

Core Beliefs about Teaching and Learning

A shared vision and commitment centered on the following core beliefs about teaching and learning can facilitate ongoing school improvement by raising the questions: “What implications for teaching and learning are embodied in these beliefs?” and “What are we doing to honor these beliefs?” Conversations about these questions among everyone involved—school staff, parents, students, and the community—can become a catalyst for continued growth and improvement in the ways we educate and support our young.

Students as Contributors

Students and adults bring their ideas, feelings, insights, and personal and cultural histories to every situation, along with the need and capacity to be active, capable contributors to a learning community.

Reciprocal Relationships

Caring, reciprocal relationships among students, among students and adults, and among adults provide the basis for creating safe, caring, and supportive learning environments.

Facilitators as Partners in Learning

The role of the facilitator as a partner in learning is to collaborate with students in exploring key questions, tackling real issues, solving problems, and communicating their ideas across the curriculum.

Families as Collaborators

Because parents and family members act as their children’s primary teachers, parent and family participation is central to the vitality and richness of a school community.

Academic Excellence

Students’ commitment to their education is developed through opportunities to be engaged in relevant, active, and reflective learning experiences that draw the learner into reciprocal relationships with people, things, and ideas.

Living with Integrity

Shared values and pro-social skills define the character of a school community as they are identified, discussed, practiced, and experienced by students and adults.

Agreements and Boundaries

Clear boundaries, respectful agreements, and positive expectations about ways to treat one another are essential to creating safe and collaborative learning environments.

The Environment as Teacher

The organization, quality, and use of the school’s physical environment have the potential to promote caring relationships and enrich learning.