

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, & LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

NARRATIVE

The Bristol Central High School community promotes an environment wherein all members of its community employ 21st century skills to become creative thinkers, conscientious problem-solvers, collaborative learners, and committed citizens in a global society.

Members of the entire Bristol Central High School community are committed to the following beliefs about learning:

- all students are capable of working at a high level of achievement
- students learn best when they are engaged in instruction that is authentic, interesting, varied and individualized
- students learn best when they are engaged in collaborative experiences that focus on real world skills
- students learn best in safe and welcoming environments with conscientious and committed community members
- students learn best when the school's rigorous curricula
 - reflects their diverse experiences and learning styles
 - provides opportunities for creativity and ingenuity
 - challenges them and encourages them to set high goals and work diligently to pursue those goals

The Bristol Central High School community has identified the following learning expectations for all students.

Academic Competencies:

- *Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:*
 - Students will solve problems through research, analysis, application, evaluation and creativity.
- *Communication:*

- Students will use a variety of methods to communicate facts and ideas effectively in a clear and well-reasoned manner.
- *Collaboration:*
 - Students will be conscientious and respectful while working together in a variety of settings to achieve a common goal.
- *Media and Information Literacy:*
 - Students will use technology to access, evaluate, and apply appropriate information while participating in authentic learning experiences.

Civic and Social Competencies:

- *Global Awareness and Civic Responsibility:*
 - Students will demonstrate an understanding of civic, environmental, and financial responsibility by employing skills necessary to be active and productive citizens
- *Life and Career Skills:*
 - Students will take initiative and personal responsibility for setting life and career goals and following through in an ethical and responsible manner.

Bristol Central High School has been engaged in an on-going, dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

A Core Values Creation Committee of parents, teachers, students, and administrators was formed in June of 2010 to revisit the school's mission statement and learning expectations. The Committee actively discussed and critiqued the previous statement of values (mission statement), student learning expectations, and motto which were created in 2001. They concluded that the mission, expectations, and motto were antiquated and did not represent the sentiment of 21st century learning. To rectify this, the committee and then later the faculty began to look at current research and information regarding the skills necessary for success in the 21st century. This research led these groups to begin to form ideas about their own values and beliefs about student learning. Using data collected from their respective groups, the committee compiled a cohesive list of values and beliefs about learning. After categorizing and condensing the information collected, the committee concluded that there are four values that serve as the cornerstones of Bristol Central High School: creativity,

conscientiousness, collaboration, and commitment. Based on these four core values, a new motto, connected to the initials of Bristol Central, was established: Be Creative, Be Conscientious, Be Collaborative, Be Committed. A new mission statement was commissioned to reflect this motto. The mission statement went through many versions as the various groups sought feedback from their constituents.

In 2011, the Bristol Board of Education approved the revised mission statement which now reads: *Bristol Central High School promotes an environment wherein all members of its community employ 21st century skills to become creative thinkers, conscientious problem-solvers, collaborative learners and committed citizens in a global society.*

Bristol Central High School has identified challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted levels of achievement. After establishing our core values the Core Values Creation Committee

reconvened and the faculty later became involved to establish the skills that were needed to “live up to” those core values. The faculty then took part in a process geared towards developing new expectations for student learning. They reviewed examples of the learning expectations of other schools as well as literature about 21st century skills (from the Partnership for 21st century).

They also draw heavily from Karen Hess’ work regarding the Cognitive Rigor Matrix and Depth of Knowledge levels. Faculty members were asked to visualize the ideal graduate after completing four years at Bristol Central High School. The faculty then took part in small group discussions and began to compile a list of skills that all students should acquire. Generally, all constituents (faculty, administrators, parents, and students) agreed that many 21st century skills were already being taught and fostered at Bristol Central High School. However, it was acknowledged that some of the previous learning expectations did not accurately reflect 21st century changes and need to explicitly address such skills.

From the multitude of skills compiled, six categories were created. Those categories included: Media and Information Literacy; Life and Career Skills; Global Awareness and Civic Responsibility; Collaboration; Communication; and Critical Thinking and Problem Solving. Academic departments then met to draft one learning expectation for each category. The

departmental drafts were then reviewed, edited, and critiqued by the Core Values Creation Committee. The six learning expectations were further edited and approved by the faculty.

The Core Values, Mission Statement, Motto, and Learning Expectations were presented to the Board of Education in March of 2011. The Board unanimously approved the work. Upon receiving their approval, learning expectations were then divided up by department and teachers worked on creating school-wide analytic rubrics. The Building Data Team (consisting of department coordinators and administrators) was consulted when dividing up learning expectations; assignments were made based on the most appropriate learning expectation for the content area. In some cases, departments were combined. For example, the Math and Science Departments focused on Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, while the Social Studies Department focused on the Civic Responsibility and Global Awareness rubric.

All teachers and administrators were involved in drafting these rubrics. Teachers used collaborative data team time to discuss current research surrounding the use of rubrics, critique any previous rubrics being used throughout the school, identify key areas where such rubrics could be used in their curricula, and conduct an in depth examination into how Karen Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix could be reflected in school wide rubrics. Departments created draft rubrics which were then submitted back to the Building Data Team. The Building Data team edited and revised the drafts and provided feedback to the chair of the Core Values Creation Committee. Rubrics were revised to make the learning expectations specific and measurable, and to reflect Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels and specific departmental curricula. They were then approved by each department at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. Rubrics were submitted to teachers to implement during the 2013-2014 school year with the rubric level of "meets the standard" expected of each student.

Bristol Central's newly developed core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are becoming more reflected in the culture of the school, are beginning to drive classroom instruction and assessment, and are beginning to guide the development/revision of the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource

allocations. Bristol Central is currently in a period of adjustment with regard to the strategic implementation of the Core Values and Expectations for Student Learning. The faculty, staff, and administration have made it a priority to stress the importance of the core values of

creativity, conscientiousness, collaboration, and commitment. As a result, those values are being instilled into the very fabric of what it means to be a student at Bristol Central. Key discussions among students, staff, faculty, and administration prompted the decision to prominently display the Bristol Central motto in all areas of the school as a constant reminder of its values; towards that end, funds were allocated to create posters and banners. The motto closes out the student announcements each morning and many administrative initiatives are explicitly connected to the school's core values and beliefs. In the spring of 2014, a "Ram Strong" recognition program began at Bristol Central. This program was designed as a first step of the school's Positive Behavior Interventions Plan. It provided blank Ram Strong Award certificates and ram head stickers to all adult members of the school community. The goal of the program is to "catch" students exhibiting Bristol Central's core values. When a teacher, administrator, custodian, cafeteria worker, secretary, or any other adult witnesses a student exhibiting one of the valued qualities, that student is presented with an award. The names of Ram Strong award recipients are displayed in the cafeteria for all to see; the names are read on the morning announcements; and the recipients are entered into a drawing for further awards. In the first month of the program, 87 Ram Strong Awards were distributed. This program has already created more of an awareness of the school's core values and beliefs and has positively impacted the school culture.

In the area of instruction, the core values and expectations for student learning are seeping into classrooms more every day. Teachers are beginning to assess students on the expectations for student learning using the school-wide analytic rubrics. While the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are becoming more apparent in the classroom, they are not being used to drive or revise curriculum. The curriculum for every course at Bristol Central is common to our sister school Bristol Eastern. Though both schools strive to fulfill the district mission of **"Preparing all students to successfully complete post secondary education,"** each school has its own specific statement of Core Values and Beliefs. Therefore, curriculum at the district level is driven by standards. By the spring of 2015, the majority of the curricula will be revised to reflect the Common Core State Standards. These standards align very well with Bristol Central's academic expectations for student learning. Many assessments, across disciplines, are created to reflect the belief that students are capable of high levels of thought and achievement. Therefore, common formative assessments have been designed to target Hess' higher DOK (Depth of Knowledge) levels. These assessments challenge students to think critically and creatively and many reflect authentic learning experiences.

Since their adoption in 2011, Bristol Central's "Core Values and Beliefs" and "21st Century Expectations for Student Learning" initiatives have profoundly impacted the school.

They have become daily reminders of the standard to which all members of the community are held. The strategic implementation of the Core Values and Learning Expectations, enhanced by their prominent display throughout the school, has led to increased awareness and understanding. According to the Endicott Survey, 81.7% of students and 88.2% of parents agree that they are familiar with Bristol Central's core values and beliefs. Among parents, 75.2% are familiar with the learning expectations. With increased exposure to the learning expectations and to the school-wide analytic rubrics, those percentages are expected to increase.

Bristol Central High School has established a plan and supporting processes for reviewing and revising its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities, but the plan is not yet in full operation. The Core Values Creation Committee developed a process and identified a timeline for additional review of the core values, motto, and learning expectations. The idea driving the plan was that learning expectations should change as the demands for post-secondary education changes. As national, state, and district expectations shift and as the 21st century progresses, a reevaluation of learning expectations will become necessary. Under the auspices of the Governance Council (comprised of students, parents, faculty, and administrators), Bristol Central will conduct an annual review of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. The revisions will be heavily influenced by surveys conducted with faculty and staff, students, and parents. The Governance Council will also be able to review results of any state and national testing in order to inform decisions regarding the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. By reviewing all of the data available, the Council will be able to review individual student achievement of the learning expectations as well as the school's achievement. This will allow the Council to identify areas in school policy or instruction that may be refined to produce better results. The goal of any review and revision of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations would be to improve Bristol Central's culture, instruction, and assessment.

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, & LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bristol Central High School has engaged in a dynamic and inclusive process guided by research and best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. The entire school community, including faculty, students, parents, and administrators, was involved in the process to develop Bristol Central's mission statement, motto and learning expectations. This process was heavily influenced by current research and best practices and adopted unanimously by the staff and the Board of Education. The core values and beliefs about learning that were identified will help to prepare all students at Bristol Central to succeed in college and careers.

Bristol Central has identified challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies. These competencies can be measured by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted levels of achievement. The expectations are clear and specific enough to be easily used within content areas to demonstrate student achievement. However, the expectations are also broad enough that they can be applied across disciplines and encompass the breadth of the school's curriculum and activities. The staff of Bristol Central High School clearly identified a rigorous target level of achievement for each school-wide rubric.

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are heavily reflected in the culture of the school and are beginning to drive instruction and assessment in every classroom. These core values and beliefs are beginning to influence policy decisions, procedures, and the allocation of school resources. While the core values have influenced some new programs, policies, and procedures, the school needs to develop a plan to evaluate all school systems and services. This evaluation should be conducted while keeping the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations at the forefront.

The Core Values Creation Committee established a plan and a process for reviewing the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The plan involves a review of recent research, assessments data, surveys, and other district and community initiatives. This plan has

not yet been put into action. The plan does, however, provide a solid framework for ongoing evaluation, review, and revision of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Based on the Rating Guide for Standard 1, Bristol Central High School judges their adherence to the Standard as **ACCEPTABLE**.

STRENGTHS:

- The inclusive process used to develop the school's core values, mission statement, motto, and beliefs about learning
- The open discussion with district leadership and the Board of Education throughout the process
- The clear understanding that the core values will be represented in all school endeavors
- The identification of measurable expectations for student learning that address the skills required of the 21st century learner
- The determination of the high level of minimum acceptable student performance as measured by the school-wide analytic rubrics
- The creation of analytic rubrics for the learning expectations which are broad enough to be used across disciplines.
- The design of a process for regularly scheduled reviews of the school's Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations
- The development of a plan to use a broad range of data sources as part of the review of the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations

NEEDS:

- Develop a formal, comprehensive plan to identify school components, such as instruction, assessment, policies, procedures, and the allocation of resources to ensure that they align with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.
- Implement the plan that has been developed to review and revise the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
- Develop a strategic plan to ensure that the school-wide analytic rubrics are used consistently throughout the school.