

2017-2018 WPS/JHHS Initiatives

Project Based Learning

Why: One of the unintended consequences of a test driven education system has been a lack of focus and development on skills and attributes of students. Consistently, we hear from employers and universities that our students lack foundational skills in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and citizenship (the 5 Cs). In response, Virginia has recently embraced a Profile of a Graduate approach to ensure that students are intentionally being taught and subsequently assessed on these critical skills and attributes for success in the 21st century world.

How: Winchester Public Schools has embraced an instructional approach through Project Based Learning to incorporate these skills and attributes into core instructional practices through an authentic learning process for students. This summer, 30 secondary teachers from DMMS and JHHS worked with the [Buck Institute](#) to learn more about the design process for authentic project based learning. These teachers will work to experiment with this instructional practice and collaborate together to serve as demonstration classrooms as we continue to build capacity with more teachers in coming years.

Vision: Ultimately, PBL will be a cornerstone to student experience at the secondary level. In particular, we hope to develop integrated units of study across content areas with a strong connection to the career and technical education department. Our hope is to create meaningful learning experiences for kids that are connected to real world problems.

Blended Learning

Why: Our strategic plan specifically seeks to "redefine the school day" so that students can spend more time pursuing their passion and being exposed to careers. In addition, our desire for project based learning, requires that we find new ways for students to master core content so that time can be freed up to pursue authentic projects. Blended learning seeks to capitalize on "time-technology" swaps in order to free up time during the school day so that student can collaborate with their peers around authentic projects.

How: This year, WPS is in the infant stages of developing the blended learning infrastructure for teachers to begin experimenting. The development will include computer adaptive tools, a robust learning management system, and digital content. Similar to the PBL initiative, teachers will be able to voluntarily participate in this work during the initial years as we seek to develop the framework of blended learning for WPS. Certainly, the Future Ready Secondary Teacher cohort will be key players in this development as they have a high need for time reallocation because of the focus on projects.

Vision: In the future, we hope blended learning will be the key to personalization so that students can move at their own pace through mastery of the content while collaborating with peers around authentic projects.

PBIS

Why: All of our climate survey data at the secondary level indicates that our disciplinary practices are inconsistent and random. Teachers want clear guidelines and consistent consequences for students. PBIS has a focus on teaching and modeling correct behavior versus a focus on merely correcting misbehavior. PBIS also has a system of interventions for students. Students and teachers thrive when there are fair, firm and consistent guidelines and consequences for behavior. In addition, we believe that our students should be held to the highest standards of social interaction including respect for teachers/staff and respect for each other.

How: Each school has a [PBIS](#) team of teachers, counselors and administrators who attended PBIS training this summer. Each team should deliver two critical documents by the end of the summer. First, a document clarifying the difference between office managed behaviors and classroom managed behaviors. Second, a document clarifying the consequences for a Level 1, 2 and 3 behaviors at the office level. These documents are public documents and serve to triangulate accountability between teachers, administrators and students/parents. Additionally, in year one, the PBIS team will work to develop tier two reteaching interventions for students who demonstrate consistent behavioral problems.

Vision: The PBIS framework seeks to bring clarity and consistency to schools in how they deal with student social, emotional and behavioral needs.

Professional Learning Communities and Curriculum Development

Why: Research is clear that when teachers collaborate with facilitated discussions around standards and instructional practices, all teachers benefit and develop in their craft as a teacher. In addition, collaboration among peers builds capacity within the organization so that there is a more consistent student experience from classroom to classroom.

How: School based instructional coaches will begin working with content/course PLCs during the 2017-2018 school year, prioritizing SOL courses based on data. Through the process, a backward design ([Understanding by Design](#)) process will be used to unpack SOL standards, define the learning targets, and design instruction.

Vision: A guaranteed, viable, and coherent curriculum for all courses.

Equity Work

Why: Winchester Public Schools, like many division across the country, continue to see outcomes that are disproportionate by race and social class. American demographic trends indicate that America will be an majority minority nation in the next 25 years. Therefore, the new work of American public schools is to develop systems to address disparate outcomes.

How: The WPS equity committee has three subsets - community engagement, culturally responsive practices, and proportional outcomes. Each subcommittee presented strategies for implementation in the upcoming year. Examples include the AMPed UP! (Accelerated Math Progressions for Underrepresented Potential) for rising fifth graders, giving the PSAT to all tenth graders in order to generate the AP Potential report for 11th grade registration, universal screeners for gifted identification in elementary school, and culturally responsive training through a train the trainer approach.

Vision: Through our collective work, advanced classes such as AP and Honors will have proportional representation. Proportional representation is 40% White, 35% Hispanic, 12% African American, 10% mixed race.