

An effective secondary school design incorporates 10 integrated principles to meet the demands of the Common Core.

These were developed through a scan of design principles used by New York City Department of Education, New Visions for Public Schools, and other high-performing school networks, and refined with the feedback and contributions of experienced educators.



A High Performing Secondary School...



Integrates positive youth development to optimize student engagement & effort

Caring, consistent student-adult relationships that communicate high expectations for student learning and behavior

Clear expectations for student competencies and standards of performance

Opportunities for students to contribute to the school environment and have a voice in decisions

Encouragement of student responsibility for meeting learning and personal goals

Openness to and encouragement of family participation

Integration of community participation, assets, and culture



Develops & deploys collective strengths

Teacher teaming that strengthens instructional design and delivery and enables professional growth

Mechanisms that promote innovation and initiative among teachers and staff

Differentiated roles for adults (e.g., multiple "teacher" roles) that enable effective implementation of the school model



Empowers & supports students through key transitions into & beyond high school

Explicit linkages between future academic and career pathways and current learning and activities

Transparency regarding student status and progress toward graduation for students and parents/guardians



Manages school operations efficiently & effectively

Purposeful use of time, people, and technology to optimize teachers' ability to support student learning

All elements of school design organized to maximize efficient use of resources

Flexible, customizable scheduling

Clear operational performance goals and accountability mechanisms

Automation of basic tasks whenever possible



Remains porous & connected

Effective partnerships with organizations that enrich student learning and increase access to community resources and supports

Participation in a network of schools that share knowledge and assets



Prioritizes mastery of rigorous standards aligned to college & career readiness

Curriculum that enables all students to meet rigorous standards.

Multiple opportunities for students to show mastery through performance based assessments

Student advancement based on demonstration of mastery of knowledge and skills



Has a clear mission & coherent culture

Clearly defined purpose, goals, and school culture

Mission and culture embodied in all aspects of school design



Continuously improves its operations & model

Use of performance data and analytics to improve curriculum and instruction

Regular review and revision of school operations and model to increase effectiveness



Maintains an effective human capital strategy aligned with school model & priorities

Consistent, high-quality systems for sourcing and selecting teachers and staff

Individualized professional development that cultivates teachers' strengths and meets school needs and priorities, including use of blended learning

Fair and equitable teacher evaluation

Leadership development opportunities and a leadership pipeline



Personalizes student learning to meet student needs

Instruction in a variety of learning modalities, linked to students' strengths and learning goals

Data-driven, real-time feedback for students and teachers

Embedded, performance-based formative assessments

Effective use of technology for anytime, anywhere learning