

Denver Center for International Studies

ISSN Design Matrix: Key Elements

VISION, MISSION, AND SCHOOL CULTURE

1. Faculty, staff, students, and families in the school community share a common vision of and mission for the school, its underlying philosophy, curriculum, and operational norms.
2. Faculty, staff, families, and community members consistently demonstrate high expectations for students.
3. The school has a supportive school culture that reflects its mission and identity as a small, international studies school.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Faculty, staff, students, and families understand and use the Profile of an International Studies Schools Network (ISSN) Graduate to frame decisions.
2. All students are consistently progressing on a continuum of achievement that meets or exceeds local, state, and national standards.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTION

1. Local, State and National standards form the foundation of the school's curriculum which is organized around "big ideas" and essential questions within an international context
2. The school's curriculum is coherent and consistent in its global focus.
3. Curriculum is interconnected across disciplines and provides students with multiple opportunities to engage in complex, problem-based projects and investigations.
4. The school consistently engages students in a study of world languages and cultures.
5. Students have a wide range of learning opportunities including electives, after-school, extracurricular programs, internationally-themed field trips, and travel to deepen their global knowledge and language skills.
6. The school has strong global simulations and Model UN programs in which all students participate.
7. Students have opportunities to earn college credits through Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and/or dual enrollment in college courses.
8. The school's curriculum includes an Advisory Program and other opportunities designed to develop the social skills and habits of mind in the Graduate Profile (e.g. collaboration, respect for diversity, conflict resolution, receptivity to other views, and appreciation of differences).

9. The Faculty uses multiple forms of ongoing assessments, including authentic and performance-based measures, based on rubrics that provide clear expectations for mastery. Data from the assessments are used to guide decision-making about instruction.
10. Students develop cumulative portfolios showing the development of their learning and progress toward attainment of the ISSN Graduate Profile. During their senior year each student will also produce an internationally themed project as their “capstone.”
11. The Faculty uses a variety of instructional strategies to engage and meet the learning needs of every student.
12. The school provides a variety of effective interventions to prevent students from falling behind and assists students who do not yet meet standards.
13. The faculty uses instructional strategies that promote high levels of literacy competence across disciplines, with particular attention to the needs of English Language Learners and students requiring Special Education services.
14. Faculty and students use technology to access global resources, connect to international schools and organizations, and support all facets of the learning process.
15. Students engage in service learning experiences that address local, regional, national, and global issues and perspectives.
16. Students have opportunities to develop globally relevant professional knowledge and skills through internships and other career exploration activities.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

1. The school is planned, developed and maintained as a small school.
2. Students, representative of the local demographics, enroll in the international studies school as a matter of choice.
3. Faculty and staff are recruited and hired at the school as a matter of choice.
4. Each school has an international studies coordinator who facilitates the infusion of global studies into curriculum, assessment and instruction.
5. The school is structured to support the development of close adult-student relationships.
6. Teachers are organized into high performing, instructionally focused teams that have common planning time within the contractual day.
7. Students are grouped heterogeneously for instruction except for limited, targeted efforts to accelerate specific learning outcomes.
8. The locus of control on critical school policies and practices is held at the level of the school within the local context.
9. The school provides opportunities for meaningful decision making by families and students.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

1. School leaders, faculty, staff, and coaches define themselves as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) focused on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning within the school.
2. The faculty collaboratively reflects on and analyzes existing practices to improve teaching and learning.
3. School leaders, faculty, staff, coaches, and partners engage in professional development to acquire, use, and create new knowledge of global studies, the academic disciplines, and pedagogical skills.
4. Grade level and discipline-based teams use student achievement and other data to inform decisions about teaching and learning.
5. The staff identifies and uses opportunities for international travel and learning.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

1. Parents, families, and guardians are productively involved in school life.
2. The school leaders and staff respect and appreciate the cultures, backgrounds, and values of their students' parents, families, and guardians and engage them in strengthening the school's international dimension.
3. The school develops key partnerships with institutes of higher education, businesses, cultural institutions, and community organizations.
4. Community based family service professionals work in collaboration with school staff to ensure students' physical, social, and emotional health.