

# Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429



## The connections between career readiness, technology integration, and personalized learning

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to show the connections between our focused efforts over the past 5 school years. The connections discussed in this document will reinforce the tie between three important areas: career readiness, technology integration, and personalized learning; these are not educational fads, rather they drive what we do at Hinckley-Big Rock (HBR).

### **Introduction**

With new learning opportunities come new challenges. HBR has embarked on a journey to provide learning experiences that are meaningful to every student. Students should see the relevance of their current learning to their future goals. They should also understand how the rigor of their learning influences their future experiences. HBR is willing and able to take on the known and unknown as we continually strive to empower our students to be ready to go.

### **Our philosophy**

It is the philosophy of the Hinckley-Big Rock Community Unit School District #429 that student academic achievement, student achievement and personal enrichment in activities, and student growth as persons of character are at the core of the work of the District. The District is committed to providing the highest quality personnel, practices, services, and support to provide for the above stated purposes. In addition, the District is committed to serving the community and taxpayers at the highest levels. To meet this commitment, the District is dedicated to acting in a fiscally responsible manner, providing effective communication and transparent practices on all District work to its community members, and forming working relationships between the community and the District.

### **Our vision**

All Hinckley-Big Rock students will be prepared to take hold of their tomorrow.

### **Background**

Beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, HBR created a multi-year District goal on career readiness. The tasks and outcomes for the [2013-2014](#), [2014-2015](#), and [2015-2016](#) school year can be reviewed to gain further background on our career readiness focus. Two important outcomes of our goal work are the bookends of our efforts. The first task of our goal work began by defining career readiness as a District: Career ready graduates have the skills and motivation to pursue a self-directed goal, adapt to challenges along the way, and know the options to obtain their post-secondary career. The culmination of our three year focus was the development of the [HBR Career Readiness Plan](#). This plan was developed utilizing the [Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations \(PaCE\) Framework](#) as a model to frame our work. The IL PaCE is not a state mandate, however it has been adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission for benchmarking post-secondary readiness for students.

In the 2016-2017 school year, HBR began its journey to increase technology integration in the learning opportunities of our students. The tasks and outcomes for the [2016-2017](#) and

[2017-2018](#) school year can be reviewed to gain further background on our technology integration focus. The continuance of this goal for the 2018-2019 school year will be decided in June of 2018 at our annual Board retreat. One of the tasks that we completed in December 2016 was to define what appropriate technology integration looked like at HBR: The use of technology as a tool in the learning process which is driven by the curriculum, enhances student learning, engages students, and improves communication, feedback, and/or collaboration between all stakeholders. We are in the process of having discussions on what the future of technology as a learning tool in our classrooms will look like. We believe that eventually, we will have a device for each student at HBR. What that looks like is to be determined.

Beginning this school year, 2017-2018, HBR began having discussions surrounding personalized learning. While personalized learning is nothing new (The word personalization dates back to the 1860s with a common definition dating back to 1903 (Watters, 2017)), the definitions of personalized learning vary greatly. We defined what personalized learning means at HBR in October 2017: Personalized learning maximizes the learning and motivation of students through the utilization of student choice, collaborative design, connections of learning to student pursuits, and student autonomy. This is directly implemented using clearly created goals and outcomes, student self-reflection, and valuable teacher feedback utilizing flexible learning environments and pacing.

## Connections

You can see a pattern of our focus and efforts through the rationale of each of our goals:

### Career Readiness

With national reports of students unprepared for the workforce and/or credit bearing entry level college courses, we need to ensure that our students are ready to be successful in their immediate plans after graduation.

### Technology Integration

With our students living a technology-infused life and preparing for a technology-infused workplace, we must provide students with appropriate technology-infused learning environments. We must increase the appropriate integration of technology into the learning environment and trust our students with more progressive technology use.

### Personalized Learning

The learning needs of our students continues to progress causing the need for us to reflect on our current structures and educational practices. Through this goal, we will research new ways to meet the personal learning needs of our students at all levels of understanding.

We are focused on providing learning experiences for our students that are meaningful to their future.

The implementation of technology integration and personalized learning support the HBR Career Readiness Plan. Specifically, technology integration supports the following tasks in the HBR Career Readiness Plan:

- By the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - o gather information regarding training and education for jobs in field of choice
- By the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - o complete a career cluster survey
- By the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to

- revisit/update the career interest inventory
- complete 4 year plan with counselor
- By the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade a student should know
  - general cost ranges of various post-secondary (PS) options
- By the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade a student should know
  - educational requirements, cost, entry level, and median salary for chosen career pathway (CP)
  - different types of PS credentials and institutions
- By the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - identify and complete a virtual job-shadowing
  - revisit/update the career interest inventory
  - create a resume and personal statement
  - identify the specialized skills necessary to be successful in their chosen CP by the end of 1st semester
- By the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade a student should have
  - completed 3 or more applications that align with PS goals
- By the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - have an advanced understanding of the specialized skills necessary to be successful in their chosen CP
- By the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade a student should know
  - estimated costs and return on investment related to further education for PS goals
  - terms and conditions of any scholarship or loan for further education related to PS goals

Specifically, personalized learning supports the following tasks in the HBR Career Readiness Plan:

- By the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - identify and set personal and academic goals
  - create an inventory of interests and possible careers
- By the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - engage in annual career day
- By the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade a student should know
  - possible career clusters they are currently interested in
- By the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - complete 4 year plan with counselor
- By the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade a student should know
  - at least one career cluster for further exploration
- By the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - chose a CP related to a career cluster
  - identify 2-3 adults to support him/her through the PS planning/selection process
- By the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade a student should know
  - educational requirements, cost, entry level, and median salary for chosen CP
  - general timing of exams and applications aligned with chosen CP
- By the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - identify and complete a virtual job-shadowing
  - create a resume and personal statement
  - attend a fair aligned to PS goals
  - complete a self-assessment regarding their proficiency in relation to these specialized skills and utilize the results

- By the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade a student should know
  - o if the CP lines up with observed academic behavior, results, and remaining time to achieve PS goals
  - o application deadlines, test timing, cost, financial aid deadlines, return on investment of options to achieve PS goals
  - o 3-5 options to achieve PS goals, one reach option and one safe option
- By the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be have
  - o met with a school counselor to ensure all steps in the PS process are completed on time
  - o completed the FAFSA when aligned with PS goals
- By the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade a student should be supported to
  - o receive industry-based certification(s) when aligned with PS goals
  - o complete one or more team-based challenges or projects related to identified CP
  - o address any remedial needs to assist in PS readiness
  - o complete an analysis of their pursuit/accumulation of these specialized skills and then utilize this analysis
  - o create a summer career readiness plan
  - o understand that the steps they have taken K-12 have prepared them to independently pursue a different CP should they choose to do so
- By the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade a student should know
  - o estimated costs and return on investment related to further education for PS goals
  - o terms and conditions of any scholarship or loan for further education related to PS goals

Technology integration can support personalized learning through providing learning opportunities that are more individualized for a student. Teachers can help shape students' educational experiences by helping them utilize learning tools, including technology, that shape students' educational experiences (Olson, 2017). Learning should not be contained merely inside the walls of HBR schools. The use of technology as a tool to enhance student learning, engage students, and improve communication, feedback, and/or collaboration between all stakeholders will directly help us maximize student learning and motivation through the utilization of student choice, collaborative design, connections of learning to student pursuits, and student autonomy. While not all personalized learning opportunities must utilize technology, there are circumstances in which technology can help HBR reach the personalized learning needs of students which are not possible within the walls of HBR schools. As our students create their personal post-secondary goals, there may be courses that we do not offer that would benefit our students. "Teachers also can use technology platforms to support data-driven learning like never before, personalizing learning to students' interests, passions, strengths, and needs" (Olson, 2017). HBR must investigate these opportunities to help our students reach their post-secondary goals, adapting to challenges along the way.

**Conclusion**

Our philosophy, vision, and goals are aligned to help us stay focused on the education of our students. Through our District goal work, we have deepened our commitment to students as individual learners. As demonstrated in this document, our focus on career readiness, technology integration, and personalized learning help tie together our efforts for each student at HBR. We must ensure that we have clearly communicated the vision and the reasons for our work, developed the skills of our staff and students, allocated the resources to support our work, and create and follow through with an action plan. While no one ever said that change is easy, we are positioned well to meet the ever changing needs of our students through our focused efforts on career readiness, technology integration, and personalized learning.

**Resources**

- Olson, A. (2017, September 27). *Personalized learning: The importance of teachers in a technology-driven world*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2017/09/27/personalized-learning-the-importance-of-teachers-in-a-technology-driven-world/>.
- Watters, A. (2017, June 9). *The histories of personalized learning*. Retrieved from <http://hackeducation.com/2017/06/09/personalization>.