and the community at large.

EMPOWERED
Asks questions, self-advocates, and has a voice in the construction of their learning experience.

INQUISITIVE
Sustains sparks of curiosity, seeking to explore and interact with others and their world.

INVENTIVE
Has the freedom to question, envision, and create possibilities as they use their unique knowledge and skill set to engage with the unknown.

Icon design credit: Student Angelina Ye
POHL logo design Credit: Student Maximilian Dodziuk

PORTRAIT OF A HASTINGS LEARNER (POHL)

The Portrait of a Hastings Learner design phase has been completed and the Portrait is swiftly becoming the strategic vision for Hastings. This is particularly relevant in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment as we strive to develop K-12 learners who are bold, collaborative, empathetic, empowered, inquisitive, and inventive.

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of many committees over the past year, our POHL Action Plans have become the primary guide for leadership across the district. Action Plans, with respective action steps, are being developed in three areas:

(1) enhanced authentic learning opportunities;
(2) an advisory-like structure to support SEL and students' sense of belonging;
(3) a community charter around behavioral expectations & magnified use of restorative practices.

Enhanced Authentic Learning Opportunities

In the area of enhanced authentic learning opportunities, we are developing building-specific structures for inquiry work, conducting appreciative inquiries to identify existing authentic learning opportunities, identifying opportunities to make exemplars more systemic, and identifying new opportunities for authentic learning. While we will have coherent processes across the district, building-specific work will vary in order to differentiate for the needs of each school. For instance, at the middle school we will start a systematic inquiry of our full academic program.

Districtwide curriculum work also is underway, planned within the framework of our curriculum review cycle. Enhanced authentic learning has now become the POHL lens for curriculum review efforts. Our social studies inquiry process at the middle and high school levels, for example, began this fall with teachers articulating areas of authentic learning within their current practice that are associated with the social studies practices outlined in the New York State Social Studies Framework.

Advisory

Processes associated with establishing an advisory program include determining where an advisory can sit within the schedule, selecting faculty facilitators, establishing a design committee, developing lessons, and conducting onboarding and training. To begin implementation of the Advisory Action Plan, we have created a pilot for students in grades 7 and 8. This decision was made once we understood the need for additional instructional minutes in these grades, creating an immediate opportunity for us to move forward. While we are implementing the advisory pilot this year, we are examining structural issues related to scheduling and staffing at the middle and high school. Once we know those structural pieces are possible for the long term, we will create a formal advisory program that spans additional grade levels.

Behavioral Charter & Restorative Practices

Our final POHL Action Plan combines the creation of a Behavioral Charter and augmenting the use of restorative practices. These two areas are closely connected under the umbrella of social-emotional learning. We elected to combine them into a single Action Plan, based on the building-specific discipline codes that were developed over the summer, which include both consequences and restorative approaches related to student behaviors. These discipline code documents have become the basis to inform the POHL work. Processes associated with this Action Plan include forming a committee to lead the creation of the behavioral charter, revisiting the discipline codes and framework for restorative practices, creating differentiated Behavioral Charters for each building, and enhancing professional learning opportunities focused on the use of restorative practices.

The work of the Behavioral Charter committee has already begun, with members of the group aligning around what a Behavioral Charter is, why it is important, and the steps that will be taken to include the voice of students and faculty members in the creation process. Our charter work has been influenced by RULER, from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, as we determine the ethos and contributing behaviors we strive to foster in each school and district-wide.

Behavioral Charter & Restorative Practices (Continued)

In the area of Restorative Practices, a professional learning plan for our first cohort of Restorative Practices instructional leaders has been created. Some of the work in this area is being led by Duke Fisher, winner of the *Lawrence P. Cooke Peace Innovator* award, who is helping faculty members to understand how to facilitate restorative circles. Kamillah Dawkins, FMS Assistant Principal, and Dr. Jenice Mateo-Toledo, DEI Coordinator, will facilitate pre-session work with members of the faculty using the anchor text *Better than Carrots or Sticks* to prime the faculty with restorative practices "look-fors" specific to what to do, how to do it, and why it is important. Thanks to a generous grant from the Hastings Education Foundation, Duke Fisher has already begun working directly with high school student Peer Leaders and HASP students around restorative approaches that contribute to cultivating safe spaces, speaking their truths and listening actively.

Please stay tuned for additional information as our Portrait of a Hastings Learner efforts continue to evolve. Updates will be provided in Hastings Happenings, the Superintendent's Friday letters, Board of Education administrative comments and future Hastings Highlights Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment newsletters.