Ten Principles of Effective School Design

1. CLEAR FOCUS AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS for staff and students are defining features of an effective school. They motivate the entire school community and inspire its members to strive constantly to ensure the success of every student. Clear focus and high expectations are the foundation on which the school's culture of collaboration and inquiry rests.

2. A RIGOROUS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM provides equitable opportunities to learn and enables every student to master challenging content, skills, and learning strategies. The school community is engaged in a dynamic process of assessment, reflection, and innovation to inform curriculum development and instructional strategies, meet student needs, and address achievement gaps.

3. A PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT is characterized by knowledge of each student's learning style, social and family conditions, strengths, aspirations, and needs. Each student enjoys strong relationships with other students and a close, continuous relationship with one or more adults in the school community; at least one adult helps coordinate the support needed by the student throughout the high school years to prepare for higher education, employment, or other productive postsecondary plans

4. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP by the principal and other school leaders is characterized by a school wide focus on student achievement; support for improving and enhancing school culture, teaching, and learning; and effective collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and partners in the community. The principal and other school leaders demonstrate and inspire an unwavering commitment to fulfilling the vision of the school among all members of the school community.

5. SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and a culture of professional collaboration improve instruction and student achievement and cultivate adult learning communities within the school. Effective professional learning communities feature continuous reflection and assessment of student work and teacher practice.

6. MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT of student learning occurs continuously and gives students a variety of opportunities to demonstrate that they meet content and performance standards and can apply their learning. Teachers use assessments as diagnostic tools to identify student needs and improve instruction. The school communicates and analyzes assessment results to inform school improvement.

7. PARTNERSHIPS WITH ORGANIZATIONS strengthen the ability of the school to serve the academic and developmental needs of its students and to forge bonds with students' families or caregivers. Effective partnerships help keep the school in touch with the wider community and professional networks, enable it to capitalize on opportunities and resources that support student success, and increase its sustainability.

8. PARENT AND CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT is an ongoing process that integrates families into the life of the school in a variety of ways. The result is a partnership, driven by parent demand and cultivated by the school community, in which parents and caregivers have voice and power to shape all components of the school. The school assumes that any person trusted by the student's family can be a partner for achieving youth success.

9. STUDENT VOICE AND PARTICIPATION ensure that students have significant opportunities to collaborate with school staff, exercise leadership, and make choices and decisions. Students have clear areas of input and participation and are actively involved in decisions regarding their classrooms, school, campus, and community.

10. INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY INTO TEACHING AND LEARNING allows all students to access and analyze information, communicate ideas, and express themselves creatively. Teachers have adequate equipment and professional development to enable them to implement technology-enhanced lessons. Students learn to navigate diverse information sources, including print, visual, and audio materials, through the explicit teaching of information literacy skills.

New Visions for Public Schools
320 West 13th Street, New York, NY 10014
Phone 212-645-5110 | Fax 212-645-7409
www.newvisions.org
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