

Appendix to Owyhee Handbook
Owyhee-Harbor School Staff Commitments
October 2008

The Harbor Method is a specific approach for being an effective school. The Harbor Method is a whole school approach in which skilled and dedicated professionals create a safe, structured, and caring environment (or “safe harbor”) that supports accelerated instruction and learning. The specific practices and philosophical underpinnings of the Harbor Method, as defined by the Owyhee staff, are detailed in this document.

The Harbor Method Philosophy and Values

Program and instructional consistency is a signature of the school. All teachers and school associates consistently implement Harbor philosophy and practices within the school.

The philosophy of the school is grounded in the belief that when there is low threat and content is highly challenging, accelerated learning takes place. A whole school approach in which competent and caring professionals, accelerated instruction and the school environment all work together create a “safe harbor” for students.

Faculty and staff use an accelerated curriculum, proven teaching strategies and student management practices that support the intellectual, social, emotional and character development of children.

Climate of High Expectations

Teachers maintain high expectations while providing differentiated instruction for students who need additional support or who need to be challenged more.

All state standards and benchmarks are addressed but are considered the floor and not the ceiling when it comes to student achievement potential.

Students know that their teachers have high expectations for their academic accomplishments and for their conduct.

Safe, Orderly and Caring Environment

The school has a zero tolerance policy for teasing, taunting, bullying, and negative peer pressure. Students know that if they are threatened emotionally or physically during their school day, school staff will address the problem.

The school has a focus on kindness and creates a positive and supportive environment for children to learn and grow. Students have opportunities to learn how to demonstrate kindness to others.

Expectations for conduct are shared throughout the school. School personnel intentionally create a structure that provides clear and consistent expectations for students and supports a positive peer culture.

Conduct expectations are taught at the beginning of the year. Students learn “Rules and Reasons” to understand how their conduct influences other students and their school.

All content areas are venues for character development and work habits. Instruction on character traits and dispositions are integrated throughout the year.

Teachers use stories to teach and shape student conduct.

Personal responsibility is built into classroom and school wide activities. Adults in the school help students learn to self-govern, and help students develop a sense of personal accountability and responsibility for their performance and the quality of their work.

The Harbor Pledge is recited in classrooms daily by all students.

Each class learns and regularly recites a character education poem or song.

“Attentive listening” is an effective schoolwide cue that is consistently used by all staff.

Rules and consequences are consistently enforced by all school staff. Teachers accept responsibility for the conduct of all students in the school, not just those students assigned to their classroom.

Students are expected to walk, without talking, in straight lines to minimize opportunities for misconduct and distractions in the hallway. Students are expected to line up quietly outside their classroom doors. The same line behavior that is used inside the building is demonstrated as students travel to and from special classes in portables.

High expectations for conduct are taught and reinforced in the lunchroom. Students are expected to wait in line without talking, to be attentive and polite to lunchroom staff, and to use soft voices to visit with students seated nearby at their lunch table. Seats are assigned in the lunch room so students aren’t excluded.

Student Engagement and Learning

A direct instruction approach is used for math concept and language boards. Frequent student responses, positive feedback or correction from teachers, and appropriate pacing are the hallmarks of direct instruction.

Teachers teach an accelerated math curriculum four days per week using a math concept board that includes grade level and above grade level concepts. Concepts and skills are repeated so students have multiple opportunities to learn and practice.

Students routinely complete a math warm-up to review basic math operations in grades 2-6.

Mad minutes are practiced daily at every grade level.

A daily oral language board is delivered routinely in grades 2-6. Students in kindergarten and first grade are instructed in daily oral language using alternate formats.

Students in 2nd – 6th grade classify a Shurley sentence and recite Shurley English jingles regularly.

Students in grades 3-6 learn advanced vocabulary words using a multi-sensory approach that incorporates skits and rhymes.

Teachers use the Boise School District's curriculum for content areas not covered by the Harbor Method (reading, writing, health, p.e., music, science, and social studies).

Teachers frequently assess student mastery of grade level and beyond grade level standards. Results of those assessments are used to improve individual student performance and the curriculum as a whole.

Teachers are given adequate prep time throughout the day so they can always be prepared to teach. Teachers are actively engaged with their students throughout the instructional day.

Teachers use multi-sensory learning experiences including rhymes, skits, jingles, and actions to assist learning and to make it engaging and enjoyable.

Administrative Leadership

The principal effectively and persistently communicates the school's mission to the entire school community. Non-negotiables of the Harbor School Method are used to guide decisions, set priorities, and allocates resources.

The principal uses natural opportunities to teach, model, and acknowledge student success and visits classrooms frequently.

The principal protects teaching time and monitors quality instruction.

The principal ensures that personnel who are new to Owyhee receive an orientation on the Harbor Method.

The principal ensures that an orientation is held for all volunteers on an annual basis.

Parent Engagement

Educators regard and engage parents as their children's first teachers.

Parents are well informed about the Harbor Method. All parents should have a complete understanding of the method before enrolling their children, a thorough orientation before the first day of school, and ongoing opportunities for classroom visits.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in various ways to enhance the school's effectiveness.

Parents support their children in their homework and to reinforce personal responsibility. To make homework a student responsibility and family friendly, homework assignments are predictable and manageable.

Parents have high value and respect for student attendance and plan family trips and vacations around the school calendar.

The school attempts to minimize stories and gossip and encourages parents to first contact the child's teacher to clarify facts and to problem solve. The principal is available if the teacher and parent need assistance resolving concerns.

Parents are asked to model school rules when volunteering or visiting during school hours. School personnel share responsibility for clarifying school rules as needed with parents and volunteers.