

SPECIAL EDITION

OCTOBER 2007

Community REPORT

The Schools of Eastern Carver County/School District 112

CARVER - CHANHASSEN - CHASKA - VICTORIA, MINNESOTA

SECONDARY PROGRAM REDESIGN DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

» Community Review and Comments Invited «

The first step on the path to significant change

This report to the community represents the first step on the path to significant change within our secondary program — grades 6-12.

Since January, 60 teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and students have combed national research and best practices to consider the components of our program that will truly prepare learners for the 21st century. Through their work, we've discovered that many things happening in our schools today are right on, providing learners with solid preparation. We've also learned that we must make significant changes if we are to truly address the realities of a 21st century world.

We ask that you read this information and respond to us by October 21 at www.district112.org. You will find a **brief online survey** in which we ask for your feedback. Your responses will be used by the members of the Design Team to review their work one last time before presenting to the School Board on November 8.

Those of you who would like to speak directly to those leading this effort are invited to a **community meeting on Tuesday, October 16, 7:00 p.m. at Chaska High School.**

If, after reading this executive summary of the Design Team's work, you are interested in reading the complete draft report, please visit our website at www.district112.org.

We appreciate your interest and support as we work together to ensure the children of this community are equipped to be meaningful contributors in the 21st century.

– David Jennings, *Superintendent*

A Mission for the 21st Century

District 112 secondary schools believe in the potential of every learner and that education enables future opportunity and success. We accept the responsibility of providing an educational program that positions our graduates with the knowledge, skills, and character traits they need to fulfill their individual promise for success. They deserve a school program grounded by a compelling purpose and our best efforts to achieve it.

Secondary Schools' Mission

As a caring community focused on achievement, guided by values, and committed to equity and excellence for all, District 112 secondary schools declare as their mission:

To prepare each learner for successful completion of a post-secondary educational program, life-long learning, career opportunities, and meaningful contributions as a citizen of the local and global community by providing personalized, rigorous, and relevant learning experiences.



The BIG ideas

- Each learner prepared for successful completion of a post-secondary program.
- Learners prepared for global and local responsibilities.
- Personalized learning experiences.

What is a "big idea?"

A change process seems to produce a multitude of words and ideas. In each of the three sections of this report, we tried to pull out the ideas that reflect new thinking or direction. We also identify several ideas that, although not new, are extremely important to our plan.

Core Principles and Strategies

Our Plan for Success

In recognition of a changing world and the different requirements for learner success as citizens of the 21st century, District 112 secondary schools commit to implementation of the following core principles:

- ▶ Dynamic Organization
- ▶ Engaged Learners
- ▶ Excellent Educational Team
- ▶ Integrated Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- ▶ Safe and Nurturing Environment
- ▶ Strong Partnerships

These core principles are a non-negotiable framework for fulfilling our promise of learner success. They are interdependent. Each core principle includes key strategies identified as the most vital to accomplish our mission.

CORE PRINCIPLE – DYNAMIC ORGANIZATION – *District 112 secondary schools will operate classrooms, schools and programs as aligned systems that can adapt to change through a shared vision and commitment to continuous improvement. We are committed to data-based, collaborative decision-making and strong communication.*

Collaborative and data-driven decision-making – *We will*

- ▶ collaborate in decision-making using data-driven analysis.
- ▶ focus all decisions on what is best for the learner.

Continuous improvement and best practice – *We will*

- ▶ actively evaluate and continuously improve our strategies and processes to target and achieve well-defined goals for learner preparation.

Shared vision – *We will*

- ▶ operate from a shared vision to guide decisions and actions.

Strong communication – *We will*

- ▶ use frequent and clear two-way communication between and within all levels of the educational organization, with learners and families, and with the broader community.

CORE PRINCIPLE – ENGAGED LEARNERS – *District 112 secondary schools will actively engage each learner to meet high expectations, create a compelling vision for their future, and believe in their ability to succeed in these endeavors.*

Developmental guidance and counseling – *We will*

- ▶ provide effective guidance and counseling for each learner in the areas of academic and career planning as well as personal and social issues.

Equity and excellence for all – *We will*

- ▶ eliminate achievement gaps.
- ▶ ensure open access to learning opportunities.
- ▶ instill hope for achieving a compelling future.
- ▶ maintain high expectations for every learner.
- ▶ provide every support necessary for success.

Learner advocacy – *We will*

- ▶ ensure learners feel cared for and connected; adults advocate for students, students learn self-advocacy.

- ▶ implement structured advisory or mentorship programs to build long-term, meaningful relationships.

Personalized planning and learning – *We will*

- ▶ engage learners and their families in creating and maintaining personal, relevant, and compelling educational plans for secondary and post-secondary education.

Quality co- and extra- curricular activities – *We will*

- ▶ encourage each learner to participate.
- ▶ provide a wide variety of high quality co- and extra-curricular activities.

CORE PRINCIPLE – EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL TEAM – *District 112 secondary schools will ensure that every level of the organization is served by empowered, accountable, and highly qualified professionals who share a collective and personal commitment and responsibility for the preparation of all learners. District leaders will set expectations, act as change agents, and provide building leaders and staff with the supports necessary for success.*

Accountable leadership – *We will*

- ▶ acknowledge administrators as instructional leaders focused on learner success and building unity and trust with staff and community.
- ▶ expect the administrative team to use district-wide assessment systems to assess all components of learner preparation.

Communities of practice – *We will*

- ▶ create a culture that supports and expects excellence in teaching and learning.
- ▶ provide staff ongoing, structured, and job-embedded time to work together on behalf of learners.

Continuous professional development – *We will*

- ▶ engage all staff in an ongoing, comprehensive professional development program.

Individual professional learning plans – *We will*

- ▶ create individual professional learning plans that allow staff to identify their own needs and guide their learning for improved learner success.



The BIG ideas

- Pursue equity and excellence for all learners
- Eliminate achievement gaps
- Personal learning plans for high school and post-secondary education
- Learning is constant; mastery is the goal; time is a variable
- Organizational commitment to continuous improvement
- Emphasis on supportive transitions

CORE PRINCIPLE – INTEGRATED CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

District 112 secondary schools will provide rigorous curriculum and instruction relevant to the lives of our learners, and measured through multiple assessments.

Multiple assessments – We will

- ▶ diagnose learner needs, plan next steps in instruction and provide learners with descriptive feedback they can use to improve the quality of their work.

Relevant instruction – We will

- ▶ use varied instructional strategies reflecting specific outcomes and best practices; learners will be active participants in creating real-life learning activities. We will expand opportunities for online learning.

Rigorous curriculum – We will

- ▶ implement curriculum that embeds essential skills and content, and that includes multiple academic options and mastery of standards.

CORE PRINCIPLE – SAFE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT –

District 112 secondary schools will provide a personalized, safe, and nurturing learning environment characterized by positive relationships, respect for all, and supports for success.

Caring relationships – We will

- ▶ personalize the school environment.
- ▶ create a sense of belonging between and among learners and adults.

Flexible school structures – We will

- ▶ create a flexible school organization.
- ▶ personalize learning that honors differences among learners.
- ▶ create small learning communities.

Healthy climate – We will

- ▶ provide procedures, programs and atmosphere that foster the learner’s academic/intellectual, character, emotional, physical, and social development.

Safe and secure environment – We will

- ▶ ensure an environment free from intimidation, harassment, or violence.
- ▶ cultivate cultural awareness and respect for diversity.
- ▶ support learners with needs that interfere with full academic participation.

Supportive transitions – We will

- ▶ provide support at points of transition between and among buildings and programs including elementary to middle school.
- ▶ focus particularly on a unique freshmen experience.
- ▶ create individualized plans for success after high school.

CORE PRINCIPLE – STRONG PARTNERSHIPS – *District 112 will build strong partnerships with the families, schools, and communities bringing together the assets and resources of each to support the development and preparation of all learners.*

Business – We will

- ▶ partner with businesses for support and real-life learning experiences to enhance learner preparation.

Community – We will

- ▶ establish close links with government and community agencies and organizations as well as other resources to promote the health and well-being of all learners.

Family – We will

- ▶ encourage and provide opportunities to build strong family involvement through parent education and comprehensive support for all families.

Infant-adult education programs – We will

- ▶ provide educational opportunities which promote life-long learning and meaningful contributions to our world.

Post-secondary institutions – We will

- ▶ collaborate to enhance secondary program planning to establish supports for learning and transitions.



What’s next?

The Secondary Program Design Team will present its recommendations to the School Board on Thursday, November 8. Following School Board action, teams of staff representing each of the three middle schools and two high schools that will open in 2009, will begin work. These “Core Teams” will be charged with implementing the recommendations approved by the Board. They will incorporate the components of the redesign in ways that best reflect the individual schools. All of the secondary schools will use these recommendations; however, the program may not look entirely the same from school to school.

Other major decisions are coming this school year:

- ▶ Boundary decisions for the high schools and middle schools
- ▶ Principals named
- ▶ Preliminary staff assignments

Look for updates on www.district112.org.



The *Community Report* is published by the Community Relations Office of School District 112. Questions or comments should be directed to: Nancy Kracke, Director of Community Relations, kracken@district112.org or 952-556-6121.

Comments and questions concerning the work of the Secondary Design Team should be directed to David Brecht, brechtd@district112.org or 952-556-6116. David Jennings Superintendent, 952-556-6110

District 112 Graduates Ready for Success in the 21st Century

This is the challenge for our schools: equipping learners for success and meaningful contributions for a time we can't even imagine clearly. We must prepare learners to work with people around the world, using emerging technology, and creating new knowledge in the decades ahead.

**Our foundation for earning a diploma includes these givens:
OUR GRADUATES WILL:**

- meet or exceed District 112's high standards for quality work with demonstrated knowledge, understanding, skills, and character.
- implement personalized, rigorous, and relevant programs of study to meet individual goals.
- serve their communities through activities that apply what they learn to real world needs.

Recognizing the importance of integrating skills and understanding across the curriculum, we will embed within all coursework elements of reading, writing, technology and information literacy, global awareness, thinking/problem solving, communication and collaboration, life skills, and District 112 Community Values.

Curriculum and assessments used to evaluate student proficiency will be tied to local, state, national and international standards.

Every District 112 graduate will demonstrate an enduring understanding in these essential knowledge areas:

algebra
arts and humanities
communication arts
data analysis/statistics & probability
earth science
economics
geography
geometry
government/civics
life science
physical science
world and U.S. history
world culture and language



Beyond acquiring essential knowledge, all District 112 graduates will be:

Globally concerned citizens. This includes:

- cultural awareness and understanding.
- proficiency in a world language other than the learner's first language.
- recognition and understanding of interrelationships among international organizations, nation-states, public and private economic entities, socio-cultural groups, and individuals across the globe.

Innovative problem-solvers with the following skills:

- analysis
- creativity
- evaluation
- metacognition
- understanding interconnection among systems

Si usted desea esta información en español, por favor llame al 952.556.6193.

Literate users of technology and information.

This includes skills in:

- reading and media literacy.
- responsible use of technology and information.
- technology use.
- the research process.



Productive individuals through the following skills/attributes:

- ethical decision-making
- financial literacy
- flexibility, resilience, and persistence
- initiative and self-direction
- leadership and responsibility
- personal wellness
- self-awareness in identifying interests, strengths, and goals
- work ethic

Strong communicators and collaborators.

Each will demonstrate skills in:

- interpersonal communication.
- multi-media.
- speaking.
- writing.



*Adapted from "Learning for the 21st Century"
by Partnership for 21st Century Skills.*

The BIG ideas

- All graduates proficient in a second language
- More connection to world issues, concerns, cultures
- Skills and character join knowledge as outcomes
- Every graduate prepared for admission to and success in a post-secondary program
- Real-world application of learning through service to community

**Community survey online at www.district112.org.
Community meeting held October 16, 7 p.m. at CHS.**

Independent School District 112
11 Peavey Road
Chaska, MN 55318
952.556.6100

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