

The Board believes that students and families deserve and require options for securing pathways to mastery, and subsequently, to high school graduation. In addition, the Board advocates for education that is shaped by individual student choices and not by external forces.

The Board is committed to realizing its mission through implementation of its belief statements and central tenets.

Mission

The mission of Next Charter School is to meet the needs of high school students who value personalized learning in a smaller, collaborative community where each member has a sense of belonging. Next will prepare each student for the future by nurturing social and personal responsibility.

Central Tenets

Competency

At every opportunity, students are assessed on what they know and can do. Student achievement is aligned to student products and performances and is manifest in the application of knowledge and skill in an authentic context. As a result, each credit area at Next outlines clear, non-negotiable learning outcomes, or competencies, that drive instruction. Competencies are transparent, rigorous, and met in such a way as to demand a depth of understanding, assessed on an individual scale.

Learning is a Social Act

Next emphasizes and promotes the idea that authentic learning is best realized within a social dynamic. To this end, individual classrooms and the larger school itself are community-based, in that both students and staff have distinct contributions to make with regard to collective learning. This model is reflective of the collaborative nature demanded of participants within the 21st century and will also help to cultivate specific dispositions. Learning does not occur in a vacuum and therefore students share experiences within teams, groups, and compacts in pursuit of competency mastery.

Investigation

Traditional approaches to learning emphasize answers. Next emphasizes questions. The work of our students is driven by important, real-world problems and questions. An emphasis is placed on the value of knowledge as a tool to make improvements to the student's world. Students engage in inquiry-based processes that seek to connect student interest to the demonstration of proficiency towards competencies.

Flexibility

Next values the unique needs and offerings embodied within each student and staff member. Learning is what happens when the learner makes meaning for him/herself. As a result, it is imperative that schools meet student learners where they are and adapt to their ever-changing knowledge, skills, and interests. Next is designed to place the student at the center of the learning process and customize educational experiences to match the needs and interests of each learner.

Belief Statements

1. We believe that schools can be the primary environmental factor that provides individuals access to our democratic ideals. They can be more powerful in the ability to shape a student's future than any other competing socio-economic factor. If we subscribe to this belief, then it is the responsibility of this charter to create a school environment that is viable for all students.
2. We believe that human behavior is not explained simply. Instead, we believe that human behavior is a result of impulses and decisions to achieve one or more end: survival, belonging, power, freedom, mastery, and fun. If we subscribe to this belief, then we must build a community of learners that knows and applies these principles of human behavior.
3. We believe that we live in an unprecedented age in which the world is becoming increasingly flat. More than ever before, access to technology is emerging as a fundamental right and should no longer be relegated to a privilege. If we subscribe to this belief, then we must provide current and purposeful technological media for student and staff use.
4. We believe that individual students arrive at school with a varying degree of culturally relevant experiences. Not all of them are equal. Their prior experiences have a direct impact on how they access current learning experiences. If we subscribe to this belief, then we must create opportunities for students to participate in outside of the school setting and connect these experiences to competencies.
5. We believe that grades are incomplete and ambiguous measures of student achievement in that they are not specific, timely, or meaningful. If we subscribe to this belief, then we must construct a system for reporting and measuring student achievement that is based in language that describes levels of competency, and structure learning opportunities in a heterogeneous manner.
6. We believe that all participants within an organization must have input to affect the operations and outcomes of that organization. This inclusionary model increases the capacity of the organization and most successfully encourages human collaboration and therefore is most responsible for building human connections. If we subscribe to this belief, then decision-making at all levels is a collective effort.
7. We believe that staff who have direct interactions with students are the most important people in our organization outside the students themselves. If we subscribe to this belief, then we must provide the time, resources, and professional development necessary so that they remain the primary positive factor that

influences student achievement.