

## **Academic Achievement and Student Self-Advocacy Policy**

Learning *how* to achieve academic success is an essential component of the early college experience. While we are teaching students important skills and content knowledge, building students' capacity to be strong self-advocates as they work toward their goals is essential to our work. This policy establishes consistent elements across our curriculum to foster this development.

### **Guiding Assumptions and Commitments:**

- We meet students where they are, acknowledging that they are learning and growing during their time with us. We recognize that not everyone is going to get to the same place in the same way and that students should have a variety of ways in which they can be successful and should be given multiple opportunities to succeed. We recognize that grades are a reflection of the complex combination between skill performance and growth opportunities. A student should be able to improve their grade if there is time remaining in the term. This does *not* guarantee that the student will pass, but rather give them the chance to demonstrate their learning.
- We believe that students are most successful when students and teachers communicate with one another. We want students to advocate for themselves, and acknowledge that part of the learning process requires providing a space to model how to advocate for oneself.
- Students and families should be included in discussions of how the student can succeed. Information about what the student needs to do to be successful should be shared with the student and family to allow them to make informed decisions.

### **Syllabus as Starting Point**

- As a first step to empowering students, syllabi will provide an overview of the course content, texts, grading policy, and learning objectives for the course. The learning objectives should reflect the departmental vertical alignments and standards, and describe the content knowledge and skills the student can expect to gain in the course. [See sample syllabus template in SY22 folder].
- To establish and strengthen student self-advocacy, syllabi will outline how, when, and why to communicate with the instructor and the steps a student and their family should take in instances where a student struggles with work completion or academic achievement.

### **Beyond the Classroom**

- Our goal is to support both faculty and students. While syllabi and connections with instructors will provide the foundation for academic success, there are resources available to students in need of additional support as they develop their academic and self-advocacy skills. For students, these include:

- School Counselors:
  - Ms. Lindsey Melchior - grade 9
  - Mrs. Ashley Bubb - 10th grade through Year 2, students with last names A-L
  - Mrs. Marian Hoyt - 10th grade through Year 2, students with last names M-Z
- Student Support:
  - Ms. Kimball
- A Team
  - Dean Melvin Bond - Dean of Students
  - Dean of Studies
- Collegial support for instructors is also available and encouraged. This can include informal discussion and sharing of resources or ideas as well as consultation with your Division Leads.
  - Division of Humanities and World Languages: Dr. Ben Craig
  - Division of Science, Mathematics, and Applied and Fine Arts: Dr. Rick Kurker

### **When a Student is Struggling**

- Teachers should not give up on a student. In instances when a student is struggling for any reason, they should be given reasonable opportunities to work with the instructor to develop a plan for getting back on track. The opportunity to regain one's footing is not a guarantee of success in the course.
- In the event a student continues to struggle in a course, despite multiple interventions implemented consistently by the instructor over a reasonable period of time, the teacher will refer the student for academic counseling with the school counselor and subsequently refer to SST, if necessary.
- When a student is dealing with a social-emotional concern, the full support team for that student should be notified (school counselor, school social worker, etc.). School counselors are able to provide short-term academic and social-emotional support, referring to the school social worker as needed for more intensive or long-term counseling. The support team will assess the student concern to determine the appropriate level of response.