

WHOLE SCHOOLING

**Equity and Excellence for
Education in a Democratic Society**

Orientation Guide for Whole Schooling Renewal



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WHOLE SCHOOLING

Equity and Excellence for Education in a Democratic Society

Whole Schooling is based on key principles and associated practices that synthesize literature on effective learning practices for helping diverse children learn together. Whole Schooling seeks to build a culture in which children are (1) included in a learning community, (2) provided challenging instruction at their own level of ability based on authentic learning activities and their interests, (3) given care and support in an environment where the development of cognitive, social-emotional, and sensory-physical skills are seen as interactive and mutually reinforcing. Whole Schooling focuses on taking children where they are, providing engaging and supportive learning opportunities, and then evaluating the impact on children's growth. Learning builds from the inside-out in Whole Schooling rather than being imposed by predetermined 'standards' of performance. This philosophy insures that children can pursue multiple avenues of excellence without being constrained by reductionistic and narrow views of learning targets. Creativity, humor, interpersonal skills and relationships, art, music, dance, sports are given as much credibility as the traditional subjects of reading, math, and science. Whole Schooling also promotes the interrelatedness of equity and excellence insuring that children of multiple abilities

(students with severe disabilities to highly gifted students), cultural and ethnic groups, and students of differing socio-economic status, learn together without being grouped by any of these or other categories.

This document provides resources for those interested in pursuing a Whole Schooling approach to education as a guide to school renewal processes. It includes the following types of information:

P. 3. Principles of Whole Schooling. The principles of Whole Schooling are described.

P. 4 Key elements of Whole Schooling. We describe the principles of Whole Schooling and paint a picture of the key elements of implementing a Whole Schooling approach to learning.

P. 10 Whole Schooling Renewal Process. We outline a framework for working in a school to engage staff, parents, and children in constantly moving towards Whole Schooling.

P. 15 Tools. Several instruments have been developed to date that may be useful.



WHOLE SCHOOLING

The Five Principles



1. **Empowering citizens in a democracy.** The goal of education is to help students learn to function as effective citizens in a democracy. School administration and decision-making, classroom teaching, and interactions with families and the community engage teachers, parents, community members in democratic approaches to learning and organizing the life of the school.
2. **Including all.** All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender & age. We figure ways to get SUPPORT for diverse kids IN our classes rather than sending them out to special classes, clustering, or ability grouping.
3. **Multi-level, authentic teaching.** Teachers design instruction for diverse learners that engages them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities AND develop accommodations and adaptations for learners with diverse needs, interests, and abilities. We move beyond worksheets to engaged methods of teaching – multiple intelligences, multi-level instruction, authentic literacy, problem-based learning, and MORE.
4. **Building community & support of learning.** We use specialized resources (special education, title I, gifted education) to support students, parents, and teachers in the general education class. . Special education teachers, Title I specialists, counselors all form a SUPPORT TEAM and provide help in general education classes. Educators seek to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school. We might see: peer tutoring programs, peacemaking and conflict resolution, circles of friends, mentoring of older to younger students.
5. **Partnering with families and the community.** Educators build genuine collaboration within the school and with families and the community. The school works to strengthen the community; and provides guidance to engage students, parents, teachers, and others in decision-making and direction of the school. We would see our school as a community center where evening programs are run. We would see parents, community leaders in the school reading to children, mentoring kids, sharing their special skills. We would see teachers knowing the community and classes helping to improve and study their communities as they learn.



Key Elements To Building A WHOLE SCHOOL

Throughout the world, educators are seeking ways to create schools that promote justice and enhance the learning and performance of all children. They are discovering that old patterns of segregating students by race, gender, culture, language, and ability model oppression, reduce effective learning, and prevent the development of relationships among diverse children. Innovative and concerned educators are seeking to create *whole schools* where diversity is valued and children of great differences learn together. This short paper outlines key elements necessary for building inclusive schools. These strategies have been developed out of comprehensive literature review and the Whole Schooling Research Project.

1. Decision-making and leadership.

A school that seeks to prepare children to be citizens in a democracy must imbed the living and modeling of democracy. What is critical in this process are these three elements that must be at the foundation of the decision making process of the school.

Leadership. A whole school is first and foremost built on a vision of what is good for children. Staff care more about children than about their place and power in the school bureaucracy, their salary raise this coming year. These are important, of course. The needs of staff are critical. Yet, all is driven by a vision of what helps children.

Democracy. School leadership must be foremost in helping to impel a vision for children ahead. However, all school staff, parents, and children themselves must have a voice in creating an inclusive culture in a school if it is to survive.

Empowerment. Similarly, all in the school must be empowered to take action to make the vision of an inclusive school real. Power

must not only be in the 'office' and principal, but all work towards this goal.

2. Include All students in learning together. The school and staff together make a commitment that all students should be welcomed into the school and that teachers and other staff will work to have inclusive classes, heterogeneously grouped where students who are gifted through severely disabled learn, play, and work together.

For this to occur and become part of the culture of the school, the total staff must be committed to this as a value for children, be



able to articulate the reasons for their belief, be willing to defend this practice against detractors, and be willing to struggle, learn, and seek answers when it doesn't seem to be working for a particular child.

In most schools, this will mean a shifting special education, gifted, at risk, and other students from separate classes into general education; identifying the students who are presently in separate special education, gifted, or other schools who would typically attend our school and invite them back; and

presently in separate special education, gifted, or other schools who would typically attend our school and invite them back; and redesigning the role of specialists to provide support for inclusive teaching (see below).

We would not see children in ability groups in class or children with special needs (learning disabilities, gifted, etc.) clustered in general education classes.

3. Multi-level, authentic instruction for learners of diverse abilities.

Schools are typically structured along grade levels and teach using standardized materials as if all children in a particular grade were at the same level. The reality, however, is that any class, whether attempting to be inclusive or not, contains children functioning at 3-6 grade levels apart.

Inclusive schools, and the teachers and staff within them, embrace this diversity of ability and make it part of the design of instruction. Rather than designing instruction around a narrow span of abilities, inclusive teachers design their teaching intentionally allowing for students to be at multiple levels of ability. The idea, however, is not to ‘make it easier for those kids who aren’t at grade level’. Rather, inclusive teachers . . .

- ❑ Design lessons at multiple levels
- ❑ That challenge students at their own level (zone of proximal development)
- ❑ Provide support and scaffolding so children can push ahead to their own next level of learning.
- ❑ Using authentic teaching strategies that engage children in learning via activities that relate to their lives at home and in the community, that connect to the real world

- ❑ Engaging the multiple intelligences and learning styles of children so that multiple pathways for learning and demonstrating achievement are available.
- ❑ Involving students in collaborative, pair or group work where they draw on each other’s strengths.

Schools in which teachers teach in this way have few children whose needs are not met. However, since staff are constantly learning, never getting it quite right all the time, there will often be children for whom teaching is not working. Staff then figure a range of *adaptations* to the curriculum, paying attention to what works and how this might be incorporated next time into an overall teaching strategy.

4. Build community and meet the needs of children with behavioral challenges.

For children’s minds to work well so that they learn, they must feel safe, secure, cared for. When they don’t learning diminishes or ceases. Therefore, building community in the school is critical. This involves many dimensions:

- ❑ Collaborative, supportive, respectful relationships among staff, parents, the community – study groups, school teams that focus on different issues, team teaching, etc.
- ❑ Building structures in the classroom among children so they know one another help one another – peer partners, circles of support, peacemakers (a program for conflict resolution where children are taught to resolve conflicts among one another under teacher supervision and guidance), sharing of lives and feelings in talk, writing, the arts, class meetings, and more.
- ❑ Giving children choices and teaching them responsibility for choices – for example, children going to the bathroom



on their own (rather than a whole group lined up), selecting among several classroom activities, allowing students to sit, stand, move around, lay on the floor, etc, as they study or work together.

In such a school, 'behavior problems' are much less frequent. Children feel cared for, have choices, do not feel constrained, and yet are intentionally taught responsibility in the process. However, given the problems children have in their lives, students will still cause problems and staff seek to respect children and develop proactive solutions.

Rather than viewing children as needing to be 'controlled', teachers understand that all behavior communicates a message. When a child 'acts out', this is his or her way of telling staff about something they need. The challenge is to help figure out what that need is and to help them learn alternative strategies for meeting it. Glasser's described five needs of human beings that can provide a way to understand children: (1) survival, (2) love and belonging, (3) power, (4) fun, (5) freedom. Most often, schools ignore many of these needs and actually *create behavior problems* in their attempt to thwart children having these needs met. The goal in an inclusive school is to create a school culture and specific strategies that help students meet their needs in positive ways. But what do staff in an inclusive school DO? Here are some simple but powerful steps.

Step 1: Clarify the behavior that is a problem. It's also helpful to figure out *why* the behavior is *considered* a problem. Are rules too rigid? Are children treated poorly so that they are responding in kind? What can be done to help meet Glasser's Five Needs?

Step 2. Why is the behavior occurring? What need does the behavior signal? These



are the questions underlying a good 'functional assessment'. They are critical for only by answering them do we understand the child and develop a way to meet needs. Other parts of this may involve analysis of the following questions: What occurs before, during, and after the problematic behavior? What is going on in the child's life?

Step 3. Develop strategies to meet the needs of the child in more positive ways. Develop these ideas *with* the child. Help the child to understand that the behavior is not good, we understand and care, but there are other ways he can get what he needs. Develop an action plan, do it, evaluate it.

Step 4. Evaluate how well the change worked. How do we know? Traditionally, we know an intervention worked if the problematic behavior went away. In this case, the strategies only worked *if the needs of the child were met*. Who determines this? The child.

School staff can do other things to deal with problematic behavior in a positive way. Some of these include:



- ❑ Dialogue and joint planning with the parents.
- ❑ Create a room where the child can go, under supervision, when he ‘needs a break’ to deal with emotional stress. This can be the library, a support room, a secluded place in the class (like under the teacher’s desk).
- ❑ Build social support for the child. Get a circle of support together of classmates who together plan with the child and teacher, using MAPS for example, how to help him or her.
- ❑ Do a “Meeting Needs Audit” of the total school to determine how well the school is meeting the five needs identified by Glasser for children in the building. Develop a range of activities that may address discrepancies.

5. Provide support for teachers.

Supporting teachers in working with students at multiple ability levels, who have emotional and social challenges in their lives is critical. This is particularly important as the shift towards building an inclusive culture in the school is occurring. Teachers who are used to trying to teach at only one level have difficulty figuring out how to teach at multiple levels. Even teachers who do this well sometimes don’t know that they do or what is multi-level and what is not.

A range of specialists are available to most schools to deal with special needs and problems of children – social workers, special education teachers, bilingual teachers, psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and others. In a traditional school, most of these people work on their own with limited consultation with others and pull children out of class for various services.

In a whole school, however, specialists work to support the general education classroom teacher. Further they work as a *team*.



Special education teachers play an important role in an inclusive school. How this role develops, however, can vary dramatically depending upon philosophy and purpose. Four roles are emerging out of research related to in-class special education support by teachers and aides.

1. Remediation or enrichment – the goal is to ‘fix’ the child or ‘enrich’ the child’s experience, often in pull-out classes or one on one work in the back of the general education class;
2. Adapting – teaching strategies are not questioned and if the ability of the child does not match requirements, curriculum adaptations are developed – eg. different worksheets, less work, more time to do work.
3. Inclusive, multi-level, authentic teaching. Here the support teacher and general education teacher work together to design lessons that engage children at multiple levels.
4. Teacher need. In this situation, a support teacher provides assistance to the teacher in strengthening or areas of relative need in the teacher’s repertoire. This might

include helping the teacher to learn skills in literacy, science by developing a lesson and teaching it.

In quality schools, we put our focus on #'s 3 and 4. #1 has little place. #2 will be needed little as teachers learn how to teach starting from children's present abilities and strengths. In this way of working we might see:

- ❑ The support team meeting weekly together to talk about children with special problems and needs and brainstorm together how to deal with the issue.
- ❑ Scheduled meetings at least every two weeks between the general education teacher and the specialists who are providing support in the classroom to develop plans on teaching together and address concerns of specific children.
- ❑ Special education teachers (Inclusive Support Teachers) assigned to several rooms where they collaborate with teachers. When we observe the room we would see the teacher or aide working with all the students in the class while assuring that the students with special needs were receiving the help they need. The special education and general education teacher would work together with each taking responsibility for all students.
- ❑ General education teacher along with specialists – special education teacher, aide, speech therapist, social worker – working together with small groups of children who are working on different projects – centers, inquiry projects, and more.

We would NOT see.

- ❑ An aide at the back of the class with a student with a disability,

- ❑ An aide or teacher sitting constantly with a student with a disability clearly working only with him.
- ❑ Students in ability groups working with the special education teacher.
- ❑ A student with special needs separated from the rest of the class.

6. Partner with parents. Parents of children with special needs have typically gone through much with their children. In traditional schools, these parents receive much negative feedback from the school. Their children are rejected and 'sent away' to special education classes or separate schools. In a Whole School, however, we turn this around by:

- ❑ *Immediately* inviting parents to have their children in inclusive classes.
- ❑ Meeting with and listening carefully to what parents have to tell us about their children. We seek to understand the child's gifts, strengths, and needs, strategies that work, and interests of the child from the parent.



- ❑ Welcoming their child into our classes. We communicate that we want their

child in our school and obtain their input for his or her educational plan.

- ❑ Invite the parent into the school and class. Make them welcome and a part of the school family and community.
- ❑ Insure that they are involved in the full life of the school.

We would NOT see:

- ❑ Parents who must fight to have their children included in general education classes in the school.

- ❑ Separate PTA for parents of children with special needs.
- ❑ Special nights just for children with special needs. They will be fully included in any after school program or activity.
- ❑ Teachers sending constant negative notes home to children without balancing this with positive communications.



WHOLE SCHOOLING

RENEWAL PROCESS

Following we describe a process for engaging in change moving towards deep understanding of the principles of Whole Schooling, an analysis of the need of the school, development of an constantly renewing action plan.

Principles of Change

As Whole Schooling has sought to build an inclusive culture of engaged teaching partner schools, we have identified several principles that underlie a successful change process. These will become more explicit during the process of the project.

Inclusive schooling with democracy at the center. Although we expect that schools will start down the road to school reform and improvement beginning in different places and emphasizing one or two of the Five Principles, the commitment to inclusion of students with differences in learning together is non-negotiable. The ultimate goal must be bringing all students with disabilities back to the school, eliminating ability grouping as a preferred instructional method, and working towards inclusive teaching and support strategies that support authentic, multi-level instruction. This commitment is inextricably tied to work that fosters democratic decision-making within classrooms and schools, as well as across schools throughout the network.

Structures based on strengths and needs. Rather than creating a canned prescription for curriculum, study, and governance structures, the Whole Schooling change process seeks to foster deep thinking and subsequent activities arising from the specific context of individual classrooms, schools, and districts. It has already been demonstrated that there is more than one approach to organizing schools, managing

classrooms, and designing curriculum that is consistent with the Whole Schooling principles.

Building on capacities, strengths, and gifts. Within and across schools, the key is identification of the capacities of teachers, parents, students, and other school staff and then to use those strengths as sources of learning for others.

Modeling the outcome via the process. If we want schools that are based on the Five Principles of Whole Schooling, the process of change must be based on these principles as well.

Reflection, thinking, sharing among teachers, staff, and parents. Change cannot be mandated, nor can new skills for teaching and schooling be simply imparted from one person to the other. These changes involve new ways of thinking and new relationships. For substantive change to occur, opportunities are needed for learning, dialogue, sharing, and discussion.

Cross-school, cross-district partnerships. Partnerships among a network of schools working towards similar goals is a critical component, linking teachers, principals, children, and parents across schools. As they have worked together, educators have frequently commented that it is much easier to have substantive discussions about classroom practices when those discussions



allow references to practices in other buildings and thereby avoid any complicating “personality issues” or reluctance to critically analyze the work of close colleagues.

Critical friends and resources from the outside. A ‘critical friend’ who understands and is committed to the Five Principles of Whole Schooling allows a school to be challenged to identify its strengths and ask questions it might not otherwise ask, thereby finding new perspectives.

Supporting and developing change agents. Ultimately, Whole Schooling is

about creating change agents among teachers, staff, parents, and students.

School reform as community organizing.

Truly effective change involves pulling together the resources of a community, setting direction together, and building resources for change. As the school moves ahead towards change, barriers and unusual opportunities will present themselves. It is helpful to think of this change and growth process from the vantage point of community organizing – within and across schools, and within individual classrooms as well.

1. Getting started: Engagement.

Connecting a school with a formal school reform model requires a process of engagement that is informed and thoughtful. One or more meetings is held with staff, parents, and students to discuss (1) the principles and practices of the model, (2) the origin of these ideas, (3) implications of implementing the models, and (4) controversies surrounding the specific model or school reform in general. A representative of the Whole Schooling Consortium is present at this meeting to provide information, answer questions, and assist as needed. Presenters provide an overview of the principles of Whole Schooling, associated practices, outline the process of renewal described below, and

identify expectations and resources and opportunities that will be part of adopting the Whole Schooling model.

The school will be asked to come to consensus in their adoption of Whole Schooling and agree to:

- (1) adopt the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as the guiding framework for school renewal,
- (2) develop a relationship with a support office of the Consortium, and
- (3) join the Whole Schooling Consortium and local Learning Partnerships – aiming both to benefit and learn from others and to contribute to the total effort.

2. Whole Schooling Renewal Steering Committee.

A group of school staff and parents will guide and coordinate Whole Schooling Renewal efforts. This group will be connected to existing school working groups – governance council, school improvement committee, and so on. Often, a representative group of these larger bodies

will function as a planning group or school-level steering committee. This group will meeting monthly and guide the work of the project via the following specific tasks and activities:

- Convene the first meeting at which participants will get to know one another



- and establish a working process for the year.
- Discuss and collaboratively develop an implementation plan for Whole Schooling.
- Utilize elements of the Whole Schooling Renewal process at each school including facilitation of a Strengths and Needs Assessment.
- Coordinate cross-school interactions – teacher to teacher sharing and site visits.
- Review the Whole Schooling process, documentation of the process and supporting materials, and provide suggestions for revisions.
- Plan & coordinate the summer conference.
- Review evaluation information and materials and provide input into their interpretation and meaning.

3. Develop a Whole Schooling vision for the school.

The Steering Committee will plan a process involving all stakeholders in each school designed to develop a vision for the school based on the principles of Whole Schooling. This vision will be the central organizing vehicle for moving towards school renewal. We expect that this vision will change, gather depth, shift directions as the school grows and mechanisms to update the formal understanding of the vision will be an integral part of the process. The following strategies and processes will be utilized to develop this vision.

- A meeting of school staff, parents, community members, and children will be held in which information will be shared about the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. Following this, small groups will work together to develop ideas about their vision for the school, organized by the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. A recorder will capture the words of each group on chart paper. Cross-group sharing will capture key themes.
- A document will be developed that pulls together and synthesizes the vision of the school.
- The governing committees of the school will review this document and endorse a summary version as a working vision for the school.

4. Whole Schooling Self-Study: *Identify strengths, needs, and priorities.*

Following this setting of the vision, the school will conduct a self-study based on the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. Essentially, school staff will ask these questions: “To what degree are we already implementing each of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling? What are particular strengths and positives? What are areas of concern and need? What do we need to do to make the vision for our school real?” More specific questions will include: “Are there students with disabilities attending other schools who would go to this school if they had no disabilities? If not, where are they? How well are we challenging students by helping them learn together at their own ability levels? What is the sense of community we have in this school?”

The Strengths/Needs Assessment will be revised and updated on an ongoing basis, thus providing an ongoing, interactive learning loop for continuous improvement and renewal. Several tools have been developed to date to assist in this process:

- (1) The Whole Schooling Action Guide;



- (2) Whole Schooling Self-Assessment Survey; and
- (3) Whole Schooling Self-Assessment Rating Scale.

Strategies for completing the initial self-study will be identified by the Steering Committee and may include: (1) written surveys and checklists using these tools; (2) use of the Action Guide as an additional assessment tool; (3) conducting focus groups and dialogues among stakeholders organized around one or more principle; and (4) collection and analysis of school data and documents. We expect to revise these documents and develop other tools as needed in the project.

The following processes will be used to conduct this assessment:

- The Steering Committee will review and select, and/or modify, tools to use to obtain the written input of teachers and parents.
- A process and tools will be developed to engage children in their classes in providing input into the strengths / needs assessment as part of the instructional process.
- An interactive meeting(s) of stakeholders where participants identify perceived strengths and needs related to each principle of Whole Schooling as a group, and then divide into problem-solving groups related to each principle to develop potential solutions and to prioritize key needs, a process field-tested to date in four schools.

5. Develop and implement a plan for change.

The Steering Committee will facilitate the change process with the School Improvement Team.

WHOLE SCHOOLING Renewal MENU FOR CHANGE. The plan will draw from and add to the Whole Schooling Renewal *MENU for Change* that articulates key strategies developed to date. These are described below followed by specific tasks and activities of the design and implementation process.

Action Learning Groups. Teachers, parents, support staff, and administrators may meet as Action Groups focused on particular issues or topics. Such groups provide a sense of empowerment for teachers and other stakeholders, providing a safe place to share innovations and teaching strategies, explore issues, and craft innovations together.

Dialogue sessions for learning, assessment, visioning, and planning. In staff meetings or special meetings that school staff and parents are invited to attend, sessions will be held on specific topics for learning, assessing the success and challenges of particular innovations, and developing updated plans for moving ahead.

Critical friend.. One or more external critical friends will work with the school, developing a relationship, visiting classes, and participating in meetings. The role of this individual is to provide an outside set of eyes, bring critical questions, facilitate organizing of staff to address critical issues, consult with the school principal, and support the development of school leadership among staff.

Workshops. Workshops can provide focused, short-term information and skill development that can be strengthened and



enhanced via other strategies. Resource people in each of the schools and consultants working with the Whole Schooling Consortium will be the primary source of assistance in targeted areas of concern.

School-to-school visits and learning partnerships. A powerful part of the process is linking teachers and parents with one another in order to understand innovations within each other's schools. Visits to schools will allow extended time observing in classrooms and will be targeted at building partnerships to be continued in Action Learning Groups and Dialogue Sessions where particular issues of interest and need will be addressed.

University courses. We will develop strategies by which courses may be offered on school campuses for a network of schools, particularly in conjunction with the work of Action Learning Groups. University courses will be provided that focus on interest areas of school participants as part of the annual Whole Schooling conference.

School retreat. Retreats once per year provide school communities an opportunity for reflection, assessment of successes and challenges, renewal of a vision, and development of ongoing strategies for change. Done well, such retreats offer an important opportunity to strengthen the sense of community among adults in the school.

Whole Schooling Consortium conference. Yearly, members of Consortium school communities will come together to share experiences, hear presentations from national presenters, and discuss next steps plans for the partnership. This will provide an opportunity for reflection and growth.

Involvement of the central school district office. Schools must react to and influence the overall mission, direction, and policies of their own school districts. Therefore, a plan regarding interactions and interventions with the central administration of the school district is an important component of a school renewal process. In the long run, the goal of the Whole Schooling project is facilitation of dissemination through all schools in a district.

Engagement of children in Whole Schooling Renewal. A key component of the Whole Schooling Renewal process is to involve children as integral partners in all aspects of the effort including the following: a heterogeneous group of children across grade levels at Hillside Elementary School will be provided training and support for participation. A group of teachers and support staff will provide specific support to these children in this process; discussions of key questions and concerns (Eg. How can children learn together while working at different ability levels? How can we care about each other in our school?) within and across classes; participation in the strengths, needs assessment and visioning for the school.



WHOLE SCHOOLING

RESOURCE DOCUMENTS





WHOLE SCHOOLING

Strengths and Needs of Our School

School Name

Your Name & Position (Optional)

Date

DIRECTIONS Identify specific activities, programs, work we do in our school or your class related to each principle in the left column. In the right column, indicate what you think is needed to improve the school and your class under each principle.

1. EMPOWER CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY: Educators work to build a culture of democracy in the school among staff, in classrooms and the school community with students, parents, and community members.

Positive strategies being used

My Class

Needed improvements

The School



2. INCLUDE ALL. All children learn together across differences of culture; ethnicity; language; academic, emotional, and sensory-physical abilities; gender & age.

Positive strategies being used

My Class

Needed improvements

The School



3. MULTI-LEVEL, AUTHENTIC INSTRUCTION FOR LEARNERS OF DIVERSE ABILITIES. Teachers design instruction for diverse learners at multiple levels, challenge each child at his or her own level, provide scaffolds and supports and engage them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities. Teachers develop accommodations and adaptations for learners as these are needed.

Positive strategies being used

My Class

Needed improvements

The School



4. BUILD COMMUNITY & SUPPORT LEARNING. All work together to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school. The school uses specialized school and community resources (special education, title I, gifted education) to support learning and heterogeneous grouping of students. Teachers and staff work proactively to understand, support, and meet the needs of students with behavioral challenges.

Positive strategies being used

My Class

Needed improvements

The School



5. PARTNER WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY. Educators build genuine collaboration for learning with families, community members, and resource organizations. They seek to engage the school and students in strengthening and improving the community.

Positive strategies being used

My Class

Needed improvements

The School



OTHER IDEAS OR COMMENTS?

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO _____ BY _____



WHOLE SCHOOLING

Principles and Practices

A Self- Assessment Tool For Educators



DIRECTIONS: This purpose of this document is to provide a simple tool that a school can use to indicate the degree to which it is implementing the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. This tool can be used as a checklist and/or rating scale.

1. Summarize key practices under each of the five principles of Whole Schooling being implemented in your school.
2. Please indicate the estimated percentage of teachers who are using a particular practice in their classroom instruction.
3. Attach any available reports or documentation that illustrate how your school is implementing these principles.

1	2	3	4	5
0% of teachers	25% of teachers	50% of teachers	75% of teachers	100% of teachers

Name of School: _____

Principal: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

The FIVE PRINCIPLES of Whole Schooling

1. Empower citizens in a democracy.
2. Include all.
3. Authentic, multi-level instruction.
4. Build community & support learning.
5. Partner with parents & community.

Comments



1. Empower citizens in a democracy.

1. _____ In classrooms students make choices and work in collaborative working groups in which they ENGAGE IN DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING.
2. _____ Teachers and the administration MODEL DEMOCRACY in the way school decisions are made with staff, students, families, and the community.
3. _____ The ideas and contributions of ALL STUDENTS ARE VALUED AND ENCOURAGED.
4. _____ CARING AND RESPECT for others is modeled and fostered.
5. _____ Efforts are made to CONNECT STUDENTS with members of other cultures, ethnic groups, and socio-economic status.
6. _____ Students STUDY THE LOCAL COMMUNITY to identify patterns of equity and inequity, power relationships, and cultural patterns.
7. _____ Students are encouraged to identify and study local, state, national, and international issues and to TAKE ACTION to have input in solving problems.
8. _____ Students are provided opportunities for COMMUNITY SERVICE as part of the curriculum.

2. Include all.

9. _____ The school has made a commitment to HETEROGENOUS groupings and is seeking intentionally to move away from separate programs of classrooms for special students to integrated programs..
10. _____ Students with SEVERE DISABILITIES (students who have severe mental retardation, physical disabilities, multiple disabilities, severe emotional impairments) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
11. _____ Students with MODERATE DISABILITIES (students who have educable and trainable mental impairment) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
12. _____ Students who have LIMITED HEARING, VISION, AND MOBILITY are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
13. _____ Students with MILD DISABILITIES (students with learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, mild emotional impairments) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.



14. ____ Students who are BILINGUAL or have LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING abilities are included in general education where they get assistance and support for language learning.
15. ____ Students served through TITLE I are provided help in the general education classroom.
16. ____ Students who have been identified as GIFTED obtain opportunities for expanded learning in the context of the general education classroom.
17. ____ The school is MULTI-RACIAL and classes are mixed racially in ways that reflect the surrounding community.
18. ____ Classes are MULTI-AGE and allow for interactions and mutual learning among students across age groups.
19. ____ PULL-OUT services for students are MINIMAL. Supports are provided using a PUSH-IN approach.

3. Authentic, multi-level instruction.

20. ____ STUDENT INTERESTS are a centerpiece of teaching and the curriculum.
21. ____ ACTIVE, AUTHENTIC LEARNING in which students learn skills through active engagement in meaningful activities is a core instructional philosophy and approach.
22. ____ Teachers use MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES to design instruction.
23. ____ THEMATIC / INTEGRATED instruction is used within and/or across classrooms.
24. ____ Teachers use COOPERATIVE LEARNING.
25. ____ In LITERACY INSTRUCTION strategies are used that give students an opportunity for peer support and authentic use of language.
26. ____ PROJECT BASED learning allows students to work together to struggle with actual materials and community issues.
27. ____ DRAMA, ART, MUSIC, & PHYSICAL EDUCATION is integrated throughout the school curriculum.
28. ____ Instruction is CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY through mentorships, service learning, community projects, and other strategies.
29. ____ The school intentionally seeks to design its learning practices to ACCOMMODATE a wide range of styles, abilities, cultures, and other human differences.
30. ____ ADAPTATIONS & MODIFICATIONS are made in the curriculum expectations and learning activities for specific students.
31. ____ STATE TESTING is kept within proper perspective. The curriculum is centered more in the needs and interests of students than state mandates and testing guidelines.



4. Build community & support learning.

- 32. ____ Teachers focus on building COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY in the classroom, moving away from competition as the central educational model.
- 33. ____ PEER SUPPORT is used informally and formally in the school and classroom.
- 34. ____ Emphasis is placed in helping students develop EMOTIONAL & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS.
- 35. ____ Teachers are given SUPPORT by specialists and the school administration.
- 36. ____ Teachers engage in TEAM TEACHING, CO-TEACHING, & CONSULTATION with other teachers.
- 37. ____ A BUILDING BASED SUPPORT TEAM is used to provide support to children, families and teachers.
- 38. ____ SPECIAL EDUCATION teachers and related services personnel (OT, PT, speech therapist) provide IN-CLASS SUPPORT for students with disabilities.
- 39. ____ PARAPROFESSIONALS provide assistance in classes.
- 40. ____ School staff have valuable PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT regarding inclusion and the other principles related to Whole Schooling.

5. Partner with families & community

- 41. ____ Teachers and the school REACH OUT in many pro-active ways to the school and community.
- 42. ____ Parents are INVOLVED IN CLASSROOMS providing instruction and support.
- 43. ____ Parents of students with SPECIAL NEEDS are included in all typical activities of the school.
- 44. ____ The school is involved in interagency WRAP-AROUND SERVICES or other methods of connecting with outside helping resources for families.
- 45. ____ The school has special programs to help parents in knowing how to CONNECT HOME LEARNING WITH THE CURRICULUM OF THE SCHOOL.
- 46. ____ The school functions as a COMMUNITY CENTER and has many programs operating at night and on the weekend.





WHOLE SCHOOLING

Towards A Guide for Action Planning

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WHOLE SCHOOLING

1. EMPOWER CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY: Educators work to build a culture of democracy in the school among staff, in classrooms and the school community with students, parents, and community members.

We would <i>expect</i> to see. . .	We would hope <i>not</i> to see . . .
- Principal providing leadership and vision while engaging staff, parents, and students in dialogue about important decisions. - Principal facilitates discussion and dialogue among staff, providing support when staff have difficulties. - Informal and formal collaboration among teachers, sharing of ideas, knowledge of each other's practice, discussion at the end of the day. - Staff attend to relationship building and people reframing and summarizing what they hear when people talk. - Staff disagree but also show respect and a willingness to work towards consensus. - Many choices for children – helping to make decisions about the school, daily choices in the classroom – activities on which to work, books to read, the making of rules by students. - Students study controversial social and political issues, take action to make an impact, seek to promote social justice – all as an integral part of the learning process. - Staff work with students and parents to engage in political action to promote positive policies in education and push back against damaging policies. - The school involves parents, university educators, and others in its dynamics of growth and change.	- Principal making major decisions and imposing these on staff with no real dialogue or involvement. - Efforts at change are made by autocratic decree. Principal often seems stressed or angry. - Children with no or few choices, teacher direction, no opportunity to make decisions or have input into class activities. - School and class rules are lists of what not to do which children had no part of making. - Much tension exists among staff, little dialogue. - Principal either resists innovation by teachers or seeks to control such efforts. - Principal takes personnel action against a teacher who participated in a rally against standardized testing. - Staff are told they cannot communicate with parents about their rights regarding inclusive education or issues regarding standardized tests. - Outside involvement is resisted and limited. The school puts forth an image that it is perfect. - Parents must make an appointment a week in advance to visit their child's classroom.

Action Steps

1. Develop a working group to look at how the school functions as a democracy, its use of power, its dynamics for group, how democracy is supported in the classroom.
2. Investigate the culture of the school. Do a "Democracy Audit" based on observations, interviews, and other data.
3. Involve staff, parents, and children in forums to discuss the idea of democracy and develop an action plan for strengthening democracy in all aspects of the life of the school.
4. Start with 1-3 small projects as 'action learning experiments' – eg. Create ways that children can influence the curriculum of study; create forums for staff decision-making about policies.

2. INCLUDE ALL. All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender & age.

We would <i>expect</i> to see. . .	We would hope <i>not</i> to see . . .
• A range of children – gifted, second language learners, mild to severely disabled – in classes learning together. • Multi-age learning is used frequently – multi-age classes, linking of classes of older and younger students in learning projects, involvement of older people in the community. • Teachers and support staff work to teach so that all children are challenged at their own level of ability, that students with different first language are given support in dual language learning. • School staff is composed of people of different ethnic groups, socio-economic status, and disability. • The school reaches out to insure that all students in its catchment area are welcomed into the school. • The principal and teachers talking about the value of all sorts of diversity and their philosophy of inclusive schooling. • Students in the school talk about what they are learning from having kids with substantial differences in their classes. • Children develop friendships and relationships across their differences.	• Separate classes for special education, gifted, bilingual, at risk. • Clustering of students by category across classes. • Ability grouping in classes. • Special education, gifted, or bilingual separate classes in the school. • 12 year old students with mental retardation ‘included’ in a 2nd grade class due to their presumed mental abilities. • Students with moderate to severe disabilities at a segregated special education school. • Teachers complaining about kids with special needs in their classes, stating they should go to separate classes. • Kids taunt, call kids with special needs ‘dummy’ or ‘retarded’. • Students from different ethnic groups cluster together; kids with disabilities are pushed away by other students.

Action Steps

1. Develop a working group to move towards inclusive schooling practices.
2. Conduct an “Inclusion Audit”. Determine how children are distributed in the building – special classes, ability grouping in classes, etc. Identify children who are sent to special programs before they get an opportunity to come to the school.
3. Dialogue with staff, parents, and children about segregated versus inclusive education. Develop a commitment to become an inclusive school.
4. Engage in learning about inclusive schooling and teaching through conferences, visits to other schools.
5. Develop an action plan. Start small. Strategies may include (depending upon the situation of the school).
 - Place children in classes heterogeneously intentionally, seeking to balance different characteristics of children.
 - Move children out of separate classes into general education classes. Re-design the roles of special teachers to support staff *or* add classes and reduce the overall class size.
 - Seek out parents of children who have been sent to segregated, special schools and invite them to consider enrolling their children in the school.
 - Teachers obtain training, as needed, and develop strategies to teach authentically at multiple levels of ability.



3. AUTHENTIC, MULTI-LEVEL INSTRUCTION FOR LEARNERS OF DIVERSE

ABILITIES. Teachers design instruction for diverse learners at multiple levels, challenge each child at his or her own level, provide scaffolds and supports and engage them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities. Teachers develop accommodations and adaptations for learners as these are needed.

We would <i>expect</i> to see. . .	We would hope <i>not</i> to see . . .
• The experiences and interests of children are used to direct and expand learning activities. The state curriculum and standardized tests are considered on source of focus for learning goals and activities. • Students involved in projects, collaborative learning activities. • Evidence of multiple modalities – words, art, music. • Children are involved in real, meaningful work – writing letters to real people, stories of their experiences, reflections on a book they have read, studying social problems in the community. • Learning activities allow a place for children to be challenged at multiple levels while they work together. • Teams of teachers work together across disciplines – literacy, science, social studies, art – to link learning around key themes. • Student produced work is everywhere – on the walls, strung from the ceiling, in the hall. Few commercial materials are evident. • A quiet hum with periodic rush of excitement pervades the classroom. Kids move around as they need and may be working on tables, under desks, on the floor, in the hall. • Visitors are expected and welcome. Students easily talk with visitors explaining what they are doing. • Student sit at tables with small groups or desks are clustered together with students facing one another. • Students may be working on different projects or activities simultaneously. • Teacher walks all over the room helping students, may be hard to find when you come in the room.	• Much pressure and emphasis on standardized tests. It becomes the thrust of the curriculum with little to no room for individual student interests. • Teachers instructing mostly through lecture, textbook or basal, and audio-visuals. • Student desks in rows facing forward. They are expected to stay seated and must ask permission to stand or move around. • Student work that mostly involves completing worksheets of isolated skills and facts. • Walls rather bare except for rules and teacher or commercially made materials. • Children’s work displayed is all the same – multiple drawings of a tree and a house, worksheets, etc. • Each subject is rigidly separated and there is little connection between subjects. • Most talk involves teacher to student and student to teacher interactions. Little student to student talk is allowed. • Learning activities are targeted at one level. Children who do not fit are excluded, bored, or cannot keep up. • All students must work on the same activity at the same time. • The teacher is at the front of the class, spends a lot of time keeping kids in their seats and asking them to be quiet and work.

Action Steps

1. A working group or groups is convened to look at curriculum and instruction in the school.
2. The group conducts a Teaching Audit regarding how instruction occurs across the building.
3. The working group identifies areas of need and improvement and these are used to develop specific action steps. These might include:
4. Identification of innovations to create within the school – eg. Multi-age classes, reading and writing workshop, interdisciplinary teaching, strategies for multi-level teaching.
5. Identifying teachers interested in different innovations to work together as a ‘Learning Innovation Team’ (LIT). Teachers work in collaborative implementation and study groups.



4. BUILD COMMUNITY & SUPPORT LEARNING. All work together to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school. The school uses specialized school and community resources (special education, title I, gifted education) to support learning and heterogeneous grouping of students. Teachers and staff work proactively to understand, support, and meet the needs of students with behavioral challenges.

We would <i>expect</i> to see. . .	We would hope <i>not</i> to see . . .
• A philosophy of building community in the school and classrooms that pervades the building. • Welcoming, inviting atmosphere – bright posters, art and writing work of students in the halls, pleasant interactions among staff. • School staff work to build a caring community with each other. They work together in study groups, flexible teaming arrangements. Staff enjoy being with one another. • Kids interacting with one another constantly in helping ways – reading as partners, hugging or talking if a child is emotionally upset. • A teacher and support staff facilitating a circle of friends for a child with many needs and challenges. 2/3 of the class volunteer to help the student when invited. • Teachers intentionally work in their classrooms to promote community, talk with children about this, build structures to support this – peer partners, cooperative learning, class meetings, circles of support. • Support staff – special education, at risk, bilingual, gifted, speech therapy, social work – are available to work with teachers <i>in the class</i> to provide assistance in designing instruction for children with diverse abilities and needs. • Support staff function as a flexible, collegial team to provide in-class help to teachers – team support for instruction, aiding in facilitating students circles of support, etc. • A building team is available to confer with teachers about students having difficulties and to support both teacher and student. • When children have behavioral or emotional problems, teachers and other school staff struggle to understand what need the child has that is not being met and to help the child have more positive alternatives for meeting that need. • Conflict resolution programs help students learn how to solve difficulties that occur. This occurs throughout the school involving teachers in supporting students. • A student support team works proactively with the student and provides support to the teacher. • Teachers and the school resists and works against the administration of Ritalin and other medications to children. • Staff look at children’s strengths and resist use of psychiatric labels, rather looking at the needs of the child, his / her school and home environment, and ways to build on strengths and meet needs.	• Major emphasis placed on following the ‘rules’ for staff, students, parents. • An adversarial relationship exists between staff and administration; cliques among staff abound. • School support staff pull children out of class to get help. They work in parallel with little communication. • Students are sent to special classes – special education, bilingual, gifted – for special help pulling them out of the classroom community. • Aides for students with special needs sit with them in the back of the room and work on a parallel curriculum. • The school and teachers use elaborate systems of rewards and punishments – stickers, gold stars, demerits. • Many students in the school identified with behavioral problems being sent to the office, not allowed to go on recess or lunch break. • School uses a ‘zero tolerance’ policy and frequently suspends children for minor infractions. • Staff are angry and afraid of students. The principal and teachers are heard frequently yelling at students. • Either the school has no support for teachers in dealing with students having behavioral problems or specialists see their role primarily as referring a child to a separate program for emotional disturbance. • When children have problems they are quickly labeled as ADD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or some other psychiatric label that identifies the problem as one within the child and reduces efforts to help a child have needs met. • 10% of more children in the school take Ritalin or some similar drug. Parents are pressured to put their children on such medications.



Action Steps

1. *Develop a Working Group to look at issues of community, behavioral and emotional needs, and support.*
2. *Conduct a Community and Emotional Needs Audit. Observe, interview, focus groups, statistics on detentions, suspensions, etc.*
3. *Develop a plan for trying innovations to build community and strengthen proactive ways to respond to the emotional and behavioral needs of children and provide strengthened support for teachers. Depending upon specific needs of the school, these might include:*
 - *Develop a plan to increase support for teachers and build a sense of community among staff – reading together about community, looking at support and collaboration mechanisms – team teaching.*
 - *Develop strategies to strengthen team work of support staff as a coordinated, flexible team with one another and with general education teachers. For example, identify thematic unit teacher might want to do and engage a few teachers and support staff team members in planning this collaboratively.*
 - *Identify small ways to strengthen a sense of community and welcome in the building – greetings to children as they come in the door, greetings to visitors, children’s work displayed throughout the building.*
 - *Develop circles of support for children with high needs based on their interest. Involve teachers and support staff in assisting children learn how to help and function as a circle of support.*
 - *Obtain training and develop new skills in looking at the behavioral challenges of children – see these as needs, do functional assessments, have options available for meeting needs.*
 - *Engage a local physician who is concerned about the over-medication of children as a consultation to work with staff and parents in finding alternatives to use of drugs to control behaviors.*



5. PARTNER WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY. Educators build genuine collaboration for learning with families, community members, and resource organizations. They seek to engage the school and students in strengthening and improving the community.

We would <i>expect</i> to see. . .	We would hope <i>not</i> to see . . .
• Parents and community members in the school and classrooms frequently, working in classrooms in meaningful teaching activities. • Teachers have close relationships with many parents. • Parents and community members are part of the school improvement team and other working groups and are involved in making major decisions regarding governance of the school. • School staff reach out and connect to community resources. They know people in the community. • Much student learning goes on in projects in the local neighborhood and community. This goes far beyond the traditional field trip where students are engaged in real activities as a centerpiece of their learning. Students study local social issues and develop strategies for their solution. • The school involves children and staff, as part of their learning, in contributing to efforts to strengthen the community. • Many community individuals and organizations are involved in instructional and after school programs in the school – artists, musicians, violence prevention, mental health, Big Brothers – Big Sisters. • The school acts as a community center, is open most evenings filled with activities for children and parents. • The school partners with other schools and external partners to learn and grow and support the learning of others.. • The school collaborates with other agencies to provide a full range of services, including wrap-around services for families with great challenges	• Parents and community members feel unwelcome in the school. • The school is usually locked and closes it's doors at 4:00 PM on most days. • Parents must fight to have their students with special needs considered for general education classes. • School staff have an us / them attitude about parents and the community. • Few school staff know the community at all – they live elsewhere and drive in and out daily. • Efforts to reach out to parents are due mostly to pressures from the bureaucracy and involve trying to give parents 'rewards' for coming to a meeting. • Parents receive much negative feedback from the school about their children. The teachers don't seem to care. • Few outside organizations are involved in the school. Those that are come in for one day, short term 'events' that impact on the ongoing life of the school in limited ways. • Students do not learn in the community. Many school rules actually prevent teachers from taking children into the neighborhood for learning. • The school attempts to get resources from community agencies but does not engage in any real partnerships so as to protect its 'turf'.

Action Steps

1. *Develop a working group to strengthen parents and community partnerships.*
2. Conduct a Parent and Community Partnership Audit. Find out how parents and community members are interacting in classes. Conduct interviews and focus groups to get perceptions of the school and teachers by parents. Use Epstein's framework in this process.
3. Conduct a Neighborhood and Community Map. Identify resources in the area based on John Mcknight's community mapping process. Involve the students in this as part of their learning activities.
4. Develop a plan for strengthening parent and community partnerships. These may vary depending upon the situation of the school.

