

Holden Rural Academy Charter

Vision

An educational opportunity for rural students to achieve academic success, through relevant, authentic and diverse experiences.

Mission

To provide our students with an educational environment that:

- employs cooperative strategies to integrate the school and community, to extend the school curriculum beyond the school.
- develops a sense of place, where local knowledge serves as a foundation for deeper learning
- develops 21st century skills that enable students to pursue any career in a rural setting
- encourages participation in democratic processes, through community initiatives
- supports learning through practical, hands-on applications, resulting in the achievement of a comprehensive set of skills for workplace success.

Purpose

The Holden Rural Academy seeks to meet the unique needs of rural students, which is for education that validates their rural experiences, collaborates with local businesses and organizations, and is accessible to every student. Students in population-sparse areas have needs as diverse as in population-dense areas, but are presented with few options for their educational needs. Place-Based Education, as outlined in this application, will meet the needs of junior and senior high students for flexible programming, tailored to the particular needs of each student.

Philosophy & Strategies

Place-Based Education is a philosophy that recognizes students' strong connections to their communities, and capitalizes on local community places and resources to provide an effective context for learning. It is grounded in real-world experience giving students opportunity to apply their learning to the real world.¹

Integration of School and Community

Place Based Education fully integrates the school and community to leverage the “power of place.” Through authentic experiences, students are equipped with the tools and skills they need to collaborate, think critically and solve complex challenges. Knowledge grounded in real-world experience and phenomena enables students to apply their learning to the real world.

- Community-engaged programming that includes visual and performing arts, STEM and physical education, will be offered in larger blocks of time, to facilitate off-campus opportunities and more comprehensive hands-on learning.
- Local experts (tradespeople, professionals, hobbyists and entrepreneurs) will be invited to share an understanding of their industry and the skills necessary for their field, enriching and deepening the learning experience for students.
- Field Education excursions will take students into the community to generate meaningful connections to the curriculum. Staff will collaborate to create cross-curricular connections, capitalizing on these learning experiences to develop a better understanding of how various subjects relate to one another in the real world.

Developing a Sense of Place

Place-Based Education nurtures the development of a sense of place, encouraging students to reflect on and better understand themselves and their role in the local community. Definitions of place then expand to classrooms, schools, communities, regions, nations and the world. At each level, students are grounding their study of large-scale issues in a solid and personal understanding of the workings of their own communities. Local learning serves as a model for understanding global challenges, opportunities and connections.

- Students meet local artists, craftsmen, farmers, tradespeople and the elderly.
- Inter-generational learning helps students to understand the current needs and challenges, in a historical context.
- Through writing, drama and visual arts, students become part of recording the oral history of our community.

21st Century Skills

Rural communities are seeing expansion in their options to connect and work remotely. Students will develop skills needed to become an effective remote employee. Remote work is a

¹“What Is Place-Based Learning?” Teaching the Hudson Valley,
www.teachingthehudsonvalley.org/about/place-based-learning

way to bring high-quality employment back to rural areas.

- Explore ways that will enable students to pursue their career of choice, while living in a small rural community.
- Teach skills related to working remotely: virtual meetings, online collaboration and support networks, time management, file sharing, functional home office setup, writing effective and efficient emails.
- Supported opportunities for high school students to participate in online courses.

Civic Engagement & Youth Voice

Participation in local organizations is a first step in participation in the democratic process. Students will recognize that their communities are worthy of study; they feel local stories are as important as national or international history, culture, and politics. This empowers students with greater autonomy and more agency so that they can identify and take ownership over complex community and global challenges.

- Community members pass on knowledge and skills that will help students take part in the democratic process. Students are encouraged to become world citizens by learning to understand, appreciate, and care for their own communities.
- Students will have opportunities to participate in community enhancement activities. Teachers will help students discover ways that they can contribute to their communities, as well as join with organizations that are already doing great things in our community.
- Organizations will mentor students in developing skills for the successful coordination and administration of a well-functioning organization.

Work-Based Learning

Work-Based Learning applies the Integration of School and Community specifically to developing skills for workplace success.

- The school will cultivate strategies for building strong and productive relationships with tradespeople, businesses and industry, to partner in the education of students. There will be opportunities for these local experts to engage the classroom and participate in in-school projects, as well as field trips for students to visit workplaces and participate in hands-on learning. We have both active and retired tradespeople willing to share their expertise.
- Students gain knowledge by visiting workplaces to see how common principles are integrated into real-life situations. Our students will be able to graduate high school with varied work-based experiences.
- The school will work toward establishing a Student Run Business. This will be a multi-year project that would incorporate trades, technology, engineering, marketing, research and innovation. Students will develop a business plan, and work through complex decisions similar to those a small business owner would make, taking ownership of the business from idea conception to the sale of a physical product. Students will organically cultivate authentic problem-solving skills, while achieving curricular outcomes, in a non-traditional setting. Examples from other schools include small-scale manufacturing, a student-led farm, greenhouse production, and design with digital fabrication.

Charter Goals and Learning Outcomes

Charter Goal 1: Rural students improve learning outcomes through education that is relevant to their rural experience.

Outcome 1: Students demonstrate deeper learning of concepts, through a wide range of cross-curricular, experiential, hands-on learning.

Outcome 2: Students participate in local theatre, arts and sports, building connections to the people, places and environment of their local community.

Strategies:

- Community-engaged programming that includes visual and performing arts, STEM and physical education, will be offered in larger blocks of time, to facilitate off-campus opportunities and comprehensive hands-on learning.
- Local experts (tradespeople, professionals, hobbyists and entrepreneurs) will be invited to share an understanding of their craft and the skills necessary in their field, enriching and deepening the learning experience for students.
- Field Education excursions will take students into the community to generate meaningful connections to the curriculum. Staff will collaborate to create cross-curricular connections, capitalizing on these learning experiences to develop an understanding of how various subjects relate to one another in the real world.
- Community participants give feedback through evaluations and surveys.

Measures:

- ▶ Students demonstrate deeper learning through experiential cross-curricular learning experiences.
 - teacher assigned grades and exams
 - observational and reflective assessments that legitimize and quantify non-verbal, somatic learning
- ▶ Students participate in positive community-engaged experiences.
 - student surveys
 - community surveys and evaluations

Charter Goal 2: Rural students connect and collaborate with community members of all ages and backgrounds.

Outcome 1: Students demonstrate knowledge of local places, identities and history. They learn about and connect to their lived experiences, communities and places within the global context. Students learn to engage with these complex multifaceted epistemologies, both reflexively and intellectually, through qualitative and quantitative approaches.

- Outcome 2: Students acquire communication skills through dialogue with community members, participation in community activities and recording of observations. They develop an enriched identity through which they articulate increased awareness, pride and ownership in their community and their accomplishments.
- Outcome 3: Students identify community needs and challenges, embrace proactive citizenship and develop leadership skills by taking on active roles that engender positive change within their communities.
- Outcome 4: Students will evaluate their skills and abilities, and develop interests and career goals, with the benefit of practical, hands-on learning, mentoring and exposure to a wide variety of careers.
- Outcome 5: Students will discover innovative ways to pursue their career pathway in a rural context. They will acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes required in the workplaces and marketplaces of the future.

Strategies:

- Students engage with local artists, craftsmen, farmers, tradespeople and the elderly. Inter-generational learning helps students to understand the current needs and challenges, in a historical context. Through writing, drama and visual arts, students become part of recording the oral history of our community. Interaction with learning partners helps students practice developing their verbal communication skills.
- Students participate in service-learning projects and community enhancement activities. Teachers will help students discover ways that they can contribute to their communities, as well as join with organizations that are already doing great things in our community. Students can explore the design thinking process by identifying and creating solutions to local challenges. Students are encouraged to become world citizens by learning to understand, appreciate, and care for their own communities. Organizations will mentor students in developing skills for the successful coordination and administration of a well-functioning organization.
- The school will cultivate strategies for building strong and productive relationships with tradespeople, businesses and industry, to partner in the education of students. There will be opportunities for these local experts to engage the classroom and participate in in-school projects, as well as field trips for students to visit workplaces and participate in hands-on learning.
- Students will have the option of establishing and participating in a Student Run Business, that incorporates trades, technology, engineering, marketing, research and innovation. Students will organically cultivate authentic problem-solving skills, while achieving curricular outcomes, in a non-traditional setting.
- Teach skills related to working remotely: virtual meetings, online collaboration and support networks, time management, file sharing, functional home office setup, writing effective and efficient emails.
- Supported opportunities for high school students to participate in online courses.

Measures:

- ▶ Students demonstrate knowledge of local places, identities and history.
 - written reports
 - oral reports
- ▶ Students acquire or improve communication skills.
 - observed interactions with community members
 - oral presentations
- ▶ Students that choose to take leadership roles in community enhancement activities develop skills in leadership.
 - observed interactions
 - evaluations by community mentors
 - tracking the number of students engaged in leadership activities
- ▶ High School students that choose to explore career pathways in a rural context, will acquire knowledge and skills related to working remotely.
 - written reports
 - mentor evaluations
 - work skills evaluation
- ▶ High school students that choose to participate in vocational learning will have gained hands-on experience in at least one vocation.
 - student surveys
 - tracking the number of students engaged in vocational learning
- ▶ Students that choose to participate in the Student-Run Business will build a portfolio, detailing their skills and experience.
 - evaluation of portfolio
 - track number of students and level of engagement in the Student-Run Business

Collaboration with a School Division

Holden Rural Academy is partnering with the Prairie Land School Division's Schools of Excellence Program. We are exploring ways that we could collaborate to enhance the educational experiences of our rural students.

Benefit for schools:

- where schools with specific expertise could pass this on to another school
- where schools with similar characteristics or circumstances focus on sharing to address common problems or challenges
- where schools focus on innovation and developing new strategies and practices
- where schools share research data or evidence, and examples of good practice

Benefit for staff:

- where bringing together professionals from different schools, and therefore different circumstances, encourages the transmission of knowledge and good practice, encouraging schools to reflect upon their established practices and to discuss and explore professional enrichment and development collaboratively.
- where staff receive advice and support. Providing an opportunity for discussion and sharing of concerns with colleagues, leading to reduced teacher isolation. Dialogue encourages innovation and creativity and fosters best practices.
- where staff confidence, motivation and morale increase, as a result of an augmented support network, and increased access to professional development and expertise.

Benefit for students:

- where students engage in joint activities, projects, or teams for competition
- where students experience enhanced and innovative educational experiences
- where students access additional choice in courses, broadened perspectives and schools address constraints through a collaborative approach incorporating alternate models of delivery.

Our research objectives would include

- identifying the key factors in collaboration that are recognized as good practice
- examining evidence of gains arising from collaboration
- examining evidence of the effectiveness of different approaches to collaborative working
- making recommendations for best practice in collaborative working between rural schools

Roles and Responsibilities of the Charter Board

The Charter Board is responsible for the development of goals and policies to guide the provision of educational services to its students, in keeping with the requirements of government legislation, the values of the Holden Rural Academy Charter and the interests of the parents.

Roles and Responsibilities of Parents

Parents have the primary role and responsibility for teaching their children. By participating in a publicly funded education system, parents choose to share the responsibility of teaching their children with teachers, principals, support staff and other members of the larger school community. Parents support their children's development physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. As the strongest advocates for their children, parents bring valuable information about those children to the learning environment.

Parents are encouraged to participate in volunteer and fund-raising opportunities at the school.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the direction and governance of the school:

- School Council - a group of parents and teachers who work together to support student learning. The School Council advises the Board and Principal on any matters relating to the school. School Council also appoints members to the Nominating Committee.
- Parents are members of the Holden Rural Academy Society, which is responsible to elect the charter board.