# Community "Owner's Manual" 2025-2026

## OVERVIEW

**Mission:**
The Open School provides a dynamic environment that fosters the development of the unique potential in each individual by nurturing and challenging the whole person. There is an emphasis on self-direction, learning through experience, shared responsibility, and the development of life long-skills.

**Goals:**

Students will be able to:

- Rediscover the joy of learning;
- Seek meaning in life;
- Adapt to the world as it is;
- Prepare for the world as it might be;
- Create the world as it ought to be.

**Guiding Philosophy:**

Learning

- To create a positive, nurturing, and challenging culture where each person can experience the joy of learning;
- To create a culture where the five goals of the Open School apply to all students;
- To be a place where all are teachers and learners as we develop our skills and abilities as life-long learners;
- To develop the potential of the whole child by striving for Excellence across the Open School Graduation Expectation continuum;
- To assess student learning in ways that challenge students to demonstrate personal, social, and intellectual growth.

Community

- To create a community where each student is known and supported to achieve their potential.
- To create an advising program where each student understands their unique place in the larger community through personalized adult guidance.
- To create a community that is truly centered on the five goals of the Open School and where personal, social, and intellectual growth are seen as interconnected endeavors.
- To embrace the positive community created through a small school environment.
- To actively encourage families to partner with the Open School and play a significant role in the lives and learning of their children.

Individual

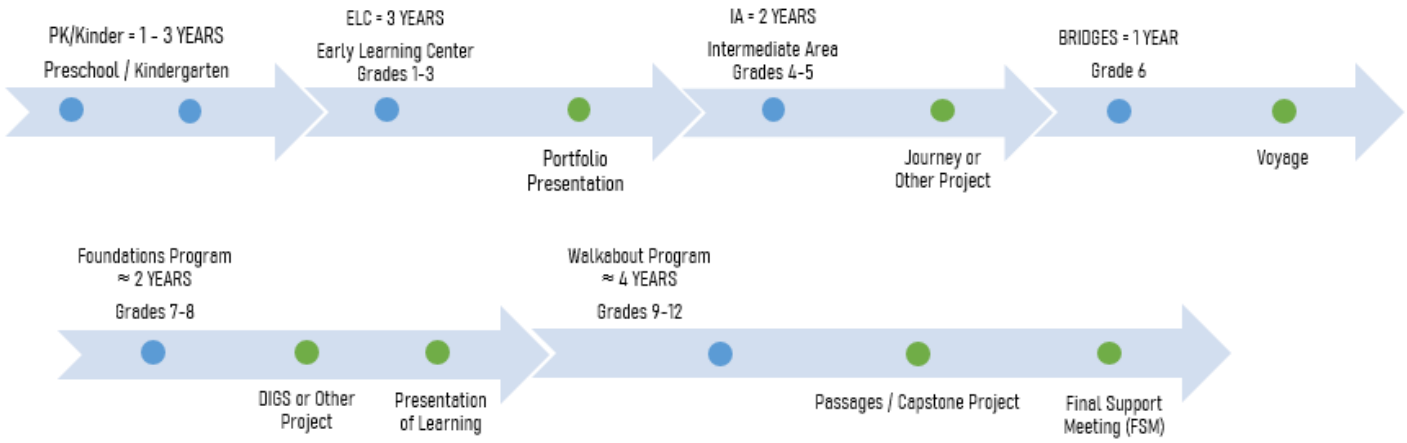
- To instill in students the desire and knowledge to pursue self-directed learning through self-reliance, responsibility and shared decision-making;
- To engage students in the creation of personal, social, and intellectual (PSI) goals in order to personalize curriculum that empowers the pursuit of passions;
- To reflect on learning and personal growth through the development and assessment of personal, social, and intellectual goals;
- To embrace the balance between the needs of the individual and the responsibilities of the community;
- To celebrate the accomplishments of all students as they strive to achieve their potential.

# Jefferson County Open School – Program Expectations

## 1. ADVISOR DISCRETION

Jefferson County Open School is a highly individualized PK-12th grade program that seeks to develop the unique potential of each student while simultaneously working to develop a supportive community of learners. Individualization and community can be paradoxically opposed. Therefore, advisors are given the discretionary authority, in partnership with students, parents/guardians, and the community, to determine individualized curriculum, freedoms, and consequences which are deemed appropriate for their advisees. This authority is paramount, as it is through the advisor-advisee relationship that a partnership is developed which creates the greatest possibility for success. The trust, latitude, and responsibility afforded through Advisor Discretion are necessary as advisors facilitate the personal, social, and intellectual growth of each advisee. While advisors are guided by the program's common mission, goals, values, and philosophy, advisor Discretion will necessarily result in variations in programmatic, policy, and procedural implementation in relation to individual students. It is understood by all advisors that what is equal is not always fair, and what is fair is not always equal. It is the responsibility of every advisor to help establish personal, social, and intellectual goals for each individual Advisee and to determine appropriate and necessary consequences for advisees in need of such intervention. At all times advisors must operate in accordance with the JPS Student and Family Handbook (Code of Conduct).

## 2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND SEQUENCE




***ALL students at the Open School will . . .***

- Have an advisor – a staff advocate
- Have personal, social, and intellectual goals to guide learning
- Be actively involved in an advising group
- Be safe, kind, and appropriate

## PRESCHOOL / KINDERGARTEN

The Preschool and/or Kindergarten Programs welcome students to the Open School by accepting and respecting students, while building a strong foundation of communication among children, parents/guardians, community, and staff.

***Preschool / Kindergarten students will . . .***

- Complete personal, social, and intellectual learning activities.
- Begin emerging as a personal, social, and intellectual learner within the Open School community.

## EARLY LEARNING CENTER (ELC): GRADES 1-3

The ELC introduces students to the Open School by artfully balancing the needs of the individual and the community. The following expectations emphasize the personal, social, and intellectual development of each student.

### *ELC students will . . .*

- Complete learning activities and maintain portfolio documentation of personal, social, and intellectual growth to an appropriate level of proficiency, as agreed upon by advisor, advisee, and parent/guardian.
- Contribute (give as well as take) meaningfully to the Open School community at large.
- Complete an ELC overnight trip.

## INTERMEDIATE AREA (IA): GRADES 4-5

In the Intermediate Area, students work to develop the skills, attitudes, knowledge and behavior necessary to be successful in a self-directed learning environment.

### *IA students will . . .*

- Complete learning activities and maintain portfolio documentation of personal, social, and intellectual growth to an appropriate level of proficiency, as agreed upon by advisor, advisee, and parent/guardian.
- Contribute (give as well as take) meaningfully to the Open School community at large.
- Be actively involved in advising and IA community meetings.
- Complete IA overnight trips.

## BRIDGES: GRADE 6

In the Bridges Program, students work to refine the skills, attitudes, knowledge and behavior necessary to be successful in a self-directed learning environment.

### *Bridges students will . . .*

- Complete learning activities and maintain portfolio documentation of personal, social, and intellectual growth to an appropriate level of proficiency, as agreed upon by advisor, advisee, and parent/guardian.
- Contribute (give as well as take) meaningfully to the Open School community at large.
- Be actively involved in advising and Bridges community meetings.
- Complete Bridges overnight trips.
- Complete a Bridges self-directed Voyage.
- Document learning in a formal Bridges Voyage presentation.

## FOUNDATIONS

In the Foundations Program, students work toward completion of the following expectations:

### *Foundations students will . . .*

- Establish meaningful personal, social, and intellectual (PSI) goals toward the acquisition of skills, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors to prepare for the Walkabout program and lifelong learning.
- Complete the Beginnings Trip each year as well as at least one extended trip during their time in the Foundations program.
- Have and follow a schedule for each block (based on PSI goals and supported by advisor, advisee, and parent/guardian).
- Reflect on all learning experiences through self-evaluation.
- Maintain a portfolio of personal, social, and intellectual growth.
- Successfully complete an appropriate percentage of classes as determined by their advisor.
- Complete a minimum of one Dynamic Investigation of Great Stuff (DIGS) each year in the Foundations program.
- Contribute to the Open School community by completing a minimum of 24 hours of community service and 10 hours of garden service each year.

- Share their Foundations experiences and learning in a Demonstration of Readiness (DoR).

***Foundations Portfolios will include…***

- Table of Contents
- Resume
- Evaluations (classes, trips, etc)
- Proposals, documentation, and wrap-ups for DIGS
- PSI goals
- Documentation of community and garden service
- Letters of recommendation (optional)
- Documentation of trips
- Other examples of things the student is proud of, and evidence of growth
- Reading/book log

***DIGS (Dynamic Investigation of Great Stuff)***

The DIGS project is an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in a topic they are interested in. This includes developing a plan in a proposal, conducting research, creating a hands-on "do" component, sharing formally with the purpose of educating peers, and reflecting on the experience in a Wrap-Up. The DIGS can be focused on almost anything: sports, cooking, working with younger children, writing, astronomy, poetry, chemistry, music, and more. There are three major components to the DIGS: DO, RESEARCH, and SHARING.

***Community Service and Involvement***

Participating in community service fosters an understanding that helping others and being involved in the wider world is personally fulfilling and makes a positive difference for others. Some examples of community service are, volunteering at the soup kitchen, teaching a class, helping around the school (office, custodial staff, library, kitchen, elementary classrooms), organizing a clothing drive for the homeless, etc. The possibilities are endless. Students may choose to be involved in a community inside or outside of school or a combination of both. Students are responsible for documenting at least 24 hours of community service hours each year.

***Beginnings Trip***

Each advising group will go on a 3-day/2-night trip during the first week of school. The purpose of this trip is to give students and staff an opportunity to build trust, bond, and build relationships.

***Extended Trip***

Each student is expected to participate in a minimum of one extended trip (in addition to Beginnings trips) *at some point during their time in the Foundations program*.

***Trip Grants (optional)***

Students may borrow up to 50% (maximum of $250) of the cost of extended trips. The student will repay this loan through community service hours to the school. This loan requires completion of a grant application which includes student, parent/guardian and advisor signatures, and a plan for how the community service hours will be paid back. Student and advisor will then attend a budget meeting to request the loan.

## WALKABOUT

Once students demonstrate their readiness by successfully completing the aforementioned expectations they make the transition into the Walkabout Program.

### *Walkabout students will . . .*

- Based on self-assessment and the Graduation Expectations Outcomes Inventory, establish meaningful goals toward the acquisition of skills, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors to prepare for adulthood.
- Complete the Wilderness Trip.
- Have a Mutually Agreed upon Plan (MAP) for each block based on their personal, social, and intellectual (PSI) goals and supported by their advisor.
- Evaluate their performance and participation in all classes, self-directed learning, and other significant experiences.
- Be actively involved in advising, triads, PLAID days, and governance.
- Attend advising meetings (group, individual, and triad).
- Maintain an organized portfolio documenting growth in all of the Graduation Expectations.
- Contribute meaningfully to the Open School community at large.
- Complete their Educational Experiences List (EEL).
- Complete the six Passages.
- Complete a capstone project in both Math and English/Language Arts.

### *Walkabout Portfolios will include…*

- Self-evaluations with feedback from the sponsor of the learning experience
- Passage proposals and wrap-ups
- Graduation Expectation Outcomes Inventory document
- Educational Experiences List (EEL)
- Suggested for inclusion
    - Authentic Artifacts
    - Activity sheets (copies kept with advisor)
    - Schedules

### *Requirements for Graduation*

- Successfully complete the Wilderness Trip
- Successfully complete one extended trip (other than the Wilderness Trip or advising trips)
- Successfully complete six Passages, including the research paper and capstone project (and rubric)
- Contribute to the Open School community by completing a minimum of 40 hours of community service each year
- Show significant growth, to an appropriate level of proficiency, in each of the Graduation Expectations, as agreed upon by the advisor and advisee
- Complete EEL (Educational Experiences List)
- Complete a final narrative transcript

## 3. ADVISING

### Advisor

The role of advisor at the Open School is the most important responsibility for all teachers. As advisors, teachers are student advocates and learning facilitators who assist students in setting and achieving the personal, social, and intellectual goals they create for themselves. The advising relationship is paramount in guiding students towards successful completion of all aspects of their program including Journeys, Voyages, DIGS, DoR, Passages, Capstones, class schedules, and other mutually agreed upon personal, social, and intellectual programs. There is a shared advisor-parent/guardian responsibility to communicate regarding

the advisee's personal, social, and intellectual goals and progress in the program. *Note: Advisors are the parent/guardian's first point of contact for all issues related to their student. Please consult our website http://jcos.jeffcopublicschools.org/ or call 303-982-7045 for advisor contact information.*

### Group Advising

Advising is an integral part of the program. Each advising group ranges in size from approximately 16 students in the secondary, to 22 students in the elementary. Advising groups meet at least twice a week where group building, planning, problem-solving, support of individuals, and school community endeavors are emphasized.

### Individual Advising

In addition to group advising, secondary advisors meet individually with each student on a regular basis to build the relationship necessary to guide students through their individualized program. Once a trusting relationship is established, advisors can provide deep and meaningful feedback to assist each student in the creation of a challenging personal, social, and intellectual program.

## 4. TRIADS (BRIDGES THROUGH WALKABOUT)

Triads are peer support groups, developed within each advising group, which aid students in personal, social, and intellectual growth. These groups form a network, which supports each member through their Voyages, DIGS, DoR, Passages, and capstone projects. In order to successfully graduate from the Open School program, each student needs to contribute to and receive support from a working triad. Triads can be a student's strongest support system as they negotiate the Foundations and Walkabout programs.

### Triad Expectations

- All students must be a part of a triad.
- Triad members must be at every Voyage, DIGS, DoR, Passage, and capstone meeting. (If a triad member legitimately cannot attend, they will provide written feedback to the triad member having the meeting).
- Each triad member will read, edit, and give feedback on all Voyage, DIGS, DoR, Passage, and capstone work of the other members prior to the meeting (such as proposals, wrap-ups, portfolios or other documentation, research papers).
- It is the triad's responsibility to actively participate in Voyage, DIGS, DoR, Passage, and capstone meetings, by asking questions, giving thoughtful commentary, and helping to tie the goals of the project to their triad member's personal, social, and intellectual (PSI) goals.
- In the Foundations and Walkabout programs, triads will meet each week to share goals, monitor progress, support one another on issues relevant to personal and social growth, as well as intellectual challenge, read one another's work, and check on success with classes, trips, and other learning opportunities.
- Triads will evaluate their effectiveness on a regular basis and hold one another accountable.

## 5. GRADUATION EXPECTATIONS

Considered in the development of each student's personal, social, and intellectual (PSI) goals, the Graduation Expectations establish a measure for growth in all areas. Students must demonstrate significant growth, to an appropriate level of proficiency, in each of the Graduation Expectations, as agreed upon by the advisor and advisee prior to graduation. Growth is evaluated based on a continuum consisting of: Emerging, Developing, Expanding, Connecting, and Bridging at the elementary level and Exposure, Experience, Comprehension, Competence, and Excellence at the secondary level. Evaluation occurs during individual advising meetings using the Graduation Expectations rubrics and portfolio documentation. The Graduation Expectations are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Personal<br>To develop a strong sense of self | Self-Directedness - Students will set and meet goals that demonstrate passion, personal responsibility, organized priorities, perseverance, self-assessment, and accountability through the completion of the six Walkabout Passages.<br><br>Risk and Challenge - Students will take calculated risks, embrace challenges, and face their fears in order to expand their comfort zones and learn from new experiences.<br><br>Values and Moral Decision-Making - Students will identify, articulate, and apply personal values and principles through complex and authentic moral decision-making.<br><br>Wellness - Students will set goals for, and continuously reevaluate, their physical and emotional wellness to maintain balance in all parts of their lives.<br><br>Life Skills - Students will acquire practical skills that will allow them to direct and sustain themselves as emerging adults. |
| Social<br>To create and maintain healthy relationships | Collaborative Community Involvement - Students will work collaboratively to problem-solve, positively influence others, and foster community in school and the world beyond.<br><br>Conflict Resolution - Students will acquire the skills and courage necessary to respectfully confront and resolve intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group conflicts.<br><br>Flexibility and Resourcefulness - Students will successfully navigate obstacles and recover from setbacks with increased adaptability and grace.<br><br>Healthy Relationships - Students will learn to appreciate and connect with others, set healthy boundaries, maintain realistic expectations, and relate to friends and family with vulnerability and respect.<br><br>Cultural Responsiveness - Students will develop cross-cultural skills and cultural self-awareness through study and travel in order to advocate for diversity, inclusion, and equitability. |
| Intellectual<br>To think and apply knowledge | Communication - Students will read, write, research, and present for a variety of purposes, which include the pursuit of curiosity, the representation of oneself, the persuasion of others, and the transmission of ideas, through a minimum of four extensive and interdisciplinary Language Arts experiences.<br><br>Responsible Global Citizenship - Students will develop critical thinking skills and expand their perspectives on U.S. and world history, geography, civics, and economics through multiple lens, including social justice and intersectionality, in order to become responsible global citizens.<br><br>Analytical Reasoning and Problem-Solving - Students will use algebra, geometry, and other mathematical concepts to analyze, make evidence-based decisions, and solve challenging problems.<br><br>Creative Expression - Students will use imagination, ingenuity, and critical thinking as they develop their own creative processes, expressive voices, and an understanding of the powerful influence of art in their lives and on culture.<br><br>Science and Ecological Awareness - Students will demonstrate an understanding of ecological principles and the scientific method by acting as curious observers of natural phenomena through three lab-based experiences. |

## 6. MAP (Mutually Agreed upon Plan) – or Schedule of Educational Experiences (Secondary)

### *Class Schedules*

Each secondary student at the Open School designs a unique schedule. During their day, students are expected to engage in classes, which address their PSI goals. Additionally, students should select classes that meet their individual needs, and provide challenge and the opportunity to rediscover the joy of learning. *Note: All student schedules must be signed by the student, parent/guardian, and advisor, indicating mutual agreement regarding the appropriateness of the schedule.*

### *Self-Directed Learning Time (Walkabout)*

With advisor support and parent/guardian approval, students have the option to utilize self-directed learning time in lieu of a class during a particular time period. During this time, students may pursue self-directed learning options such as community service or apprenticeship. Most students, however, explore these options on Friday as part of the PLAID day experience (Personal Learning and Independent Discovery).

### *Student-led Classes (Walkabout)*

At the Open School we believe that all community members are equal partners in the teaching and learning process. Consequently, students may propose to teach a student-led class. In order to teach a student-led class, students must go through a proposal process to obtain the approval of their parent/guardian, advisor, and triad, prior to placing a class on the schedule. All student-led classes will be supported by the student's advisor for the duration of the class. *Note: Please be aware that any student may enroll in a student-led class. Check the block schedule to determine which classes are student-led.*

### *Schedule Building Process*

Selecting and Registering for Classes

- Students should create a class schedule with an appropriate level of challenge. Classes are available to students based on level: Foundations, Walkabout, and Combination (Combo). Combo classes are open to all secondary students ($7^{th}$–$12^{th}$). Students are encouraged to take classes that support their PSI goals.
- Students should be sure to select second choice classes unless they are guaranteed a spot in a continuing class.
- Class sizes are limited; therefore, students and families should be aware that not all students get all of their first-choice classes.

### *Problem Solving*

- The teacher of an overfilled class uses a lottery system to reduce the size of the class and creates a list of students who were "bumped" from a class.
- Teachers share the list with advisors.
- An updated schedule of open classes (with # of spaces remaining) and closed classes is generated.

### *Advising/Round Two Registration*

- Students are informed by their advisor if they have been "bumped" from any of their first-choice classes.
- Those who have been "bumped" register for second choice classes that are still open or look for alternatives.

## 7. CLASS COMPLETION STATUS (SECONDARY)

Narrative evaluations form the foundation of self-assessment documentation and are critical to monitoring the progress of each student at the Open School. All classes, self-directed learning, and other significant experiences are evaluated by the student with written feedback from the sponsor of the experience. Completion of classes is determined by the student and teacher and is indicated through written feedback on the evaluation. Classes are either Transcriptable or Incomplete. Incomplete classes ***may*** include the opportunity to complete the necessary work to change the class status to Transcriptable within a limited time frame as established by the teacher. *Note: students may not include incomplete classes in their final narrative transcripts for graduation purposes or to be submitted for college admissions.*

## 8. PLAID - PERSONAL LEARNING AND INDEPENDENT DISCOVERY (WALKABOUT)

Self-directed learning experiences help students understand themselves as individuals and as contributing members of society through interdisciplinary, experiential, 'real world' education. PLAID Experiences include apprenticeships, community service projects, Passage work, and other self-directed projects. Successful completion of Walkabout requires effective planning and utilization of PLAID experiences. Documentation of PLAID experiences must be included in the body of evidence/portfolio through Passage proposals, wrap-ups, and other forms of mutually agreed-upon record keeping. *Note: please see the Open Campus policy for guidance on specific details for student, parent/guardian, and advisor agreements for PLAID Experiences.*

## 9. PSI (PERSONAL, SOCIAL, INTELLECTUAL) GOALS

Students regularly demonstrate, work toward, and evaluate their individual progress through the Open School by creating and incorporating PSI goals. These PSI goals are created in collaboration between students, parents/guardians, and advisors. At the secondary level, these goals are utilized to develop students' Mutually Agreed upon Plans for class schedules and self-directed learning through DIGS, DoRs, Passages, and their capstone projects.

## 10. STUDENT GENERATED CURRICULUM (IA THROUGH WALKABOUT)

### *IA Projects*

In the IA, students are guided by teachers through the self-directed learning process as part of projects that are attached to thematic units, which occur throughout the year. These are designed to assist students in beginning the transition from teacher-directed to student-directed learning. Students develop the skills necessary to develop meaningful independent projects by setting goals, planning, and evaluating independent work.

### *Bridges Voyages*

As part of the transition to the Foundations program, Bridges students apply the skills they have learned in a Bridges self-directed learning Voyage. SDL Voyages require students to design meaningful projects, write detailed proposals, set clear goals, follow through on commitments, and articulate personal, social, and intellectual growth.

### *Self-Directed Learning Projects (SDLs) (Foundations)*

Students engage in self-directed learning projects during their Foundations career. Projects include community service, and Dynamic Investigation of Great Stuff (DIGS). SDLs are designed to assist students in beginning the transition from teacher-directed to student-directed learning. Students develop the skills necessary to seek out and secure meaningful projects, write detailed proposals, set clear goals, follow through on commitments, and articulate personal, social, and intellectual growth.

- Community Service - Giving back to a community in which you believe you could make a difference is the purpose of this SDL. The importance of this SDL is the development of an understanding that in helping others you may make a positive impact in the community. Students are required to document a minimum of 24 hours each year.

- Dynamic Investigation of Great Stuff (DIGS) - In this SDL students will conduct an in-depth exploration of a topic. There are several parts to a DIGS include writing a proposal, conducting background research, an experiential "DO" part, a classroom activity, a formal sharing designed to educate peers, and an evaluation.

### ***Passages (Walkabout)***

Walkabout, inspired by a First Peoples' of Australia rite-of-passage, is the final phase of the program in which each student demonstrates readiness to function as an adult by doing six Passages, the actual transition to adulthood. Passages begin when the advisor agrees that the student has the foundational skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to succeed and has demonstrated the ability to set meaningful goals and attain them. Passages are personally challenging projects developed by each student in six different areas to demonstrate the ability to apply their skills in the real world. The Passage process includes the writing of a proposal, which is approved by a committee of peers, the advisor, and a staff consultant. Mentors and parents/guardians may also participate. Upon completion of the Passage, the student reconvenes the committee and presents a written summary for final approval. The six Passage areas are as follows:

- **Adventure:** A quest, a personal and meaningful challenge, the pursuit of which requires courage, endurance, self-reliance, and intelligent decision-making.
- **Career Exploration:** A broad investigation of a field of employment, including an in-depth study of at least one job within that field, with particular attention to possibilities for the future.
- **Creativity**: The development of a product that is an expression of one's personal imagination, together with a detailed analysis of the process by which it was created.
- **Global Awareness**: The identification of an issue having global impact, followed by a study of how one's own culture and at least one other culture deals with this issue, culminating in a service project designed to influence the issue on a local level.
- **Logical Inquiry**: An investigation, which includes the generation of a hypothesis, the development of a systematic approach to data collection, and sufficient documentation to allow replication of the study.
- **Practical Skills:** The development of proficiency in a skill or set of skills for which one was formerly dependent on others and which has the potential for life-long usefulness.

### ***Walkabout Days (Walkabout)***

Students are guided by their advisor through the process of creating personally meaningful, challenging, and rewarding curriculum. The proposal/wrap-up process is student-led and requires that students schedule, organize, and lead Passage meetings. Walkabout days are scheduled throughout the school year to prioritize time for this work to take place. *Note: Walkabout days are scheduled approximately eight times a year in lieu of classes to accommodate Passage proposal and wrap-up meetings.*

## 11. TRAVEL PROGRAM

Experiential learning through travel is an integral part of the Open School program. Travel provides an excellent learning opportunity in the real world and often proves to be a turning point in a student's life. The objectives of the travel program include rediscovering the joy of learning, establishing trust in self, others, and the school community, creating ownership of school and one's actions, and reaffirming self-esteem. *Note: Throughout the Open School program, trips are required. Required trips include: ELC and IA advising overnight trip/s, Bridges trips, Foundations Beginnings trips, Wilderness Trip, and one additional extended trip at both the Foundations and Walkabout level.*

### ***Secondary Advisor Support/Trust***

Due to the nature of risks involved in the travel program at the Open School, students must demonstrate a high level of trust and responsibility prior to being eligible to attend any trip (except for orientation trips such as the Beginnings or Wilderness Trip). As a result, every secondary student must obtain written advisor support submitted to the trip sponsor prior to departure. advisor discretion is a critical factor in determining

secondary student eligibility for the travel program; following is a list of some indicators that may be used to assess student trust levels:

- Maintenance of an open dialogue with the advisor through regular attendance and positive participation in individual advising meetings;
- Regular attendance and positive participation in advising, classes, governance, and triad meetings;
- Transcriptable completion of the majority of classes each block;
- Ongoing participation and successful completion of past Voyage, DIGS, DoR, or Passage work;
- Documentation of a variety of learning experiences through a portfolio;
- Documentation of a variety of personal, social and intellectual growth through the Graduation Expectations.

***Five Non-Negotiables***

Due to the risk inherent in operating the travel program, the Open School has adopted five non-negotiable standards of behavior for all school related activities (commonly referred to as the Five "No's"). Violations of the Five "No's" will result in the immediate removal of the student from the travel experience at the parent/guardians' time and expense. In addition, the Drug, Alcohol, Violence and Trust policy will take effect.

✕ NO sex ✕ NO drugs ✕ NO alcohol ✕ NO tobacco ✕ NO violence

***Travel Grants/Scholarships (Secondary Only)***

In order to make the travel program accessible to all students, the Open School has created a Grant/Scholarship Program to assist those students in need. It is the responsibility of the student to secure all grants/scholarships a minimum of two weeks prior to departing on any trip. Grants/Scholarships are obtained by completing all necessary paperwork (see the Financial Secretary), securing an in-school service project for grant payback, and attending a budget committee meeting for approval. The maximum number of grants a student may receive during a school year is two. A grant will cover half of the trip cost, up to $250. *Note: All grants must be paid back in full by completing a thoroughly documented, school-based service project prior to obtaining another travel grant/scholarship.*

## 12. STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES

Throughout their Open School career, students are responsible for documenting their own progress through each phase of the program. Documentation includes a body of evidence or portfolio, which details their personal, social, and intellectual growth on their PSI goals. Students regularly demonstrate, work toward, and evaluate their individual progress through the Open School by creating and incorporating PSI goals. Progress on the Graduation Expectations, PSI goals, Journey/Voyage/DIGS/DoR/Passages, capstone project, class completion, and more are detailed and included in a student led conference, an in-person presentation with the advisor and parent/guardian, twice each school year.

## 13. COMMUNITY CIRCLE / GOVERNANCE / LEADERSHIP

Community Circle is an elementary community meeting, while governance is the Foundations and Walkabout school meeting where students participate in the democratic governance of the school. In addition to disseminating information, students celebrate successes, discuss school-wide issues and solve problems collectively. The structure of governance is often established by the Leadership class. Leadership class often works out details of various proposals, which are then discussed in either group advising or governance as part of the democratic decision-making process.

## 14. TRANSCRIPTS (WALKABOUT)

The culmination of each student's experience at the Open School is documented in their final transcript. Open School transcripts are written by the student, and include:

- Personal statement
- EEL (Educational Experiences List - a summary of each individual learning experience)
- Advisor/teacher support letters

- Detailed information about knowledge and skills gained and what was of personal significance to the student

When a student includes an Open School class or experience in their transcript, this indicates that the student has met or exceeded all course requirements for that experience.

Transcripts are authenticated by the student's advisor, another faculty member familiar with the student's accomplishments, and the school principal. This narrative transcript is the official record used for college and job applications.

Graduation from the Open School is based on successful completion of individualized goals related to the Graduation Expectations (personal, social, intellectual), equivalent experiences related to the Jefferson County Public Schools Graduation Requirements, successful completion of the Wilderness Trip and one other extended trip, completion of the six Passages, and a final transcript in which the student describes his or her learning experiences and accomplishments as a high school student.

# Policies and Procedures

In addition to the following policies, as a Jefferson County School District Option School the Open School is subject to all the terms and conditions outlined in the **Jeffco Public Schools Student and Family Handbook (Code of Conduct)**. All Open School students and parents/guardians are expected to be familiar with the responsibilities outlined in this handbook.

## 1. Advisor Discretion

Advisor Discretion is paramount to the advisee-advisor relationship in all facets of the Jefferson County Open School program. Please refer to "Advisor Discretion" on page two for a more detailed description.

*Advisor Change Procedure (Secondary)*

As the advisor-advisee relationship is critical to the success of each student in the program, students and Advisors are empowered to initiate a change of advisor. The following procedure has been adopted to guide the advisor change process.

Student Initiated:

Students wishing to initiate a change of advisor should follow the steps listed below:

- Demonstrate good standing within the community by having had a successful block (including developing and maintaining an appropriate MAP/Schedule, full attendance, positive participation, and successful completion of classes);
- Discuss the possibility of making the proposed change with parents/guardians, advisor, and prospective advisor(s);
- Write a proposal or letter;
- Visit the prospective advising group; an advising change is both a change of group and a change of advisor;
- Schedule a meeting with the current and prospective advisor;
- Celebrate the change.

Advisor Initiated:

Advisors who have experienced a loss of trust in an advisee so great as to warrant an advisor change should follow the steps listed below:

- Employ a ladder of well-documented interventions designed to support the advisee to correct inappropriate behavior, including individual conversations with the advisee, phone calls to the parent/guardian, family meetings, support plans, behavior contracts, etc;
- Discuss issues and strategies related to the advisee with peers, support group, or in staff meetings;
- Discuss the possibility of an advisor change with the team in a staff meeting to determine if the advisee has support to seek out a new advisor. If it is determined that the advisee has support to change advisors, provide a window of time for the advisee to seek out a new advisor.
- If there is support, set up a meeting with the advisee and the prospective new advisor to facilitate the change.

## 2. Attendance

**To report absences please contact our attendance line at 303-982-7053.**

The goal of our attendance policy is to support families and children. We believe strongly in the experiential nature of learning at the Open School; students who miss school are not able to make up this aspect of their education. We recognize that excessive tardiness or absence can be a cry for help from the family or the student. We believe that if we work together within our school and with Jeffco Public Schools Student Outreach, we can make a difference for children.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Advisor makes contact**<br><br>***Attendance Reminder Letter***<br>***Medical Letter***<br><br>***Notification of Out of School Learning Experiences***<br><br>***Request for Compulsory Letter***<br><br>***Request for Initial Hearing from Student Outreach*** | 1. Advisor contacts parent/guardian and begins to document contacts with family.<br>2. Advisor will keep records of parent/guardian contacts.<br>3. When a student has 10 unexcused OR excused absences, an Attendance Reminder Letter will be sent to the parent/guardian.<br>4. At any time when 10 or more days of excused absences for the first semester or 20 or more days of excused absences for the school year, a Medical Letter from the student's doctor may be required in order for absences to be excused.<br>5. If a student is out for an extended learning experience that is NOT a school sponsored trip, Passage work or a Self-Directed Learning Project, the parent/guardian and/or student should provide written notification to the advisor indicating purpose and duration.<br>6. Student will still be recorded absent and when student has 10 excused absences the Attendance Reminder Letter will be sent home.<br>7. If there are 3 or more days of unexcused absences after the Attendance Reminder Letter has been sent, the Request for Compulsory Letter will be sent to the parent/guardian, with a copy of the letter and updated attendance to the Jeffco Public Schools Student Outreach Office. The advisor will receive a copy of this letter.<br>8. If there are 3 additional days of unexcused absences after the Request for Compulsory Letter is sent, Request for Initial Hearing form will be submitted to the JPS Student Outreach office, along with a copy of updated attendance.<br>9. A record of all attendance contacts (from advisor and from office staff) will be requested prior to the hearing date. |
| ***Tardy Policy*** | For every **5 tardies**, one unexcused absence will be documented on the student's attendance record. This tardy policy will work with the attendance policy and students with tardy issues will be receiving an Attendance Reminder Letter earlier in the process due to these creating unexcused absences on the record. |

### 3. Behavioral Expectations and Discipline Ladder

<u>Elementary Student Norms</u>

At each level of the elementary; preschool, kindergarten, ELC, IA, and Bridges, students and staff collaboratively establish student norms. Student norms are general agreements for guiding student behavior and responsibilities. Students who violate the norms may experience a loss of trust from their advisor and/or the community and other appropriate consequences in accordance with the Jefferson County Schools Code of Conduct. The three general behavioral guidelines in the elementary program are:

- Is it safe?
- Is it kind?
- Is it appropriate?

<u>Secondary Student Norms</u>

Each year students work collectively to establish a series of school-wide norms. Student norms are general agreements for guiding student behavior and responsibilities. Students who violate the norms may experience a loss of trust from their advisor and/or the community, and other possible consequences.

<u>Discipline Ladder</u>

The values and norms of the Open School are designed to ensure a caring, safe, and productive learning environment for all members of the community. We believe each member of the community is responsible for upholding these values and norms, including monitoring one's own behavior and confronting peers who

choose to act inappropriately. We also understand that anybody can make a mistake and make poor decisions sometimes. In the Open School discipline model, we view mistakes as learning opportunities both for individuals and the community as a whole. Therefore, peer groups such as advising groups and triads may be involved at all levels of student discipline, if such involvement is appropriate.

At any point in time, individuals who violate community values and norms can choose to control their own behavior, accept confrontation from peers or staff, and accept responsibility for their actions, rectify the situation, and make better choices in the future. In these cases, no further intervention would be needed.

The vast majority of norms violations are resolved quickly with a reminder or confrontation. The following interventions occur when that first confrontation does not work. In cases where students are not ready or willing to accept responsibility for changing their behaviors that violate community norms, the following practices will be implemented.

*Note: In severe cases, a student may move from the lowest level of discipline to the highest without following a prescribed sequence. Additionally, the advisor will always be the first point of contact with the parent/guardian in the event of any discipline matter.*

| Intervention | Possible Solutions |
|---|---|
| **Lowest Level** | |
| Self-monitoring | • Self-Control and self-advocacy |
| Peer-to-Peer Confrontation | • Apology, Peace Table, advisor, or restorative conversation |
| **More Serious** | |
| Teacher/Advisor Confrontation | • New seat, time away, individual meeting with advisor, written student reflection (i.e. Situation Evaluation Plan, Solve it Plan), incomplete classes, loss of specials privileges (elementary), loss of off campus and/or open campus privileges (secondary), removal from class, and/or other consequences deemed appropriate by the advisor. |
| Advisor Informed | • Problem-solving meeting, Incident Report, loss of trust, loss of off campus and/or open campus privileges (secondary), Peace Table, restorative practices (mediation), and/or other consequences deemed appropriate by the advisor. |
| **Severe or Repeated Violations** | |
| Advisor, Parent/Guardian, and/or Administrator involved | • Problem solving meeting, Incident Report, loss of trust, loss of off campus and/or open campus privileges (secondary), Peace Table, restorative practices (mediation), service to community, retention at given level of program, and/or other consequences deemed appropriate by the advisor. |
| Informal and Formal Suspensions *Note: Informal Suspensions are determined and directed by the advisor, in collaboration with an Administrator*. Formal Suspensions are determined and documented in accordance with JeffCo Student and Family Handbook (Code of Conduct). | • Loss of privilege to attend school for a given period of time, make-up work, re-entry meeting, Peace Table, service to community, restorative practices (mediation), retention at a given level of the program, and/or other consequences deemed appropriate by the advisor. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Contract | • Re-clarification of Open School values and norms and individual responsibilities with clear terms to demonstrate appropriateness of the program, and/or other consequences deemed appropriate by the advisor. |

**4. Open and Off Campus (Secondary)**

Open Campus: A core philosophical tenet of Open Education is that learning occurs in a variety of settings, both planned and unplanned and in and out of the school building. In order to successfully complete self-directed learning projects (SDLs), Presentation of Learning (DoR), or the Passage process, students are expected to seek learning opportunities beyond the school walls. While engaged in Personal Learning and Independent Discovery (PLAID) days, students will necessarily be out of the building as they pursue apprenticeships, community service work, and other learning opportunities. As a result, students will not be directly supervised by Jefferson County Open School staff during these times. It is therefore required that students communicate all relevant information (address, phone number, times, transportation methods, etc.) in a written proposal that has been signed by their parent/guardian, advisor, consultant, and triad prior to beginning a DIGS/DoR/Passage learning experience. *Note: parent/guardian consent is not negotiable.* The aforementioned signatures are indicative of the high level of trust the student has attained and the full support and knowledge of the risks inherent in such activities. While trust has elements of subjectivity which must be determined by the parent/guardian and advisor, some indicators include:

- Maintenance of an ongoing, open dialogue with the advisor through regular attendance and positive participation in individual advising meetings;
- Consistent attendance and positive participation in advising, classes, governance, and triad meetings;
- Transcriptable completion of the majority of classes each block;
- Well written SDL or Passage proposals;
- Ongoing participation and successful completion of past SDL or Passage work;
- Documentation of a variety of learning experiences through a Portfolio;
- Documentation of personal, social and intellectual growth through the Graduation Expectations;
- Constructive use of unstructured time.

Note: See the Secondary Drug/Alcohol, Violence and Trust Policy for additional information.

**5. Trust**

At the Open School, students have a responsibility to be trust-worthy and dependable as active members of the Open School community. It is a core belief that all students are inherently good, and given the choice, will to do the right thing. As a result, students are trusted to make important decisions about their education, including appropriate class schedules, PLAID day activities, travel program participation, and more. It is therefore critical that students and parents/guardians work with advisors to establish a trusting and supportive relationship.

Trust Violations

Violations of student norms, expectations, and responsibilities are taken seriously. Violations of Trust will result in a loss of privileges and/or suspension/expulsion as detailed in the Code of Conduct. The advisor, parent/guardian, student, and/or administrator (if necessary) will determine details. In addition to suspension/expulsion, privileges that may be revoked could include, but are not limited to: open and/or off campus, participation in the travel program, participation in the PLAID day program, etc. The Open School utilizes a discipline model which views mistakes as learning opportunities, both for individuals and the community as a whole. It is therefore the student's responsibility to reestablish a trusting relationship with the advisor and the Open School community. *Note: In the event of a Trust Violation the JPS Student and Family Handbook (Code of Conduct) will be consulted and students will be subject to possible suspension/expulsion.*

## Five Non-Negotiables

Due to the risks inherent in operating a program like the Open School which includes travel, Open and/or Off Campus privileges, PLAID days, etc., the Open School has adopted the five non-negotiable standards of behavior for all school related activities (commonly referred to as the Five "No's").

- No Sex
- No Drugs
- No Alcohol
- No Tobacco
- No Violence

## Secondary Drug, Alcohol, Violence, and Trust Violation Policy

Jefferson County Open School is a unique, PK-12 experiential program that provides many opportunities for students to function independently on extended trips, Voyage/SDL/DoR/Passage work, independent study and travel, PLAID experiences and other open/off-campus activities. In order to enjoy the continued support of parents/guardians, staff, community, and district leadership, the Open School has developed a policy to address serious violations of trust, including use of drugs, alcohol, or violence. Any student who is involved, either directly or indirectly, in any of these behaviors violates the trust of the advisory relationship and the community, and is excluded from such independent activities for as long as it takes to rebuild a trusting relationship. *Note: This may include students who witness inappropriate activities but take no action to address the situation, or failure to relay critical information to a staff member.*

In cases of student possession, use, abuse, intent to use, trafficking of alcohol or other drugs, including over-the-counter medications, the Open School upholds the JPS Student and Family Handbook (Code of Conduct). Violence is defined as any physical act of shoving, punching, slapping, hitting, or any manner of violating another person's body or space. This includes sexual harassment, as well as threatening another person verbally, physically, or with any kind of weapon. Verbal abuse may include threats or the use of abusive language.

**First offense**- District policies are followed regarding formal suspension or expulsion for drugs, alcohol or violence; an advisor may impose an informal suspension for general trust violations. Before re-entry into the community, the student must take part in a conference attended by the parent/guardian, advisor, and administrator. In addition to the aforementioned suspensions, the student is prohibited from taking part in overnight trips, including advisory trips, for a minimum of six months (with the exception of required curricular trips such as the Wilderness Trip). The six month travel ban is non-negotiable. This trip suspension begins on the first day of the formal or informal suspension.

After a trusting relationship has been re-established with the student's advisor and the school community, a student may request to have trip privileges reinstated by presenting a convincing case to a committee comprised of the advisor, administrator, parents/guardians, triad, and trip sponsor in a Trust-Reinstatement Meeting. The committee will decide, by consensus, whether the student has satisfactorily demonstrated that they are trustworthy.

**Second offense**- All district policies apply. At this time, the question of whether the Open School is the right learning environment for the student becomes the paramount topic of discussion. A parent/guardian conference/support group will be convened to consider alternatives, which can include a plan for counseling, treatment, therapy, or other appropriate help. A contract will be developed governing the actions and expectations for the student; in most cases, the contract will include an appropriate leave from the school with the return based on the demonstration of the ability to make responsible choices and to be trustworthy.

In situations where the trusting relationship between secondary advisor and advisee has been compromised to such an extent that the advisor can no longer work with the student, the advisor may withdraw support for the student to remain in their advisory group. If this occurs, the student may seek the support of another

appropriate level advisor (i.e. Foundations or Walkabout), if such a choice is determined appropriate by the greater staff.

**Withdrawal of support for a specific trip**- General trust violations may include lying, cheating, stealing, other egregious acts committed against members of the community, or a serious lack of engagement in the program as demonstrated by failure to follow their MAP/PSI goals, meet community expectations, attend classes, or complete evaluations. An advisor or trip leader may withdraw support for a specific trip if the student demonstrates behaviors that call into question their ability to be sufficiently trusted while traveling.

**6. Visitors** To provide the best educational experience to our visitors, and ensure safe and smooth operations, we follow a policy that addresses the various types of visitors:

- Parents/Guardians- Parents/guardians are always welcome to visit. As a courtesy, they should call in advance to coordinate the visit, sign in at the office, and wear a visitor's pass.
- Educational professionals, college students, students from sister schools, etc- Any staff member may arrange this type of visit. It's important to obtain approval from an administrator so the visit is scheduled for an optimal time. Visitors must sign in at the office and wear a visitor's pass.
- *Alumni, Graduates, Former students, and/or Friends and Family are welcome to visit, however, visits need to be scheduled and approved by administration and a former advisor (if applicable and possible), prior to the visit. A visitor must sign in at the office and wear a visitor's pass.
- Prospective students- Our orientation process calls for all families to attend an evening information event and for prospective secondary students to visit for at least a half day. These visitation days are listed on our website and are coordinated through the Public Relations class. Visitors will sign in.
- Voyage/SDL/DoR/Passage Meetings- Our students may invite friends and family to these meetings. Visitors must sign in, wear a visitor's pass, attend the activity, and sign out.

***Note: Unless circumstances are extremely unusual, and advisors AND administrators have been contacted IN ADVANCE, we will <u>not</u> allow visitors.**

# Glossary of Terms Used at the Open School

Advisor
The role of advisor at the Open School is the most important responsibility for all teachers. advisors are student advocates and learning facilitators who assist students in setting and achieving their Personal, Social, and Intellectual goals they create. The advising relationship is paramount in guiding students toward successful completion of their individualized personal, social, and intellectual programs.

Advising – Group
Advising is an integral part of the Open School program. Each secondary advising group has between 14 and 18 students. Elementary advising groups vary between 15 and 22 students. Advising groups meet on a regular basis. Group Advising emphasizes community through group-building, collaborative problem-solving, and supporting individuals and community endeavors.

Advising – Individual
Each advisor meets individually with each advisee on a regular basis to build the relationships necessary to guide students through their individualized program. Once a trusting relationship is established, advisors can provide deep and meaningful feedback to assist each advisee in the creation of a relevant personal, social, and intellectual program.

Block (1-2-3-4) (Secondary)
The secondary schedule is a block schedule, although many classes are semester- or year-long classes.

Bridges
Bridges is the final phase of the Open School elementary program. It is designed as closure to the elementary experience and a transition into the Foundations Program. The culminating project is the Bridges Voyage Self-Directed Learning project and presentation.

Capstone Project
A Capstone Project is a multifaceted body of work that is district determined and serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for secondary students. Capstone projects are district determined and could:

- include a portfolio of the student's best work - curriculum or research-based.
- feature a set of experiments organized around a central problem.
- showcase a community service project or learning activity; and/or
- student-written narrative transcript.

Community Circle
Community Circle is an all IA & Bridges (elementary grades 4-6) meeting where students participate in the democratic governance of the school. In addition to disseminating information, students celebrate successes, discuss school-wide issues and solve problems collectively.

Community Service
Community Service involves students in practical, productive experiences which address actual needs and develop a sense of pride in self and school. Students improve self-image, increase understanding of personal abilities and limits, break down stereotypes, increase empathy, and create a profound sense of fulfillment.

Consultant
The Voyage, DIGS, DoR, Passage, and Capstone processes require that students work with a consultant. These are individuals, sometimes staff members, who work one-on-one with students to meet the objectives of their Voyage, DIGS, DoR, Passage, and Capstone project. Consultants are involved throughout the entire process, including being present at both the Proposal and Wrap-Up meetings.

Day of Dialogue
A Day of Dialogue is an educational experience which is student-created. In order to preserve institutional flexibility to respond to the teachable moment, a Day of Dialogue allows secondary students and staff to respond collectively by stopping the daily schedule to dedicate an entire day to focus on current events, student needs, a student celebration of learning, or a crisis.

Demonstration of Readiness
A Demonstration of Readiness (DoR) is a presentation for Foundations students to celebrate their self-directed learning projects, classes, as well as personal and social goals throughout their years as a Foundations student.

End-of-Year Transcript
End-of-Year Transcripts are evaluations/reflections of each secondary student's experience at the end of each school year. End-of-Year Transcripts are written by the student and include a Personal Statement, class list, advisor support letters, and written documentation of each individual learning experience. Both Mid- and End-of-Year Transcripts combine in a continuing document which is incorporated into the Final Transcript.

Evaluations
Narrative evaluations form the foundation of self-assessment documentation and are critical to monitoring the progress of each secondary student at the Open School. All class and self-directed learning experiences are assessed through the evaluation process. By reflecting on their personal, social, and intellectual growth, students chart their progress regarding the Graduation Expectations.

Final Transcript
The culmination of each Walkabout student's experience at the Open School is documented in the Final Transcript. An Open School Final Transcript is a narrative transcript written by the student and includes a Personal Statement, Educational Experiences List, documentation of each individual learning experience, a letter from the principal describing the Open School, and advisor support letters.

Five Goals
The Five Goals are guiding principles which influence all aspects of the program. Students will be able to:

- Rediscover the joy of learning,
- Seek meaning in your life,
- Adapt to the world as it is,
- Prepare for the world as it might be, and
- Create the world as it ought to be.

Foundations:
Between elementary school and high school (Walkabout program) is the Foundations program at the Open School. Foundations students are in 7th and 8th grades.

Four Quadrants
The four quadrants assist students in recognizing the world is indeed our classroom.

| | In School | Out of School |
|---|---|---|
| Planned | | |
| Unplanned | | |

Governance
Governance is meeting time for secondary students to participate in the democratic governance of the school. In addition to disseminating information, students celebrate successes, discuss school-wide issues and solve problems collectively.

Graduation Expectations
Considered in the development of each student's PSI Goals, the Graduation Expectations establish criteria for personal, social, and intellectual growth. Students must demonstrate significant growth, to an appropriate level of proficiency, in each of the Graduation Expectations, as agreed upon by the advisor and advisee. At the elementary level, growth is evaluated based on a continuum consisting of Emerging, Developing, Expanding, Connecting, and Bridging. At the secondary level, evaluation occurs during individual advising meetings using each student's portfolio as documentation of growth

Intensives: Secondary
Intensives are a multi-day learning experience focused on a specific topic for the duration of the experience. Intensives typically occur between the first and second block in the first semester, or between the third and fourth block in second semester, and allow students to have a highly immersive learning experience.

Journeys
Journey projects are designed to assist students in teacher-directed and student-directed learning. Students learn and develop the skills necessary to carry out self-designed projects by setting goals, planning, doing, and evaluating independent work.

Leadership (Class)
These secondary classes (Foundations and Walkabout specific) are designed to support students in the actual governance of the school. These groups work out the details of various student- or staff-generated proposals which are then distributed to, and discussed in, the democratic decision-making process, either in secondary advising groups or governance.

MAP (Mutually Agreed upon Plan) – or Schedule of Educational Experiences
Mutually Agreed upon Plans are designed to provide the greatest possibility of successfully completing a student's PSI goals. The MAP includes what is conventionally referred to as a class schedule, but is expanded to include Passage work, self-directed learning projects, trips, college classes, vocational school classes, work study, and other educational experiences and activities designed to help students meet their personal, social, and intellectual goals.

Mid-Year Transcript
The Mid-Year Transcript is an evaluation of each secondary student's experience at the end of the fall semester. Mid-Year Transcripts are written by students and include a Personal Statement, class list, and written documentation of each individual learning experience.

Passages
Passages are personally challenging projects in the Walkabout program, developed by each student in six different areas to demonstrate the ability to apply the skills they have learned to the real-world problems/issues. The six Passage areas are: Adventure, Career Exploration, Creative Expression, Global Awareness, Logical Inquiry and Practical Skills.

PLAID (Personal Learning and Independent Discovery)
Self-directed learning experiences help Walkabout students understand themselves as individuals and as contributing members of society through interdisciplinary, experiential, 'real world' education. PLAID Day plans may include apprenticeships, community service projects, Passage work, and other self-directed learning projects.

PSI (Personal, Social, and Intellectual) Goals
Students regularly demonstrate, work toward, and evaluate their individual progress through the Open School by creating and incorporating PSI goals. At the secondary level, these PSI goals are worked out between students, parents/guardians, and advisors, and are utilized to develop the students' Mutually Agreeable Plans for class schedules and self-directed learning through DIGS, DoRs, Passages, and their Capstone project.

Portfolio
Portfolios contain a body of evidence gathered by each student and their advisor to document personal, social, and intellectual growth on the Graduation Expectations. Portfolios are required for students to demonstrate readiness from one level of the program to the next.

Proposal
Secondary DIGS, DoR, Passage(s), and Capstone project includes the writing of a proposal which is approved by a committee of peers, the advisor and a consultant. The proposal is presented at a meeting, which consultant, advisor and triad are required to attend. Mentors and parents/guardians are encouraged to participate.

Restorative Practices
Restorative Practices in schools is philosophically based in fostering relationships, strengthening understanding, repairing harm, and building strong communities. Restorative Practices identify and address the needs that occur when there is conflict in the school community by cultivating empathy and modeling conflict resolution skills with students and adults alike. Restorative Practices, when practiced with fidelity, create a safe space for connection and dialogue. When facilitated by trained practitioners, Restorative Practices lead to a more equitable and inclusive environment for students, staff, families, and community members. Restorative conferences and circles are done to problem-solve appropriate responses to events or promote a safe and healthy community on an ongoing basis in a variety of settings.

Self-Directed Learning Projects
Also referred to as SDLs, every Self-Directed Learning project (or experience) involves six major steps. Each step must be documented in the student's portfolio before it is considered complete. Guidelines can be found in this student planner.

Three Domains
In a holistic approach to teaching and learning all three domains, personal, social, and intellectual, are equally considered in the learning process.

Triads
Triads are peer groups which support students in personal, social, and intellectual growth. These groups help to guide each member through the Passage Progress.

Trips
Trips are an integral part of the Open School program. Trips provide excellent learning opportunities in the real world and often prove to be a turning point in a student's life – reawakening the joy of learning; establishing trust in self, others, and the school community; creating ownership of school and one's actions; and reaffirming self-esteem.

Twelve Characteristics of an Effective Self-Directed Learner
- Has Vision
- Has a Goal
- Develops a Strategic Plan
- Has High Self-Esteem
- Takes Calculated Risks
- Is Self-Disciplined, Determined and Persistent

- Is Organized (time, effort, resources)
- Has a Support Network
- Is Self-Motivating (inner and outer rewards)
- Has a Powerful Personal Learning-Doing Style
- Is Self-Assessing (planned feedback)
- Is Positive, Confident (self-efficacy)

Voyage

Voyages are designed to assist students in beginning the transition from teacher-directed to student-directed learning. Students cultivate the skills necessary to develop meaningful independent projects by setting goals, planning, doing, and evaluating independent work. As part of the transition to Foundations, Bridges students complete a self-directed learning Voyage. SDL Voyages require students to seek out and secure meaningful projects, write detailed proposals, set clear goals, follow through on commitments, and articulate personal, social, and intellectual growth.

Walkabout

Walkabout, inspired by a First Peoples' of Australia rite-of-passage, is the final phase of the program in which each student demonstrates readiness to function as an adult by doing six Passages, the actual transition to adulthood.

Wilderness Trip

The Wilderness Trip is a multi-day backpacking trip designed to orient students to the Walkabout program and the Open School. Students spend the first three days of school participating in wilderness survival lessons, working together in group building activities, learning about the school community, and planning the logistics of the trip. Each trail group consists of new students to the Walkabout program, student leaders, and an advisor. Although this is a physically and emotionally demanding trip, students walk away with a sense of accomplishment and deepened relationships with students and staff.

Wrap-Up

Upon completion of the Voyage/SDL/DIGS/DoR/Passage process, the student reconvenes the committee that was present for the proposal and presents a written summary for final approval.