

Port Allegany District

Philosophy

We believe that the school is an institution which should strive to equip each student with the necessary skills to realize his/her potential as a rational and affective being. One which should help to prepare each student to understand the complex and changing nature of his/her world, to meet the practical challenges of life, and to understand that a richness and breadth of life exist beyond the practical. One which should help to prepare the student to value his/her individual dignity and to respect the dignity of others in this world. One which should enable him/her to realize that she/he must work to promote his/her own and others' welfare, and an institution which should reinforce the fact that many of the hard choices of this life are moral choices--and that she/he must learn to distinguish right from wrong and to choose the right despite the pressures of a changing society.

We believe that the basis of education is individual discipline and that the basis of self-discipline is reason, that we must teach students that self-discipline and education are essentials of our republican way of life.

We believe in the inherent dignity of each person, that each person is a creature of reason and feeling, and that she/he must learn to distinguish between the two.

We believe that each person is educable or trainable; that children's ability to learn varies, and that this variance in ability to learn must be considered in establishing programs of study; that a student should be guided toward a particular course of study based on his/her capabilities; that the school should assist the parents in this guidance, but that the student and his/her parents have the right and responsibility to make the final selection; that we should teach facts to students; that students must learn to associate facts, to see relationships between

them, to structure them and to use them as a basis for generalizations and judgments; that we should introduce students to conflicting ideas, make them aware of the basis of those ideas, and show them that their choices must be made on principles; that students benefit from the exchange of ideas in a classroom and that freedom of expression should be encouraged, but that the control and interpretation of all classroom activities is unquestionably the right of the teacher--not the student.

We believe that the student activity program is an extension of the curriculum; that all students should be encouraged to participate; and that the program should be a positive influence on teaching students social responsibility and on exploiting positively the tremendous peer-group influence; that the school's emphasis on positive ideas, attitudes, and feeling is invaluable in helping to formulate a student's self-esteem; that the best way to accomplish our objectives is to provide our teachers with adequate instructional materials and a reasonable number of students, and to provide our students with well qualified teachers.

We believe that well qualified teachers are those who have a genuine compassion for students, who have an understanding of adolescent behavior, who have thorough knowledge of and enjoy the subjects which they teach; who show respect and love for learning, who demonstrate intellectual integrity, who organize their learning, who involve the class in the learning activities, who demonstrate clarity of thought, who demand clarity of thought from their students, who are firm but fair and consistent with students, who have a positive effect on students by word and example, who consider their work professional, and who devote more than the prescribed minimum school day to teaching pupils and to working with their colleagues.

We believe that any organization as complex as a high school must have a principal to accept final responsibility for the people, objectives, and achievements of that organization. To accomplish the purposes of the school, she/he must work with the staff but must, when necessary, make authoritative decisions.

We believe that our actions should be based upon what we think, that our objectives must be realistic and challenging, and that we should exert the maximum effort to accomplish them. We must continually explore new ideas and search for ways to make our work more effective.

We believe that the school exists to serve the community and society that the community can expect to be kept informed regarding the work of the school, and that the community should be willing to help the school implement its philosophy and objectives.