

PSEL 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values

The direct mission statement of Livingston Public Schools is “empowering all students to learn, create, contribute, and grow.” The vision of Heritage Middle School is a bit more specific and speaks to creating a positive, safe, and successful school in which students take responsibility for their learning, behavior, and decisions. This internship began with having to identify some problem areas in our schools. Right away it was apparent to me that our mission, vision, and core beliefs were not evident in the daily happenings at Heritage. Student behavior was an issue, HIB cases were escalating, and marginalized students were not feeling safe and welcome. One of my initial action plans included a rebrand of our current expectations for students. Our district has created and adopted a “Portrait of Graduate” that presents the 21st century skills that students need to meet success in their lives after graduation. One thing that I noticed right away is that it needs to be presented differently to middle school students in words that are actionable and meaningful to teenagers. After surveying staff and students it was clear to me that the negative student behaviors were largely credited to a sinking culture and climate of the building. In my opinion, one way to try to rebuild this is to create a set of student and staff expectations that align with the Portrait of a Graduate, but is our own. I think that it is very important that the staff and students are part of the team that decides how our building should look, act, and feel. Together with a team of teachers and students that I recruited we have begun to consolidate the expectations into categories that use the “r” in the word Lancers since that is our mascot. So far we have devised the R with the words Respect (yourself and others), Responsibility (for your actions both positive and negative), Reflect (evaluate your choices). We are in the process of ensuring that we can imbed the larger ideals of the district as well as refine our school expectations and are working with students on a logo to accompany our brand. It is the hope of students, staff, and administration that this can be rolled out in September of 2024.

