

## Notes on Mission

Your mission is the most important element of your school's plan, as everything you do in your school should be based on this statement. It should describe the overall philosophy and purpose of your school. In general terms, it should describe the principles and instructional methods that define your approach. It should inspire people to believe in the school model you plan to implement and be easy to grasp. It is important to establish direct connections between your beliefs, the methods you will use and the desired outcomes. A mission statement will:

- help people understand your purpose
- give you direction as you move forward
- help you identify your priorities

It's helpful to break this down into:

- **Your purpose:** *what are you trying to accomplish?* (e.g., to reengage over-age/under-credited students at risk for dropping out; to prepare students with academic and marketable skills)
- **Your business:** *what are you going to do?* How are you going to accomplish your purpose? Think instructional approaches, curricular philosophy, systems, structures and school culture (e.g., by providing a challenging, standards-based curriculum; through project-based learning; through differentiated instruction; by addressing the social and emotional needs of all students; through mentoring relationships)
- **Your values:** *what principles or beliefs guide your work?* (all students can learn, personalization, focus on reflection and refinement, commitment to excellence, democracy & equity, community engagement)

Some schools have a separate list of **CORE VALUES**, while others make their values clear in their mission statement.

Throughout this process we will keep coming back to your mission, which is why it is the focus of our first workshop.

### Your Mission Statement Should...

- Convey the purpose of the school
- Express your school's purpose in a way that inspires support and ongoing commitment
- Motivate/inspire those who are connected to the school
- Be articulated in a way that is convincing and easy to grasp
- Use proactive verbs to describe what you do
- Be free of jargon
- Be specific, short, sharply focused, and memorable

*(adapted from J. Radtke's "How to write a mission statement")*