Seven Principles

The ISA Approach

For over two decades, ISA has partnered with schools and districts to provide students with the support they need to graduate ready for college and career. ISA's proven approach is effective, sustainable and can be customized to address each school's unique context.

The ISA model focuses on three core areas, grounded in seven, research-based principles.

College Prep Teaching & Learning

1. College-preparatory instructional program provides all students with rigorous inquiry-based curriculum and instruction aligned with your state standards. The program focuses on students' intellectual development, in particular the development of higher order thinking skills, organizational skills, habits of work, and mastery of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Elements of the instructional program include:

- An inquiry approach to curriculum and instruction
- Infrastructure for student support, including the organizational and instructional framework that provides the academic and social supports necessary for student success
- Development of habits of mind and habits of work
- Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- Multiple forms of assessment
- Intensive 9th-12th grade post-secondary education preparation
- Internships and community service

2. Extended school day and school year provide additional opportunities for student enrichment and remediation. These opportunities enable staff to provide students with the time, attention and other supports necessary for their success in the program's challenging, college-prep curriculum, including:

- Skill development
- Assignment completions
- Homework/tutorial
- Test preparation
- Leadership development
- Internships/work experiences
- Community service projects
- Curriculum-connected travel and tours

The ISA Approach — COLLEGE PREP TEACHING & LEARNING · BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS & PERSONALIZATION · CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Are You Ready?

Studies prove that the ISA approach has a sustained, positive impact on student achievement and significantly improves high school attendance, credit accumulation, grade promotion, graduation rates, college attendance and persistence rates.

In collaboration with schools and districts, ISA's team of expert educators helps assess the strengths and needs of each school in order to design a customized plan. ISA then supports schools in the implementation of practices and strategies that will increase their capacity to graduate every student ready for success in college and career.

The ISA Model has been selected by the United States Department of Education as an approved, evidence-based whole school reform model. ISA's evaluation study has been accepted into the **What Works Clearinghouse**, and is approved for School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding.

3. Continuous professional development ensures a collaborative learning community in which teachers and school leaders participate in individual and team coaching. These include the ISA Summer and Winter Institutes, as well as individual and team-based coaching on issues such as:

- Classroom management strategies
- Design and implementation of inquiry-based lessons
- Performance and portfolio assessments

Building Relationships & Personalization

4. Distributed counseling leverages trusting adult/student relationships to increase achievement and provide a safety net of care and support. ISA supports each team as it develops its own program, one that is appropriate to that team's goals, contexts, and students. Several core components that are fundamental to distributed counseling are:

- Team structure whereby a team of teachers in the core content areas teaches the same group of students
- Team collaboration on goals and strategies to support the academic, social and emotional development of students
- Teachers as advisors
- Student-support mechanisms
- Consistent communication with parents
- Development of a 4-year, college access program

5. Dedicated team of teachers and counselors provides a consistent support network throughout students' four years of high school. This structure provides consistency, personalizes the school environment, creates strong, long-term connections between students, teachers and counselor, and ensures that the support network is engaged and knowledgeable. The team values collaborative work in their commitment to students' continuance and success.

6. Parent involvement is strongly supported, as it has been proven to positively influence student learning and achievement. ISA teams regularly communicate with parents through a number of mechanisms, including phone calls by advisors to their advisees' parents, teacher conferences with parents, parent orientation sessions to introduce and discuss the mission of the school and aspects of the school's academic and counseling programs, team intervention meetings with students and parents, and the school's parent/teacher association.

Continuous Improvement

7. Continuous organizational improvement is facilitated by the use of data to monitor program implementation and student performance outcomes. Teams meet regularly to ensure that the program is aligned with ISA's seven principles and that the focus is on accountability for measurable outcomes. Staff use student performance data, results from student inventories and program implementation reports to inform practice, make program improvements and provide appropriate interventions for students. Teachers collaboratively and regularly review student work to determine if the learning goals are being met. Schools participate in an end-of-year inventory that includes a self-assessment and an external assessment to examine program quality and identify where further development is needed.

The ISA Network

The ISA Network, a strong community of ISA leaders and educators, supports the ISA model by providing school leaders, teachers and counselors the opportunity to share and collaborate within a larger community of ISA educators. This collaboration benefits the network participants as well as ISA students across the nation.

The Leadership Network, comprised of all ISA principals and assistant principals, meets throughout the year and focuses on the principal as instructional leader and organizational manager. Network activities include school visits, classroom observations, instructional walk-throughs and debriefing sessions in which participants discuss their experiences and analyze the implications for instructional leadership and organizational design.

The Counselor Network, comprised of ISA counselors, meets both formally and informally to discuss issues, trends, case studies, best practices and more. Counselors share strategies, problem solve challenges, and develop curriculum. Ongoing support is provided by ISA in the areas of conflict resolution, peer mediation and advisory.

The Teacher Network provides a number of opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge and skills through team planning, curriculum development and instructional design. The network provides school-based professional development that focuses on inquiry-based instruction across the four major content areas, implementation with state standards, alignment of pedagogy with the teacher evaluation framework, and assessment development.

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