LEVELS 1 AND 2 SCHOOL EXAMPLES AND MODELS*

Overview of Level 1 School Characteristics:

*   ***Has developed and is committed to implementing an Era 3 mission-outcomes statement*** similar to preparation for lifelong learning, intelligent citizenship, and self-understanding.
*   ***Develop a success oriented learning environment*** in order to support student achievement based on an Era 3 learning mission goals.
*   ***Focus virtually all their curriculum around meaningful content and student understanding*** – using essential questions, uncovering critical issues, challenges, ideas and/or concepts rather than on "covering" a lot of fragmented information and facts.
*   ***Embed the teaching of critical, key skills into the meaningful curriculum*** – ask questions and define problem and challenges; search for-process information and data; think deeply and flexibly; draw conclusions and apply learning; communicate effectively.
*   ***Generally create a holistic, integrated curriculum*** most often organized around big ideas, understandings, essential questions, research, communication and thinking.
*   ***Assess success through multiple measures***, especially including the results of projects, open-ended authentic assessments and public presentations. Students keep and reflect on portfolios of their work, often electronically kept, over time.
*   Place significant emphasis on ***improving learning and providing students with feedback through ongoing formative assessments***.
*   ***Often expect students to participate in capstone experiences*** that demonstrate their overall abilities, skills and their knowledge and understanding gleaned over their many years of learning. Capstone experiences often take the form of synthesizing courses, internships, and/or specially designed graduation tasks that constitute a portfolio of their work and self-understanding.
*   ***Prepare students well for post high school learning experiences***, because they have learned lifelong learning background knowledge and skills.
*   The program often helps students develop a ***clear perspective on their interests strengths, and plans for the future***.
*   Often ***structure learning and organize facilities and schedules differently from the traditional school structures***. Rooms are often larger, designed to accommodate two classes together so that teachers can work as teams. Technology is regularly and seamlessly incorporated into the learning day and available to students.
*   ***Sometimes use radically different models to engage students in learning*** and promote Era 3 learning. For example, "Big Picture" schools focus learning around "self-understanding" – helping students discover their interests and what motivates them to learn. As students develop interests, they begin to do research around them, find internships, and build their knowledge and skills through an integration of interests, projects, research, thinking, and curriculum.
*   Develop ***strong school and professional learning communities***, in which both students and teachers continuously learn collaboratively.

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Some Level One School Examples and Models

New Manor High School (A New Tech School)
From their website: "The goal of Manor New Technology High School is to prepare students to excel in an information-based and technologically-advanced society. We are committed to leading educational reform and our instructional program encourages students to learn through collaboration with peers, businesses, and the community. Students develop problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, and the resiliency they need to succeed in a rapidly changing and competitive world. Our curriculum brings together the strength of modern technology, community partnerships, problem solving, interdisciplinary instruction, and global perspectives in a student-centered, collaborative, project-based community."
New Manor High School website:
http://www.manorisd.net/newtech/aboutus.html
New Manor is part of a network of schools –
New Tech Network Website:
http://www.newtechnetwork.org/

The Met (A Big Picture School)
The philosophy of the Met focuses on educating "one student at a time" in a small learning atmosphere. True learning takes place when "each student is an active participant in his or her education, when a course of study is personalized by teachers, parents and mentors who know that student well, and when school-based learning is blended with outside experiences that heighten the student's interest." The school focuses on creating a rigorous learning situation relevant to students, around student interests, along with strong relationships with other adults and students. Teacher/advisors work with the same students for all four years of high school. Core tenets include: Learning in the real world, advisory and assessment, applied academics and assessment, college transition program, health and wellness, and travel opportunities.
Met Website: http://metcenter.org/
The Met is a "Big Picture" school, one of many across the country.
Big Picture School Website: http://www.bigpicture.org/

To read an article about Big Picture Schools, go to:
http://www.philasocialinnovations.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=41%3Abig-picture-philadelphia-and-the-reform-of-americas-educational-system-through-student-centric-

High Tech High

(From its website) High Tech High currently operates nine schools in San Diego County: one elementary school, three middle schools, and five high schools. All of these schools serve a diverse, lottery-selected student population.

High Tech High has three design principles: **personalization**, **adult world connection**, and **common intellectual mission**. Responding directly to the needs of students, all three principles connect to the broad mission of preparation for the adult world. Moreover, all three call for structures and practices that schools do not now routinely employ. High Tech High has also created a more recent design principle, known as **teacher as designer.**

The design principles permeate every aspect of life at High Tech High: the small size of the school, the openness of the facilities, the personalization through advisory, the emphasis on integrated, project-based learning and student exhibitions, the requirement that all students complete internships in the community, and the provision of ample planning time for teacher teams during the work day.

Website: http://www.hightechhigh.org
Additional, multiple resources can be found at: http://www.hightechhigh.org/resource-center/ or http://www.hightechhigh.org/downloads/WinterResidency2010/

The Sustainability Workshop

This special Philadelphia public school program for seniors enables students to define authentic problems that drive the curriculum and dictate what specific knowledge and skills are developed by the students. Real world criteria are used to assess student work. Two other key principles include giving students many opportunities to make decisions and see the consequences of their decisions, and "fail forward", learn from mistakes and errors. The program is put into practice through student projects. Ultimately, it is hoped that this program will expand into a full fledged high school.

Website: http://www.workshopschool.org/

Expeditionary Learning

Expeditionary learning partners with school districts and charter schools to "transform existing schools at all levels, pre K-12, and in all settings – urban, rural and suburban. The model is designed to help schools adapt their curriculum and instructional practices to conform to ten design principles – among them, the primacy of self-discovery, a focus on "wonderful ideas", success rather than failure, personal and group responsibility, working towards personal best and collaboration, and service and compassion. The model is born out of a collaboration between Outward Bound and the Harvard School of Education.

For more information about Expeditionary Learning, its program and values, its school and district partners, and its multiple resources, go to: http://elschools.org/

To download Expeditionary's Core Practices Book, go to: http://elschools.org/sites/default/files/Core%20Practice%20Final_EL_120811.pdf

Schools That Work (Edutopia Series)

Schools That Work takes a deep look at what school successes are made of. How principals and teachers, parents and students, and schools and school districts collaborate to change the futures of their young people. In the schools that work series, Edutopia shares the blueprints that change makers use -- the contracts, lesson plans, and teacher-training tools used to create change. Edutopia also provides the opportunity to meet the change makers themselves -- the teachers and administrators of Schools that Work – and to hear about the hurdles they overcame. *(Note: Some schools in the "Schools That Work" series are at level one, and some at level two).*

Website: http://www.edutopia.org/stw

Envision High Schools

Envision Schools was founded in June 2002 to bring high quality college preparatory education to communities with the greatest need, with the goal of sending all the organization's students to college. Envision Schools targets underserved urban youth, particularly those who are first in their families to attend college, in communities of color and neighborhoods served by underperforming public schools. Each

Envision School is academically rigorous, uses project-based learning, and integrates art and technology across the curriculum to instill the critical thinking and creative skills necessary for students to be successful in college and beyond. Today, Envision Schools operates four schools in the Bay Area – two in San Francisco, one in Oakland, and one in Hayward.

Website: http://www.envisionschools.org/

NOTE: The next page describes level 2 schools.

Overview of Level 2 School Characteristics:

• Have either implicitly or explicitly (usually implicitly) adopted some parts of the mission/Era 3 outcomes, and program elements that help students meet Era 3 outcomes.

• Have strong positive cultures, a subject centered, relatively coherent curriculum, high expectations for most students, multiple assessment measures, formative assessments and high levels of support for students who need help, and some form of professional learning communities designed to help teachers become more proficient and collaborate with each other.

• In many cases, have adopted curricular programs that promote rigorous, "understanding based" learning, such as reading workshop, writing process programs, Social Studies/History Alive! curriculum materials, Everyday or Singapore Math, and project or problem based learning. Some use Understanding by Design/Teaching for Understanding formats for organizing, planning and designing units and courses. Some have incorporated the International Baccalaureate program that provides a more coherent approach to a course based structured program, but also adds many of the characteristics of level 1 schools to its program. Although there is some emphasis on creating a streamlined, more focused curriculum, it is often not as coherent and focused as in level 1 schools. For example, the high school programs in these districts often have many Advanced Placement course options and electives that are designed to provide rigorous learning experiences, but also tend to fragment the curriculum and are not connected to other course offerings.

• Usually maintain traditional subject-centered schedules, especially at the middle and high school levels. Some have incorporated a "block" schedule at the middle and/or high school levels that provide subject area teachers with more time to foster in-depth learning, halve the number of courses that students take at any one time, and halve the number of students working with any given teacher during the day. A few schools have developed team teaching opportunities that enable teachers to teach in pairs or in "small learning communities".

• Many students have longer school days in level 2 schools. In high socio-economic schools, extra time generally takes the form of after school enrichment activities, Saturday SAT-prep sessions, and the like. Many low socio-economic level 2 schools often have required, extended school days, extra school days during the school year, required summer sessions, and required Saturday activities.

• Often have some form of a civic education program, both integrated into the curriculum and as a separate component. Many of these schools require students to do "service learning" in order to graduate. Strong after-school programs in some schools promote "self-understanding" and the development of student talents and interests.

• A large majority of the students graduate and go on to college or some form of post high school training. Level 2 schools do a reasonably good job in providing students with understandings, background knowledge, key skills and habits of mind that students need for college work and other options upon graduation.

Some Level 2 School Examples and Models

Middle Schools – Schools to Watch

Through the Schools to Watch® initiative, the National Forum identifies schools across the United States that are well on their way to meeting the Forum's criteria for high performance. Forum members believe that three things are true of high-performing middle-grades schools:

- They are academically excellent—these schools challenge all students to use their minds well.

- They are developmentally responsive—these schools are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.

- They are socially equitable—these schools are democratic and fair, providing every student with high-quality teachers, resources, and supports.

To achieve this level of performance, high-performing schools establish norms, structures, and organizational arrangements to support and sustain their trajectory toward excellence. They have a sense of purpose that drives every facet of practice and decision-making.

Website: http://www.schoolstowatch.org/

Education Trust

The Education Trust promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels—pre-kindergarten through college. The goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that consign far too many young people—especially those from low-income families or who are black, Latino, or American Indian—to lives on the margins of the American mainstream.

Their website has many resources, but especially interesting is their case studies of "success stories" – high risk - high poverty schools that have beaten the odds. Look under their resources section for these models.
Website: http://www.edtrust.org/

YES Prep

YES Prep Public Schools is an open-enrollment public school system that serves 4,200 students across eight schools in the Houston area. Every year, 100 percent of YES Prep's graduating seniors have been accepted into four-year colleges, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Rice and Stanford. YES Prep combines a highly successful 6th-12th grade model along with high standards for student achievement.

With more than a decade of experience, YES Prep has proven that ALL students can succeed—regardless of their zip code—if given access to great teachers and great schools.

Website: http://yesprep.org/

Schools That Work (Edutopia Series)

Schools That Work takes a deep look at what school successes are made of. How principals and teachers, parents and students, and schools and school districts collaborate to change the futures of their young people. In the schools that work series, Edutopia shares the blueprints that change makers use -- the contracts, lesson plans, and teacher-training tools used to create change. Edutopia also provides the opportunity to meet the change makers themselves -- the teachers and administrators of Schools that Work – and to hear about the hurdles they overcame. (Note: some schools in the Schools That Work series are at level one, and some at level two).

Website: http://www.edutopia.org/stw

Scarsdale High School

Scarsdale High School has eliminated their AP Courses in favor of "Advanced Topics" courses. These courses examine fewer topics in greater depth. Students may take the Advanced Placement exams after completing these courses, but they do not exactly follow the AP curriculum (which is often "coverage" based).

For more information, go to:
http://www.scarsdaleschools.k12.ny.us/20202062213552647/site/default.asp
then download the high school catalogue and view descriptions of the advanced topics courses.

KIPP Schools

KIPP, the Knowledge Is Power Program, is a national network of college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. There are currently (in 2011) 99 KIPP schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia serving more than 27,000 students. KIPP builds a partnership among parents, students, and teachers that puts learning first. By providing outstanding educators, more time in school learning, and a strong culture of achievement, KIPP is helping all students achieve at high levels and prepare for college. Nationally, more than 90 percent of KIPP middle school students have gone on to college-preparatory high schools, and over 85 percent of KIPP alumni have gone on to college.

Learn more about KIPP and its five pillars of educational excellence, and explore other resources and information, at:
http://www.kipp.org/

Jay McTighe and Associates

Jay McTighe, co-author of the popular program Understanding by Design, has collected information from a number of states, school districts and schools that have adopted Understanding by Design as their curriculum model. His website provides information about, and links to, many of these school based sites.

For more information, go to:
http://www.jaymctighe.com/resources.php
then to UbD related websites and other resources.