

**Portage Public Schools
Monitoring Report**

Policy Type: Ends
Policy Title: Ends Policy 1.2

Certification

I hereby present my monitoring report on Ends Policy 1.2 in accordance with the monitoring schedule established by the Board. I certify that the information provided in this report is true as of March 4, 2016.

Signature

Date

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1.2 POLICY LANGUAGE

Students have critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills to equip them to learn and to lead with confidence.

Interpretation

(My interpretation remains very similar to that in my previous report. I have made some changes to the definitions.)

I interpret the four “C’s” to be the foundational skills needed by students in order to be successful in the 21st Century.

Critical thinking is a skill that every student must possess in order to think clearly and rationally. Being able to think critically is a matter of survival in the new economy. It is also the foundation of science and democracy. Science requires rationality in designing experiments and testing theories. Democracy requires citizens who can think objectively about social and political issues and are able to avoid biases and prejudices.

Communication skills are critical to future success. Students must have effective written and oral communication skills as well as the ability to use technology to communicate effectively.

Collaboration, even more so than individual performance, is the expectation of most employers. More and more work today is done in global teams; it is rare for any work to be completed by a single person working alone.

Creativity has long been associated with the arts; however, it is important for students to come up with new and useful ideas and generate alternative possibilities.

I interpret being able to **learn and lead with confidence** to mean that students are engaged in activities during the school day, and in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities outside of the school day, that help build and develop the four “C’s”.

Report

(Data points remain the same; however, changes have been made in the text of my report.)

These foundational skills, sometimes referred to as “soft” skills are difficult to measure. Desired individual and group behaviors can be identified for each of the four skills; and certain behaviors can be observed and a tally of their frequency can be made, however, this is a time consuming task which we currently do not perform. A concern about creating operational definitions for concepts such as these is that when a concept is defined as the way in which it is measured, a

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definition that is trite is generated and doesn't account for the richness of the concept and therefore not a reliable assessment of the skill.

Rather than create operational definitions for each of the four skills and a system to observe and tally behaviors, this report will focus on student enrollment in classes, programs and activities that are known to develop these four skills. While most District course offerings, programs, and activities incorporate instructional practices that help students develop these four critical skills, there are some, in particular, that I will focus on for this report. I will also add that, beginning with our youngest students, these four skills are introduced and taught at a developmentally appropriate level. At the high school level our graduation requirements demand that students enroll in a wide variety of classes that assure the development of these skills over time.

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes - and the related exams - rely heavily upon a strong foundation in critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration. AP and IB exams have a cost/benefit relationship; students who devote time and energy in preparing themselves for the end-of-course exams and score well will benefit from reduced costs at the post-secondary level. Increasing the number and percentage of students enrolled in AP and IB courses – and taking the related exams – is a reasonable indicator that students will graduate high school with a greater ability to learn and lead with confidence.

AP/IB Courses and Exams

The following charts indicate the number of AP and IB courses taken by students at various grade levels as well as performance data on end of year AP/IB exams. IB data includes IB Diploma attainment.

AP Courses		2013-14		2014-15	
Students in at least one (1) AP Course		601	21%	605	22%
Students in at least one (1) AP Course by grade	9	2	<1%	2	<1%
	10	279	37%	285	41%
	11	110	16%	82	11%
	12	210	30%	236	38%
AP Courses in which a "C" or better was earned (# of AP Courses taken)	9	2 (2)	100%	2 (2)	100%
	10	271 (280)	97%	272 (291)	93%
	11	113 (117)	97%	87 (89)	98%
	12	234 (243)	96%	238 (264)	90%
AP Exams in which a "3" or better was earned (# of AP Exams taken)		226 (336)	67%	250 (389)	64%

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IB Courses		2013-14		2014-15	
Students that took at least one (1) IB Course by grade	10	11	1%	8	1%
	11	415	60%	409	57%
	12	452	65%	442	71%
IB Courses in which a "C" or better was earned (# of IB Courses taken)	10	11 (11)	100%	7 (8)	88%
	11	1116 (1164)	96%	1233 (1302)	95%
	12	1302 (1345)	97%	1299 (1353)	96%
Students who earned an IB diploma (# attempted)		69 (85)	81%	74 (93)	80%
IB Exams in which a "3" or better was earned* (# of IB Exams taken)		1085 (1131)	96%	1050 (1066)	98%

**Some IB Exams that were scored as less than a "3" were exams that were registered for, but not taken due to students dropping the class midyear.*

Other Course/Program Offerings

Art, Music, Physical Education and Technology-related classes all promote the four “C’s”.

At the elementary level – and through grade 6 – 100% of our students take Art, Music and Physical Education courses on a weekly basis.

At the secondary level (grades 7-12), Art, Music and Physical Education are primarily elective courses. Enrollment varies by grade due to scheduling restrictions and individual student needs.

The chart below shows student enrollment numbers during the past two years in selected art, music, physical education, and STEM-related classes.

Course Selection	2013-14		2014-15	
	# students	% students	# students	% students
Art 7-8	364	27%	446	35%
Art 9-12	309	11%	589	20%
Music 7-8	748	56%	731	57%
Music 9-12	616	22%	633	21%
Physical Education 9-12	488	18%	798	27%
Technology and Applied Science (Non EFE) 9-12	203	7%	267	9%
EFE/EFA 11-12	228	17%	398	27%
KAMSC	112	4%	103	3%

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Co Curricular/Extra-Curricular Activities

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities allow students to extend their learning beyond the school day and encourage the development of the four “C’s”.

At the **elementary level**, after school activities include but are not limited to:

- Girl/Boy Scouts
- Student Council
- Building Leadership Teams
- After-School Enrichment Classes
- Math Competitions
- Book Clubs
- Student Safeties
- Girls On The Run
- Mad Science
- Young Rembrandts
- Fuel Up to Play 60

Student participation varies by grade and by building. However, each of our elementary buildings sponsors either Boy or Girl Scouts (or both) with about 200 participants total and all buildings have a Student Council or similar leadership team with approximately 175 students taking part. Aesthetic Education impacts an additional 1400 students.

Additional opportunities exist during the summer months through various camps and classes including the STEP Camp offerings supported by the Portage Education Foundation.

Opportunities are expanded at the **secondary level**, especially in grades 9-12. These activities include athletic teams, groups that compete, perform or travel for events, and groups that just meet after school. At the middle school level there will typically be 20 or more activities available to students with approximately 60% of the students participating.

At the high school level the number of activities approaches 100 with approximately 90% of the students participating in at least one activity.

Other Indicators

Being equipped to learn and lead with confidence means that students are thinking about the future, understand what internal and external resources are available and know how to navigate around obstacles.

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Beginning in the fall of 2014, Portage students in grades 5-12 participated in the Gallup Student Poll which measured, in part, how hopeful students are about their future.

Portage students were more hopeful overall than 5-12 students across the U.S. Students had numerous ideas about how to overcome problems. They were goal-oriented, had abundant energy and knew how to achieve their goals.

	<u>U.S. Overall</u>	<u>Portage</u>
	2014/2015	2014/2015
Hope	53%/48%	63%/53%

Furthermore, two of the survey questions yielded the fact that 76% of our students “can find many ways around problems,” while 82% of our students “can think of many ways to get good grades”. This further validates that our students are becoming well equipped to learn and lead with confidence in their next phase of life.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.