Imagine what you can learn!

The VPS learning community has focused on increasing student achievement and preparing our young people for college, careers, and life. In a 2013 survey, more than 90 percent of staff said they feel supported in the implementation of the Design II work. Progress is evident in many areas. Kindergarten readiness has increased, and community partnerships have multiplied. New infrastructure and one-to-one technology enhance schools. District resource officers and anti-bullying training have made our schools safer. More students are taking advanced courses and earning college credit while still in high school. Graduation rates are rising.

Chapter 2

Now it’s time to return to Design II and think ahead to 2019. How will teachers modify their instructional practices? In what ways will learning change? How can the district continue to provide innovative learning environments in this time of change?

The work is already under way. In September 2013, 45 high school students from nine VPS schools joined together to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and barriers to learning. Their voices, together with community and district input, will help write the next chapter of Design II.

The next five years promise to be exciting, so stay tuned for news from Design II, Chapter 2. Your dedicated efforts have brought us far, but there is more to accomplish. Our students have no limits for the future.

In 2012, 46% of graduates were eligible for college credit in high school through dual-credit programs.

Highlights from the strategic plan

The Art of Imagination

In 2008, more than 400 students; recent graduates; district employees; parents; and community, agency, and business leaders came together to help Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) craft a new strategic plan.

That plan, Design II: The Art of Imagination, has provided a road map to improve learning and teaching throughout the district. Six goal areas have guided the comprehensive effort to remove barriers and raise achievements for every student.

Design II Goals

- Early Learning—collaborating with parents and partners to promote readiness to learn
- Family Engagement and Family-Community Resource Centers—building a culture that welcomes and supports parents’ participation in their children’s education and forging community partnerships focused on student success
- Flexible Learning Environments—integrating digital technology tools to increase student engagement
- Instructional Quality—creating the context and conditions to personalize learning
- Programs of Choice—helping students discover and develop their abilities, talents, and interests
- Safe and Supportive Learning Environments—developing more inviting, culturally respectful, and emotionally safe places

Design II has led to expansion of educational program choices in grades K-12, structured and focused time for teacher collaboration, new applications of technology to increase student learning and engagement, improvements in instructional quality across the district, and partnerships that mobilize resources and remove barriers to learning.

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The number of students participating in AVID, a program which helps underrepresented students get ready for post-secondary education, has grown from 25 to more than 1,000.

Over the past decade, the percentage of students enrolled in AP/IB courses increased from 6% to 46%.

The number of middle school Challenge and Honors class registrants increased from 1,152 in 2008-09 to 2,432 in 2012-13.

The Art of Imagination

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