



Linda J. Jacobs, Ed.
Executive Director

Yvonne Callaway
Administrative Director

Leigh Cloyd
Fiscal Coordinator

Martha Schneider
Program Director

The Village Curriculum

“It takes a village to teach a child.”

Adaptation of African Proverb

The Village Curriculum is based on the philosophy that the purpose of education is to help students achieve the knowledge and skills that they need to become contributing, as well as happy, members of society. Therefore, The Village Curriculum is a competency-based curriculum.

A competency-based curriculum mirrors the nature of today’s world. Our age is one of ever-increasing and changing information and technology. A scientific truth today may not be a truth in a year. A technology skill needed for employment this month may be outdated in two years. Much of the material students are required to memorize in school is never used outside of school. For instance, most students are required to memorize the quadratic formula. However, most adults do not use it and many have forgotten it altogether.

The academic program includes reading, language arts, math, science, social studies and computer science. The curriculum is aligned with the Voluntary Maryland Curriculum. Students are prepared to take the MSA, Alt-MSA, and HSA state tests as is appropriate to each student. Additionally, art, performing arts (music, drama, dance) and recreational education balance the program.

As we teach our students, we must help them to adjust to changes and to problem solve. Students’ learning to apply and to analyze information, not just memorize facts, are the foundation for a competency-based curriculum. Students need to know where to find information, how to separate out what is important and what is not, and how to organize the information for the intended purpose. Research, task analysis, organization and time

management skills are essential. A competency based curriculum helps students to acquire these essential skills. The Village Curriculum adds an additional dimension to learning.

Based on the concept that a school is a microcosm of society, the Village Curriculum allows students to learn information and to use this information in a very realistic setting. Four days a week are dedicated to rigorous academic studies, but on Fridays the Village opens. The high school math class becomes a bank; the middle school math class is the school store. The social studies class becomes Town Hall or perhaps a travel agency. The students learn and practice reading skills in the bakery. Sequencing and following directions and patterns are invaluable in the tailor shop. When the Village is in full swing, no classroom is just a classroom. All classrooms are businesses.

Each one of the businesses in The Village Curriculum is an integration of skills—academic skills, technological skills, communication skills, social skills, and vocational skills. Students quickly learn that in “real life” subjects blend together. In life there is no job that requires academic knowledge/skills in only one subject area. The banker must not only be good in math, but in writing and speaking as well. In addition to reading each recipe, the baker must develop good math skills for measuring and for retailing the baked goods. Multi-media presentations, as well as scientific knowledge, are necessary in the environmental foundation or science classroom. Technology cuts across all classrooms and all careers. Students soon learn to recognize and to cope with this reality.

The Village Curriculum also addresses that different students have different abilities. Each business employs students with varied cognitive, social, and vocational aptitudes. One student’s academic knowledge may be complimented by another student’s social skills in order to complete a business project. Cooperative work skills and building on each individual’s strengths are vital for the success of the business. The curriculum allows each child to attain a feeling of academic and personal achievement and success commensurate with the student’s capabilities. Students learn to communicate effectively both within and beyond the classroom.

The Village Curriculum allows students to “learn by doing.” Busy work is not part of the program. Why spend learning time on doing multiple worksheets on measuring skills when students could actually be measuring and computing land areas for projects in the landscaping business? Students are more willing and more motivated to become active participants in the learning process if they see how the information applies to them. In running the different businesses, the students definitely see this application. Fractions are not just learned because they are part of a math class. They become the tool to increasing or decreasing a recipe in the café or they enable students to create a bookcase in the woodworking business.

It takes a village to teach a child. Our Village of students, educators, business leaders and other concerned citizens work together to support and nurture students so that they can see themselves as in integral part of the community. Success for all students should not be a dream, but a reality!

To learn more about The Harbour School, call us 410-974 – 4248 in Annapolis or 443-394-3760 in Baltimore County.