



T H E G C S

360

Newsletter

GOSHEN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

MARCH 2018

Many Paths. One Destination.

by Diane Woodworth, GCS Superintendent



Diversity is a word one hears a great deal these days. But diversity isn't limited to differences in ethnicity, geography or socioeconomic

status. It also speaks to new and different ways to achieve desired outcomes.

The most important outcome for all of us at Goshen Community Schools is the education of our students. We are united in our belief that our students must be given all the tools to be successful in life. And educational success requires preparation for life in an increasingly global and diverse society. A GCS education also addresses the soft skills essential to being good community citizens as well as the more tangible skills learned through traditional academic training.

We are united in this belief – and we are relentless in the pursuit. That's why our Pathways to Learning initiative at Goshen Schools is so valuable and I am pleased we are featuring it in this newsletter. Here at GCS, a powerful model has evolved – one that embraces innovation and diverse educational approaches throughout the system without losing our collective focus on our fundamental mission.

Innovation and diversity are also reflected in the continuing progress of our Strategic Plan. The work of so many selfless individuals will soon culminate in a comprehensive plan and some exciting changes in the District. We all look forward to implementing the action items that will make our schools even more effective, efficient and well prepared

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Living up to our promise

Pathways to Learning initiative provides innovative educational framework for real world preparation.

The administrative team at Goshen Community Schools recently published a comprehensive report on the Pathways to Learning initiative. The report details the specific outcomes every GCS pupil, and their parents, have a right to expect as the student progresses from elementary school to middle school and high school. One might call it a "promise" – or even a "bill of rights." Regardless, Goshen Schools' Pathways to Learning speaks to how seriously the district takes its mission and commitment to the education of the whole student in ways that will provide relevant preparation for life in a global society.

"Pathways" is the operative word in the program model. While sharing a vision for educational success and belief in the core values of the entire GCS system, each of the nine schools deliver specific learning experiences. At the elementary school level, West Goshen and Prairie View Elementary Schools follow the Primary Years International Baccalaureate (IB) model. Chandler and Model Schools focus on New Tech. Expeditionary Learning (EL) is the model for Chamberlain Elementary and C.L.A.S.S. (Connecting Learning Assures Successful Students) is featured at Parkside. Dual Language Immersion is the focus at Waterford Elementary School.

As students pass from elementary to middle school, their educational development can be realized in both New Tech and Middle Years IB at

Goshen Middle School. At the high school level, the learning pathways options expand again to include Career Ready, New Tech and Early College programs as well as IB (Middle Years and Diploma Programme).

Diane Woodworth, GCS superintendent, sees the Pathways to Learning initiative as a win-win for students. "The innovative and varied academic programs at each of the schools provide an amazing opportunity for students to engage in personalized project-based learning," she said. "So while the programs are specific to the respective schools, they all provide a common framework for educating the whole student through multi-faceted experiences and essential life skills."



The common framework centers around five critical pillars: effective communications and technology skills, interaction and engagement with the community, strong fundamental academic knowledge, personal and social skills, and college/career/life preparation and planning.

The presentation of each of these pillars varies by grade level, of course, but they all speak to the need for today's students to be tomorrow's leaders in the local and global community. Learned knowledge is only part of the equation. It also involves real world problem-solving, communications and other soft skills required by potential employers and valued by friends and community members alike.

The specifics of each school curriculum model are much more in-depth than can be addressed in this article. However, here are a few examples of the Pathways to Learning curriculum in action at various schools.

New Tech

New Tech is the framework for project-based learning at Model and Chandler Elementary Schools. According to Model Elementary principal, Tami Hicks, the faculty identifies real world projects on which the students research, discuss, and collaborate. One recent third grade project, for example, explored the impact of severe weather on community residents.

The students applied traditional educational skills such as English and mathematics to study the nature of tornadoes, the damage they can cause, critical statistics and other relevant points of inquiry. The class even hosted a presentation by a local TV meteorologist. Ultimately, they focused on what Goshen residents need to know and do in the event of severe weather. They prepared severe weather kits including flashlights, batteries, first aid supplies, water, MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) and severe weather radios and invited the community in for a presentation of their findings.

C.L.A.S.S

At Parkside Elementary, the C.L.A.S.S. model is based on brain science and learning cognition. However, those “hard sciences” actually demonstrate that softer skills like character and leadership are essential qualities for learning. Parkside school counselor Jan Holsopple says that C.L.A.S.S. provides unique opportunities for students to learn to be collaborative and demonstrate character through interaction with teachers and other students.

Each grade level has a theme to help make connections for their students. Creating a year-long plan is a school-wide initiative to drive connections and inquiry. As an example, Holsopple related how the Parkside teachers introduced the theme of travel for the second grade class as a way to connect various academic disciplines with real world situations. This process better enables students to relate to the subject. As Holsopple describes the process, “It all goes back to the way the brain learns. Collaboration, passion, inquiry and curiosity are good for the brain.”

Expeditionary Learning

Expeditionary Learning (EL) at Chamberlain Elementary provides a powerful platform for

students to be highly engaged in their own learning. Chamberlain Principal Kim Branham likes to describe EL as “project-based learning on steroids.” She adds, “EL creates an environment where academics are strong, engagement is strong and it all contributes to building a community of learners.”

Active in the EL network for three years, Chamberlain is one of only 160 schools in the U.S. featuring this unique model. Branham says the level of engagement has been exceptionally gratifying. “Students really seem to enjoy taking ownership in their learning. The ownership and buy-in from the faculty has kept our retention very high. And new parents in the community are taking note of the successes we’ve had.”

Dual Language Immersion

The Dual Language Immersion program at Waterford Elementary was highlighted in an earlier edition of this newsletter and it has continued to grow and flourish under the direction of principal Katrina Overton and her dedicated teachers. “The way the students have responded to the teachers is absolutely jaw-dropping,” she says, “as is the interest from the community.”

Overton used the recent Festival Hispano in December as an example. “We had caroling, piñatas, Hispanic food, dancing and more. The building was absolutely immersed in the Spanish language and culture. By involving the community and parents in this way, the educational component of our curriculum is inspiring to the children and their ability to learn is greatly enhanced.”

Primary Years IB

West Goshen Elementary and Prairie View Elementary both feature the Primary Years IB curriculum. At its core, the curriculum is based on inquiry-based learning and enables students to become more independent, active learners who take action using what they have learned. It focuses heavily on a spirit of preparation: preparation that considers the whole child, preparation for the future, and preparation that is engaging. This spirit also includes a sense of inclusiveness that embraces multi-culturalism, and a component that encourages exploration and creativity through rich and stimulating learning environments.

Lori Line is the principal at West Goshen and she notes that the foundation of an IB education is built upon the Learner Profile. The goals of the profile are to develop “learners” who are inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. According to Line, each of these attributes is integrated in everything they do. “It helps us build relationships with our students. It also has a profound impact on their lives at home and in the community.”

Middle/High School Pathways

The beauty of the Pathways initiative is how seamlessly it integrates as students graduate to middle school and high school. At Goshen Middle School, the two learning pathways are New Tech and International Baccalaureate (IB). While using

different methodologies, the two models are similar in that they are both inquiry-based. Unlike more traditional academic models, these programs are more engaging and help stimulate student interest and curiosity. They are also both standards-based so they are compatible with state expectations.

New Tech and IB differ at the middle school level with New Tech taught via project-based learning. It is experiential and hands-on, thus requiring students to do research and work in groups. IB adds an important global perspective, including study of a second language and the performing arts. IB students are encouraged to take control of their own learning and seek insights as to how knowledge itself is achieved.

The Pathways to Learning process culminates in high school, where students can continue down the road towards the IB Diploma Programme, or embark on Career Ready, New Tech or Early College curricula. All scenarios provide outstanding preparation for life’s next chapters. It is preparation for an effective and productive future – as contributors to their chosen vocation, to their community, and to the global society.

Editor’s note: *This article has been prepared to provide highlights and examples of the various applications of the Pathways to Learning initiative at Goshen Community Schools. Parents and others are encouraged to learn more by picking up a copy of the Pathways to Learning report in the district administrative office or going online to <http://bit.ly/2EXP5A6>.*





Little Big Idea Grant Winners

What's a great idea worth? Two faculty members found out recently to the tune of \$1000 each as they were awarded grants from Vibrant Communities, Elkhart County.

GHS art teacher Betsy Poling was "very excited" to learn her vision for "little free libraries" was one step closer to reality, thanks to the grant. Poling wants to install uniquely designed and constructed mini book depositories all over Goshen so residents can share and enjoy books with their neighbors.



A teacher at Prairie View, Kelsey Ambrosen's award-winning idea was for a book scavenger hunt. The hunt requires people to solve puzzles and riddles to find hidden books. Ambrosen wants to work with her students to hide books throughout Goshen and write the clues that will enable residents to identify the locations.



All That Jazz

The Goshen High School Jazz Band performance

The Goshen High School Jazz Band was the recipient of an exceptional honor when it was invited to perform for the Indiana Music Educators Association Annual Conference in January. The only jazz ensemble in the state to receive this invitation, GHS jazz ensemble members were doubly honored to be joined on stage by one of the world's premier jazz saxophone soloists, Eric Marienthal. Although snow and cold from Mother Nature nearly conspired to keep the performers from traveling to Fort Wayne for the event, they managed to make the trip and revel in the experience. Elkhart's Conn-Selmer provided generous assistance in arranging Marienthal's appearance. Goshen High School Band Director Tom Cox summarized the event in a few words, "As exciting as this was for me personally, it was an amazing experience and great honor for our talented kids."



Scholastic Art Awards

Fourteen Goshen High School students won a total of 21 awards in this year's Scholastic Art competition. Their work will be on display at the South Bend Museum of Art from February 3 to March 3, 2018. Congratulations to all.

Yadira Diaz, Estresada, Painting, Gold Key (shown above)

Madelyn Martinez, Toxic Love, Ceramics & Glass, Gold Key

Madelyn Martinez, Majestic Mountains, Ceramics & Glass, Honorable Mention

Lyla Stoy, Sound of the Frogs, Comic Art, Gold Key

Anthony Beatriz, Home, Ceramics & Glass, Silver Key

Cheyenne Mullins, Her, Photography, Silver Key

Elkah DeVoe, Verletzt, Drawing and Illustration, Honorable Mention

Joel Lara, Moving Waves, Art Portfolio, Silver Key

Joel Lara, Melted Flesh, Sculpture, Honorable Mention

Joel Lara, Fishing Coast, Ceramics & Glass, Honorable Mention

Joel Lara, Crashing Tides, Ceramics & Glass, Honorable Mention

Amelia Marrufo, Blue folds, Painting, Honorable Mention

Amelia Marrufo, Colour, Painting, Honorable Mention

Brandi Smith, Lost and Found, Ceramics & Glass, Honorable Mention

Diana Flores Valtierra, A Colorful Wonderland, Drawing and Illustration, Silver Key

Caitlin Bell, Spinning A Thread, Painting, Honorable Mention

Syreeta Moore, Poem Illustration, Digital Art, Silver Key

Lauren Barton, Labyrinth, Painting, Silver Key

Lauren Barton, Cacophony, Painting, Silver Key

Yenifer Escobedo, Momento: "Artificial Hope," Painting, Honorable Mention

Yenifer Escobedo, Momento: "Silence," Painting, Honorable Mention

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Many Paths One Destination

for the challenges of educating the next generation of talented GCS students.

As a final note, when a team is as hard-working and conscientious as yours here at GCS, it is nice when outside agencies acknowledge our accomplishments. Recently niche.com put Goshen Schools in the top 10 percent of school corporations in our state. We are gratified and humbled by this recognition, and we know there is so much more we can do. With your ongoing support, we will continue to push closer to our ultimate destination, providing our students with the best possible educational foundation.

Positive Population Trend

As part of the Strategic Planning process, independent demographers were tasked with assessing likely population shifts over the next ten years. Projections for student population growth over the next decade are very positive. While 80 percent of Indiana school districts are likely to see declines in student population, Goshen Community Schools are projected to grow by 200 students from last year's 6,534 to 6,728 in 2025-26.

2018 Events

March 8, 9, 10
GHS Musical "Tarzan"
GHS Auditorium
7:00 p.m.

March 10 & 11
GHS Musical "Tarzan"
GHS Auditorium
2:00 p.m.

March 15
Coffee with the Superintendent
Administration Center
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

March 15
Coffee with the Principal
GMS
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

March 19
Orchestra Preview Concert
GHS Auditorium
7:00 p.m.

March 20
Band Preview Concert
GHS Auditorium
7:00 p.m.

March 28
Snow Make-up Day
GCS will have classes to make up for
February 21st cancellation

March 29 - April 6
Spring Break
No school

April 20
Hoops Night
GMS Main Gym
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

April 23
National Junior Honor Society
Induction Ceremony
GMS Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

April 27 & 28
GMS Musical "Madagascar"
GMS Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

April 29
GMS Musical "Madagascar"
GMS Auditorium
2:00 p.m.