

The Critical Skills Program and the Coalition of Essential Schools...

Shared Vision,

Shared Philosophy,

Shared Practice

The Common Principles:

1. Learning to use one's mind well

2. Less is more- depth over coverage

3. Goals apply to all students

4. Personalization

5. Student as worker, teacher as coach

6. Demonstration of mastery

7. A tone of decency and trust

8. Commitment to entire school

9. Resources dedicated to teaching and learning

10. Democracy and equity

What the Critical Skills Program might look like in your Essential School:

Real life problems are viewed as opportunities for learning. Reflection and revision are used to examine and improve the quality of work.

All shareholders support and participate in challenges that demonstrate a high level of authenticity, complexity, uncertainty, and student ownership.

Knowledge and understanding of clearly defined skills and dispositions are the explicit focus of all work for all students.

Community building is intentional, born from the student's unique cultural backgrounds to create connections to life outside of school.

All shareholders take the initiative in designing and leading challenges and access common tools and strategies to help in their problem solving efforts.

Assessment is viewed as a dialogue and an opportunity for growth. Reflection is encouraged and facilitated in multiple ways. Learning is exhibited to audiences beyond the school in the process of the work as well as in the product. Real life expertise and standards are key parts of these exhibitions.

All shareholders encourage and empower one another to raise standards of excellence and model effective collaborative tools for problem solving.

Everyone is viewed as an essential member of the collaborative learning community and everyone models appropriate, healthy risk taking.

All shareholders collaborate toward desired outcomes which will guide the shaping of policies, procedures, assessments, and school culture. Reflection is used as an integral piece in designing future learning experiences.

All shareholders are incorporated in discussions of the learning standards to be targeted and recognize which problems should belong to students to solve.