

Creating a Shared Vision Example

Central City Elementary School

A system of fundamental motivating assumptions, principles, values, and tenets that leads to a tangible direction.

VALUES AND BELIEFS

Values and beliefs are the shaping force behind the shared direction.

What are the curriculum, instruction, and assessment factors that support effective learning for Central City Elementary School students?

We Believe ...

- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment should be aligned to meet the needs of *all* students.
- Teachers must have high expectations of all students—all staff personnel must have high expectations of academic performance and social behavior (each student must be able to reach her/his full potential).
- Assessment needs to be efficient, workable, regular, manageable, understandable to everyone, quick (fast), and inform and drive instruction (making students responsible for ongoing assessment of their own work, as appropriate).
- Students should feel safe, emotionally and physically, both inside and outside of the classroom. Students and teachers respect and positively interact with each other.
- Curriculum and instruction must be standards-driven, uniform within grade level, and articulated across grade levels
- Grade-level meetings need to be focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and reflective of teachers' needs

- Communication should occur at all levels, bottom to top, top to bottom, and between programs.
- Flexible grouping of students' support instruction at each students' instructional level.
- Shared decision making will support a quality school
- Teachers, including those with low-performing and incoming students, need support with inservices, materials, and programs.
- Communicating with parents about curriculum instruction and assessment will assist with students' learning.
- All teachers need time, resources, and training to achieve successful student learning.
- All students are entitled to a well-rounded curriculum.
- Instruction must fit different student learning styles.
- Instruction must:
 - * Incorporate (enrich) students' real-life experiences and connect to relevant, creative instruction
 - * Provide for new experiences that they may not get otherwise
 - * Diversify and focus on basic skills in grades K-3

PURPOSE

- Comes out of core values and beliefs
- Needs to be compelling
- Needs to be flexible
- Not a description of what the organization does now
- Broad, fundamental, inspirational, and enduring
- Must grab the “soul” of each organizational member

*To make a contribution to the world
by making tools for the mind that advance humankind.*

Steve Jobs, Apple Computer

What is the purpose of school?

What is the purpose of Central City Elementary School?

Why does Central City Elementary School exist?

Jot down your personal thoughts before sharing with your small group.

The purpose of Central City Elementary School is to—

Educate our students to their fullest potential of academic knowledge and social competence, thereby developing productive individuals who contribute responsibly to society.

MISSION

Mission—a brief, clear, and compelling goal that serves to unify an organization’s efforts. An effective mission must stretch and challenge the organization, yet be achievable. It is tangible, value-driven, energizing, highly focused, and moves the organization forward. It is crisp, clear, engaging—it reaches out and grabs people in the gut. People “get it” right away; it requires little or no explanation. A mission has a finish line for its achievement and is proactive. A mission should walk the boundary between the possible and impossible.

Is this still a relevant mission?

The Leadership Team and other interested staff members can revisit the mission and make a recommendation to the whole staff for approval.

**The mission of
Central City Elementary School,
by addressing the needs of the total child,
is to develop academically
and socially successful students,
and to help create literate lifelong learners
who are caring and contributing citizens.**

SHARED VISION

*Shared visions emerge from personal visions.
This is how they derive their energy
and how they foster commitment . . .
If people don't have their own vision,
all they can do is "sign up" for someone else's.
The result is compliance, never commitment.*

Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*

- Statement needs to be vibrant, engaging
- Specific description of what it will be like when the mission is achieved
- Provokes emotion and generates excitement
- Transforms the mission from words into pictures
- Brings the mission to life

What is your desired vision for the school?

What would it *look like, feel like, sound like* when the mission of Central City Elementary School is implemented? Think in terms of the *Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Learning Environment*. Jot down your thinking below. (We will want to collect these pages from you at the end of the day to make sure we incorporate all of your thinking into the shared vision.)

Curriculum

- Emphasis in basic skills K-3
- Additional, specific remediation curriculum
- Supplemental resources (technology, independent reading libraries, field trips, guest speakers)
- Extended learning time needs curriculums that are different, but aligned in their approach to standard classroom curriculum in literacy
- Teacher input in selection of curriculum materials
- Standards-driven
- Teacher support in implementing new curriculums taking into account different teacher needs (ongoing and timely support, not single day training)

- Communicate curriculum and essential standards (for grade level) to parents
- Timely delivery of curriculum materials for year round
- Pacing/timeline for literacy, and math curriculums that take into account classes with large percentage of students below grade level
- Provide/select curriculum materials that include strategies for different skill levels in the same classroom
- Single grade classrooms that allow for the teaching of a single grade curriculum

Instruction

- Systematic skills instruction within a meaningful context for students—hands-on learning, literature-based, real world experiences—supports student success
- Consistent use of effective research-based instructional practices across grade levels supports student mastery
- Instruction needs to meet the diverse needs of students, and therefore, include a variety of strategies and modalities
- Integrated, thematic instruction supports student learning and retention
- Flexible grouping based on periodic assessments, within or across classrooms, for different student skill levels is essential for timely mastery of skills
- Initial instruction needs to be followed by consistent practice (including homework) of new skills
- Productive, academic use of the entire school day is essential to student success
- The grade level (team) meeting is the essential support system for an articulated general curriculum, systematic instructional practices, and collaborative instructional decisions related to underperforming students
- Instructional time needs to be sacred and uninterrupted
- Everyone sticks to the program and focuses on the district and state standards

Assessment

- Assessment needs to be systematic, efficient, ongoing and inform productive instruction
- Assessment has to be at meaningful instructional points during the year
- Bilingual assessment will be more formalized and used to frame curriculum

- Assessment has to take into account the actual levels of student attainment upon entering the grade level
- Assessment needs to be regularly summarized to inform and improve classroom grade level and schoolwide practice
- Align assessment to the standards and report card
- Authentic assessment based on student work and performance
- Pre-test – to understand academic level of class (helps to plan curriculum)
- Post-test, see growth (can be used for next grade level’s pre-test)
- Grades two through six integrate test-taking skills into the curriculum
- Assessments are regularly reported to parents in a variety of ways

Learning Environment

Safe and healthy room:

- all ideas valid and respected
- chance to speak without hurting others
- chance to listen (responsibly)
- right to teach/learn
- right to make mistakes and to learn from them
- right to have materials, supplies, appropriate teaching and learning tools (in working order)
- freedom from disturbances

School grounds:

- need of supervisors
- quality play area (sufficient space)

Our school should have—

- Student Council
- Student Safety Patrol
- Safer parking lot
- Uniforms – enforced consistently
- Restrooms

Support Systems

- Systematic professional development, including training, collaborative curricular planning, and peer coaching that supports effective classroom practice.
- Weekly, informal observations of classroom instructional practices by site administrators to support continuous improvement of the school educational program.

- Instructional reform needs to be focused, efficiently implemented, and maximize teacher time for curricular and instructional planning.
- Information related to school programs needs to be communicated in an ongoing, systematic, and accessible fashion.