

# Notes from Brainstorming Session: "What is Optional"

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## Flexibility in Curriculum

- Teaching CCS not text books
- follow kid interests
- freedom to try new things
- it is ok to pick SS & science concepts and themes
- we learn together. Some of the most rewarding learning happens when we all learn together and are open about the process and discoveries
- grab teachable moments w/o worrying about schedule or time

## Communication

- emphasis on communication through writing and speaking
- sharing of learning/work
- teaching kids how and when to talk
- cooperative learning
- write for a purpose, ideas often established by kids
- open communication/parents have input
- the story that teachers, parents, and children understand
- regular planning with team a must
- safe environment created for all to participate

## Creative

- teachers and students encouraged to thinking outside the box
- art projects (some connected to academics)
- performance
- choice in presenting learning
- process not product
- teachers and parents can bring in own ideas and interests
- we join together to explore the impulse to create. We guide children through the process
- creativity in all subjects exploring concepts through games, projects and the arts
- "kid done" not too much adult interventions

## Assessment/Reporting of Progress

- data based decision making
- deciding just what is data/what is honored as data
- portfolio
- year-long conversation, continuing conversation
- progress shared for all kids-above and below proficiency
- extra parent support can allow for increased RTI opportunities
- Students are involved in conference/student led part, goal setting with parents/students part of the process
- we come to a shared understanding of the "story" of each child and their journey through life

- performance based when possible
- parents in the classroom and see learning plus students share progress

#### Parent Involvement/Learning Community

- parent input
- supportive
- ask important questions
- parent led activities
- familiar with all teachers and get to know many of the kids
- not focused on their own child's class, but all
- time committed to needs of class
- parents are involved with setting goals with children
- parents feel comfortable/knowledgeable with what is happening in school we all help children in their journey
- parents supporting learning at home too

#### Theme/Project-Based Learning Community Wide

- An overarching framework to connect the learning community, though implementation will differ based on student developmental level
- program focus
- connection to theme (an anchor) throughout the year
- cooperative learning across grades
- ability to differentiate themes for different age levels, interest levels
- cross grade level learning
- small learning community
- looking at ways to contribute to the larger community
- community service

#### Integrated Classroom

- Planning from standards/following standards and weaving together arts and subjects (not following a specific program)
- much very good learning is not isolated to one academic area, but encompasses many or all
- encourage discussion of connections students make in all subjects
- science journals
- less worksheets
- subjects not always taught by a strict schedule; ability to change day around as needed
- centers

- inquiry activities
- hands-on non-standard materials that interest students in learning

#### Child-Centered

- finding and exploring a child's passions and interests to enhance engagement
- self-direction/independence
- meeting all above and below level students where they are at and moving them forward using
- data driven decision making
- creativity in the way students are moved forward (performance, games, projects)
- lots of choice and chances to set priorities, goal setting emphasis
- the learner sets meaningful goals
- emotional independence/confidence developed
- get to know all students
- learning styles respected and incorporated
- give a base for learning then let kids extend
- the whole child is valued and considered

