

A. Foundations and Basic Commitments

Policy A-102: Guiding Philosophies and Principles

Policy

1. The Valhalla School Foundation (VSF) views rural education as possessing unique and beneficial characteristics with the potential to maximize student learning. In general, rural students approach life from an entrepreneurial perspective and have close, personal ties to members of their family and community. According to the work of Gordon Neufeld (*Hold On to Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More Than Peers*, Vintage Canada, 2005) the connectedness of the community has a significant impact on the "parent-orientation" of a child and, by extension, contributes to their success in school. Similarly, multi-grade groupings contribute to an environment that encourages this same sense of community connection.
2. The VSF believes the unique aspects of rural education that distinguish it from its urban cousin, call for a diligent focus on structured teaching practices that maximize opportunities for all students in the rural classroom. In addition, direct community involvement will underscore the importance of civic commitment and participation for the students of VCS.
3. The VSF holds strongly to the belief that rural schools must provide students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for success in both urban and rural settings.
4. The VSF recognizes the central role of a parent and guardian in the life of a child and therefore sees itself as a partner commissioned to foster academic success as a part of the overall process of child development.
In keeping with this:
 - a. VSF is committed to the development of trusting partnership relationships fostered by open and transparent communication between parents and the school on all matters concerning their children.
 - b. It is a priority that parents form a majority of the Foundation's representatives.
5. The VSF recognizes that it is in the students' best interest for the Foundation to support its educators by clearly defining all goals and expectations and in turn providing the means necessary for them to be carried out.
6. The VSF views self-confidence as a product of competence. With this in mind, it commits to student success in academics and leadership in an atmosphere of supportive encouragement
7. The VSF holds in high regard for its students the skills of memorization of both prose and arithmetic, mental calculation and dignified visual presentation of written work in the form of excellent penmanship and recognizes the role of diligent drill and practice in fostering regular, automatic presentation of said mastered skills.

8. The VSF strongly upholds the skill of critical thinking as an important part of child development. It is a crucial tool for developing logic and the Foundation purports it is through the mastery of skills and the acquiring of knowledge that one formulates a basis for such critical analysis. As students advance, the focus on skills and knowledge can naturally lead to more opportunities for abstract reasoning, logic, and self-reliant thought processes.

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Legal References:

Valhalla School Foundation Charter, page 1-2