

Farmington Public Schools

Farmington, Connecticut

Students as Leaders of Their Own Learning

FHS Forum

December 17, 2014

Farmington's History of Continuous Improvement

- Standards-led district (Over 15 Year History)
- Established New Five Year Goals in 2010 – major shift from Content only to Content AND 21st Century Thinking and Learning Skills
- Established *The Framework for Teaching and Learning* in 2011
- Articulated the district's Core Beliefs
- White Paper – Learning 2.0
- New Mission Statement (Alignment)

Creating a Vision

- Common Readings and Research (Administrators, Faculty and Board of Education)
- Student Focus Groups
- Administrator, Faculty, and Parent (PTO) Feedback
- Board of Education Feedback
- Board of Education Approval of Goals and Vision of the FPS Graduate(March, 2010)

Farmington Public Schools Vision of the Graduate



- **Critical Thinking and Reasoning**
- **Collaboration and Communication**
- **Problem Solving and Innovation**
- **Self-Direction and Resourcefulness**

WHY?
Core
Beliefs



WHAT?
Five Year
Goals and
Vision of the
FPS
Graduate
March, 2010



HOW?
Framework
for Teaching
and Learning
Sept., 2010



Aligned to Common Core State Standards

External Realities

- * **Information Revolution**
- * **The Nature of Work Has Changed**
- * **Global Competition and Collaboration**

The Context



Internal Commitments

- * Our Aspirations for All Students
(Mission of FPS)**
- * Vision of the Graduate**
- * Develop a Community of Learners
Through the Framework for
Teaching and Learning**

Our Challenge

- * The Current System Was Designed for Another Age and for Another Purpose**
- * An “Attainment” Culture Versus a Learning Culture**

Power of Mindset



Can Farmington Meet the Challenge?

- *AP Participation
- *College Acceptances Data
- *Capstone

Farmington High School Design Team: November, 2011-November, 2012



The Design Team will review data, research exemplary practices, and consider stakeholder feedback toward the end of producing a report that summarizes the findings and outlines a set of recommendations *for the pervasive engagement of students throughout the high school* that include but are not limited to:

- a clearly articulated rationale for *why engagement matters and why designing for engagement* is the essential means of transformation of teaching and learning
- a vision of an engagement-focused high school in which *every student fulfills the Vision of the FPS Graduate*
- promising alternatives in the areas of curriculum, assessment, and program development
- revised high school graduation requirements
- proposals for structural and organizational changes
- opportunities for partnerships with community organizations, businesses and colleges/universities at the local/global level

All of the above recommendations must ensure that students will enhance their college and career readiness in a competitive market. The recommendations will be used to inform a short-term and long-range strategic planning process for the future.

Make-Up of the Design Team

- **Students**
- **Teachers**
- **Parents**
- **Administrators**
- **Board of Education Members**

1. Accelerate Instructional Innovation

Teaching and learning in every classroom, every day **reflects** the research-based principles of the *Framework for Teaching and Learning*. Students are at the center of the learning experience. Students are engaged in meaningful and challenging work that is artfully designed to inspire effort and interest. Instruction is primarily about ensuring that every student has the ability to reason and think critically, to communicate clearly and collaborate with others to solve complex problems and generate innovative solutions and ideas. These innovative instructional practices **transform the role of the student in the learning process.**

2. Create Student-Driven Learning Pathways

Students take an active role in planning their own education. A strong advisory and guidance program helps students explore college and career options and make thoughtful decisions. **Students customize a learning pathway that aligns with their interests and goals.** All students have access to alternative learning options including **advanced studies, certificate programs, blended learning** and other options as they emerge both within and outside of the classroom. By using student success plans, portfolios, rubrics and online course management tools, teachers help students direct their own educational experience.

3. Redefine Graduation Standards

The school community is committed to a true standards-based system of accountability and the **graduation policy requires all students to demonstrate mastery of core competencies and content knowledge at high levels of college and career readiness** before receiving a diploma. Teachers use common rubrics to assess student performance and students use feedback to improve their work. A transcript from FHS reflects the accomplishments of every graduate and tells the story of a 21st century learner and a brand of excellence that is unique to the Farmington graduate.

4. Bring the World to the Student and the Student into the World

Student learning extends beyond the classroom to include real world “on the job” or “in the field” experiences. Students regularly engage with experts and mentors to better understand and apply content knowledge to authentic problems or situations. Technology allows students to interact and learn with global peers and experience real time communication and collaboration. Students acquire the skills and dispositions to be prepared for **global citizenship** and the challenges of diverse world cultures.

5. Build a Continuum of Independence

The school schedule, curriculum, and learning opportunities are all intentionally designed to **build capacity for self-directed, independent learning on the part of every student.** The ninth grade curriculum provides a foundation for more sophisticated and complex learning in the upper grades. Students establish and maintain a culture of respect and responsibility that allows for greater independence in each successive grade. Peer mentoring supports a strong commitment to scholarship, leadership and respectful relationships. The entire faculty feels collectively responsible for the academic success, personal growth and well-being of every student.

6. Benchmark Against Global Standards

The administration and faculty have developed a **common definition of academic rigor that is based on international standards and prepares students for globally competitive post-secondary education and careers.** Assessment practices align with these standards demanding transfer and application of knowledge to authentic and challenging tasks. Students investigate ideas in depth, communicate clearly and work well with others from diverse backgrounds. The school is able to assess its own instructional effectiveness using comparative data and by studying internationally recognized best practices.

7. Make Achievement the Constant and Time the Variable

Formative assessment strategies are used in every classroom throughout the school year to identify emerging student learning needs and modify instruction or provide intervention before students fall behind. **Flexible daily schedules and yearly calendars allow students who are underperforming to access the support they need to achieve mastery.** Pacing can be modified to respond to the needs of a wide range of learners resulting in accelerated or extended graduation rates. **Grading practices are consistent with a standards-led philosophy and promote effort and self-direction.**

8. Design Space for Self-Direction and Collaboration

The **physical space of the school encourages students to be engaged learners.** There are bright open spaces for student study groups and independent learning. Studio and performance spaces are available for creative independent work. Multi-media labs, engineering labs, scientific research labs all provide students with state-of-the-art equipment and tools for advance level work. Double classrooms allow for collaborative learning and presentations.

9. Make Learning Public

Student work is on display around the school and out in the community. Performances in all disciplines are regularly open to the public so that everyone can see and hear about student accomplishments. Community experts serve as mentors and critique student work. Students are adept at giving and receiving feedback on their work and rely on this feedback for continued progress. Parents and students understand the characteristics of quality work and can judge their own or their child's progress using exemplars.

Exhibitions of student work are the cornerstones of an assessment system designed to promote self-directed life-long learning.

10. Leverage Technology as a Tool for Learning

Technology use across the school is transformative, changing the way students learn and teachers teach. The faculty promotes and models digital citizenship and online responsibility. Learning technologies, course management tools, and online resources are used on a daily basis in all classes. Technology is used to engage students in complex problem solving, peer collaboration locally and globally, and culture empathy. Every student graduates with a high level technological literacy.

From the student's perspective

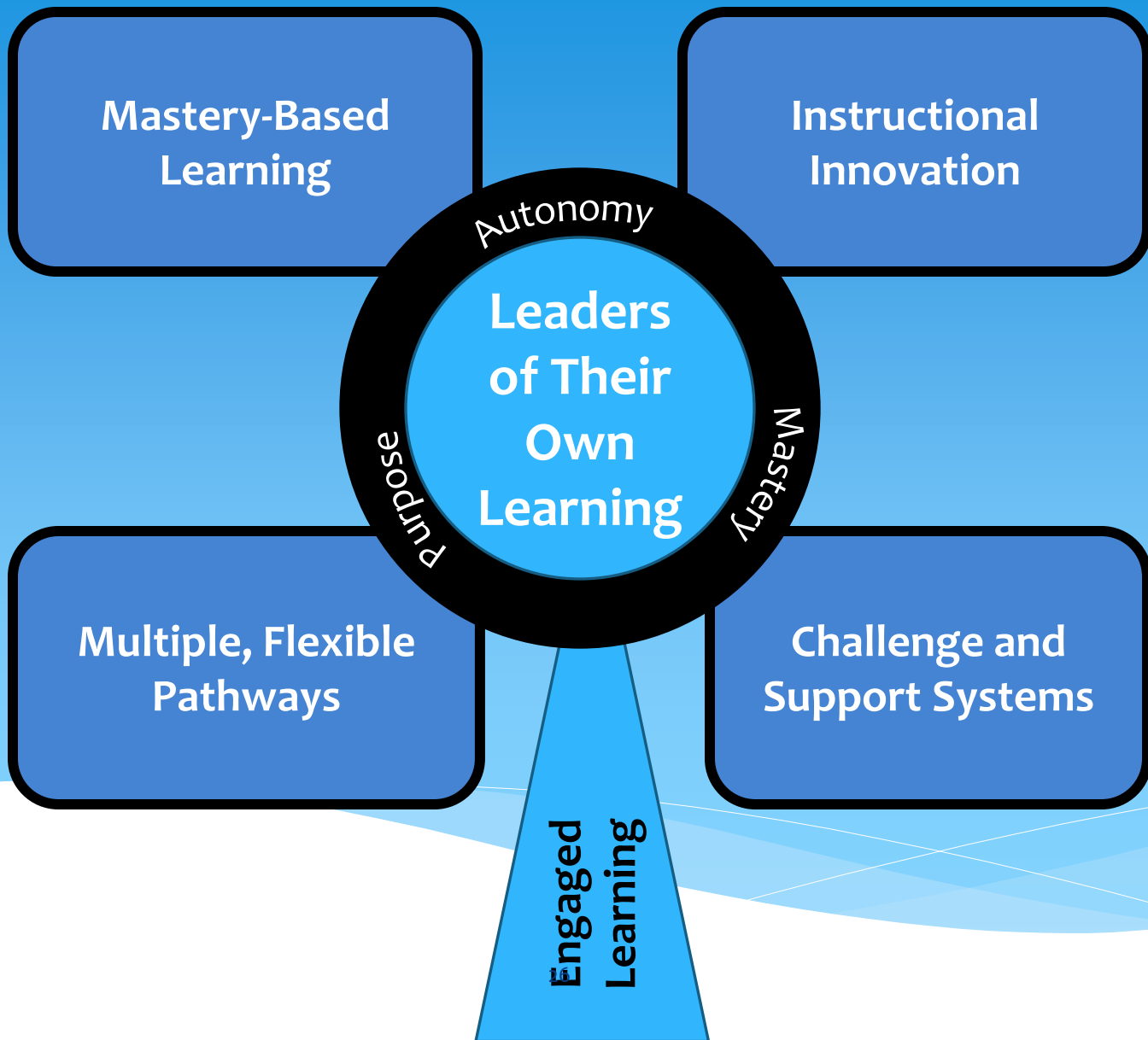
My Freshman Year

- Rigid curriculum
- Content driven
- Separation between students teachers/administrators
- Few options for creativity and student directed learning

My Senior Year

- VOG, FTL, Core Beliefs
- Flexible curriculum and lesson plans
- Thinking and learning skills driven classes
- More opportunities to get involved and have a voice (collaborative instructional rounds)
- More opportunities to show mastery of skills (varied assessments—time the variable)
- More opportunities to study subjects that interest the individual student
- Capstone Research Project
- Student-Teacher Partnership

Farmington High School



Upcoming Forums

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Mastery-Based Teaching and Learning at FHS

Graduation Standards, College & Career Readiness,
Challenge and Support for All Learners

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Assessment 21

Best Practices in Assessment for 21st Century Learning, Project-Based Learning,
Performance Tasks, “Learning the Constant, Time the Variable”

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

Multiple Pathways to Achievement

Support and Advancement Programs, Capstone, Personalized Learning Plans,
Internships, Community Partnerships