

Fundamental Values about Education

Imagine yourself as a student in Decatur. Which of the following “fundamental” values (beliefs, ideals) would you want to be exhibited in your school? Take one row at a time, and take turns talking about the pros and cons of each value in the pair for your student learning experience. If there are disagreements on a row, you should try to understand why the other person believes what they do. It is not necessary to reach consensus, but your reporter will mark all values on which there is consensus.

In learning and instruction we value:

Standardization (learn the same thing at same time as others)	or	Customization (learn what you need when you need it)
Adversarial relationships (win-lose arrangements)	or	Cooperative relationships (win-win arrangements)
Compliance (external direction and discipline)	or	Initiative and self-control (internal direction and discipline)
Conformity (try to be the same as others)	or	Diversity (cultivate your individual talents and strengths)
Compartmentalization (learn subject areas separately)	or	Integration (learn how subject areas interrelate in real problems)
A sorting focus (restricting the time you have to learn)	or	A learning focus (allowing the time you need to learn it well)

In administration we value:

Bureaucratic organization (decisions made at higher level)	or	Team organization (decisions made closest to the problem)
Autocratic leadership (higher levels control lower levels)	or	Shared leadership (higher levels empower/support lower levels)
Centralized control (all units must conform to the same rules)	or	Autonomy, accountability (units may differ, if goals are met)
One-way communications (schools communicate only with district)	or	Networking (schools often communicate with each other, too)

Sample Stakeholder Values for Ends and Means

To help you understand what a value is and how to state it, as well as what each category (box) means. Do not feel you need to use these values. Decide what you truly believe in your heart.

For:	... we value the following outcomes (ends):	... we value the following methods (means):
Students	Skills and motivation to be life-long learners. Knowing the basics of reading, writing, and math. Being considerate, caring, and honest. Cultivating their unique talents and interests.	Giving students more of a voice in directing their own learning, along with some teacher and parent voice. Learn in small, multi-age groups in which character values are cultivated. Having enough time to master each skill or topic.
Teachers	Making a powerful difference in students' lives. Advancing my knowledge about new methods and technologies of instruction. Feeling like a part of a team with other teachers.	Being part of a small caring environment for students. Having more flexibility to teach what I think is important for my students. Shared decision making with students and parents in deciding what each student should learn and how.
Parents	Having an opportunity to learn topics of interest. Having more meaningful interactions with my child. Learning better ways of dealing with conflicts with my child. Having more flexibility on when my child comes home, to match my work schedule	Shared decision making with my child and teachers in deciding what my child should learn and how. Receiving easy-to-follow instructions for fun learning activities to do with my child. Being able to partner with my child's teacher on ways of handling conflicts with my child.
Administrators	Making a meaningful difference in teachers' lives. Providing teachers with the support they need to best serve their students. Protecting my teachers from attempts to restrict what and how they can help students learn.	Shared decision making with my teachers. Having more flexibility to run my school the way I think is best.
Community	Benefiting from student activities and services to the community. Helping students to become better, more active citizens.	Sponsoring "service learning" activities in community organizations. Providing or supporting learning opportunities in some schools.

Work Sheet for Stakeholder Values

Please fill in one box at a time, writing down things you think are important ends and means for each of these stakeholders. It may help to think in terms of what roles you think each stakeholder should ideally play in educating our children.

For:	... we value the following outcomes (ends):	... we value the following methods (means):
Students		
Teachers		
Parents		
Administrators		
Community		