

PRINCIPLES OF INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM

I. RESPONSIVE TO THE INTERESTS, CAPACITIES, AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE STUDENTS BEING TAUGHT

Independent curriculum serves the actual students in each classroom and is designed and implemented within a context of high academic standards, intellectual challenge, and a deep understanding of these students' interests, abilities (both developed and developing), aims, and requirements.

II. CONGRUENT WITH THE MISSION AND VALUES OF THE SCHOOL

Independent curriculum aligns with the stated mission, values, culture, and strategic priorities of the school and conforms with the highest standards of equity and the highest ideals of intellectual, cultural, social, and civic engagement.

III. MULTIPLE MODES OF ASSESSMENT

Independent curriculum supports the measurement of student learning by a full range of assessment tools and techniques, both formative and summative. Mastery of process is valued as much as product, and a student's ability to apply knowledge is valued as much as its acquisition.

IV. BUILT ON THE STRENGTHS OF THE FACULTY AND SCHOOL

Independent curriculum is designed and implemented based on the ever-expanding capacities, interests, and critical pedagogical judgment of teachers—individually as classroom convenors and shapers of classroom culture and collectively as faculties enacting the missions, values, priorities, and aspirations of their schools.

V. HIGH INTELLECTUAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

Independent curriculum challenges students and demands their best work in accordance with their intellectual, social, developmental, cultural, and ethical capacities and needs. It asks that students engage actively in the broadening of their perspectives and the deepening of their understandings.

VI. INCLUSIVE AND JUST

Independent curriculum recognizes the variety of students' cultural perspectives and experiences. It proceeds from the premise that preparation for life and work in a diverse and connected world demands learning experiences that acknowledge and include multiple perspectives in the quest for a future defined by justice and equity.

VII. EXPLORATION AND CREATIVITY

Independent curriculum encourages the taking of intellectual and creative risks in a climate of personal, cultural, and artistic exploration. It asks learners and educators alike to push beyond existing frontiers in the building of knowledge, skills, and understandings that embrace new possibilities for the self and the world.

VIII. WELLNESS AND BALANCE

Independent curriculum takes into account the developmental, social-emotional, and physical needs of learners and educators alike and promotes healthy, balanced living and work habits that permit the expression of the fullness of the individual.

IX. LEARNING FOR THE SAKE OF LEARNING

The cornerstone of independent curriculum is that learning, formal and informal, should be an end in itself, rewarded by a profound understanding and a generous appreciation of the self and the world. While learning may have certain instrumental value, such value is incidental to the higher values of intellectual, cultural, and personal engagement.