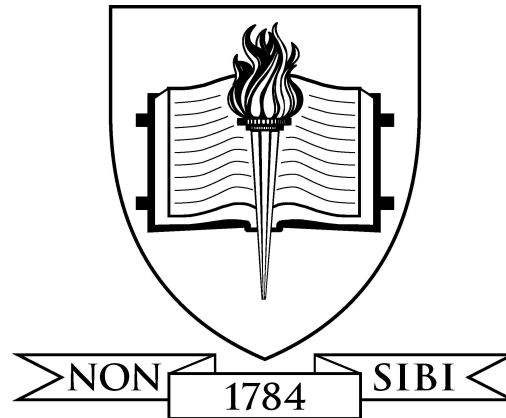


# A Scarsdale Education for the Future



## Background

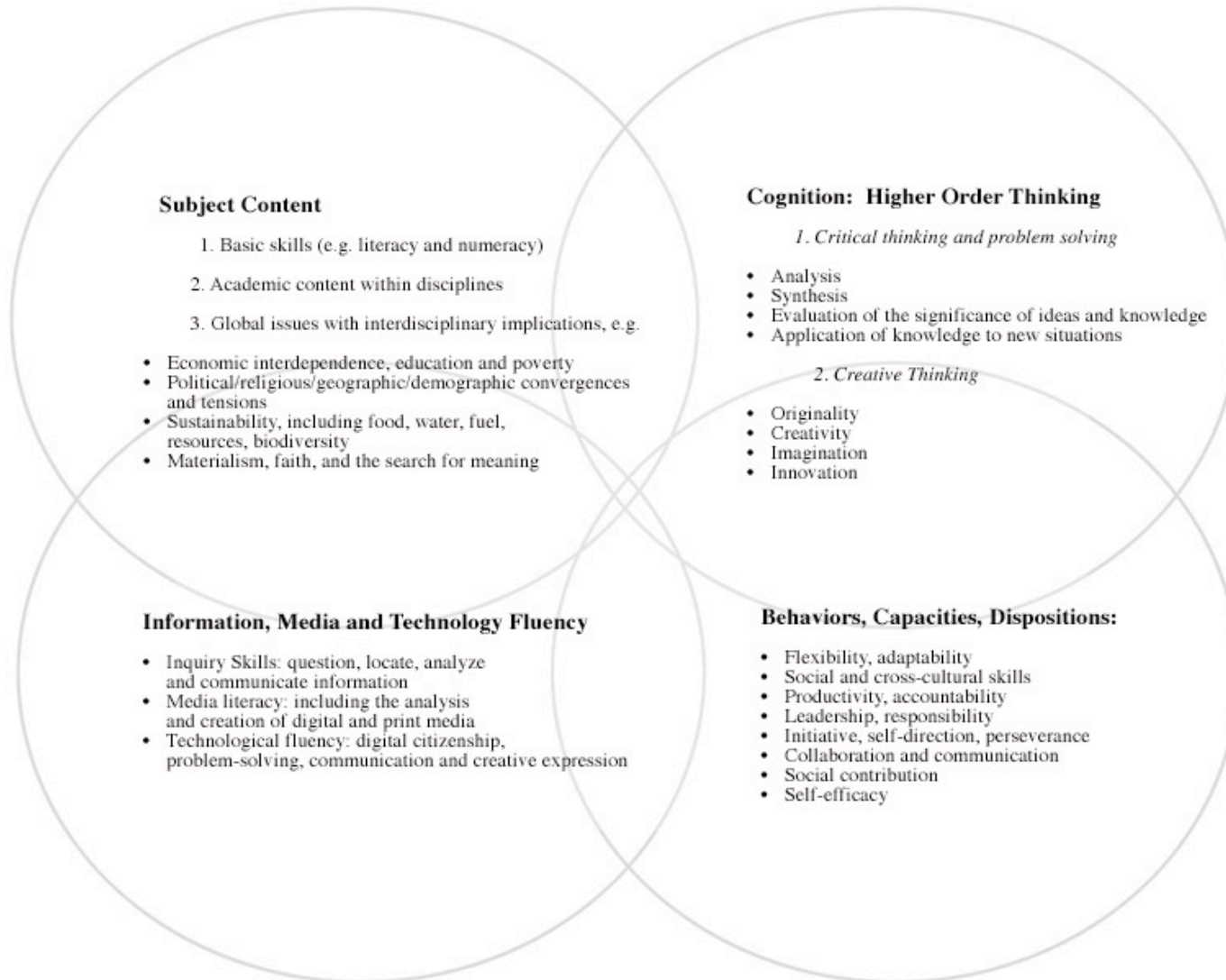
The 21st Century presents new economic, environmental, political, and social challenges. Our work is to empower Scarsdale graduates to engage successfully with these emerging forces, not to be controlled by them. This work is consistent with our Mission.

The Mission is to “enable our youth to be effective and independent contributors in a democratic society and an interdependent world.” We are doing this by pursuing three inter-related goals:

- To prepare our students for effective participation in an interdependent world
- To develop minds and spirits to inspire a love of learning
- To foster decent, responsible, contributing citizens (*non sibi*)

At the strategic planning session of May, 2008, professional staff reached informal consensus on the following core curriculum for the future, comprising subject content, higher order thinking; technological knowledge; certain behaviors, dispositions and capacities. **We will revise and improve this curriculum as our understanding grows.**

# The Scarsdale Education for the Future\*



approved, Strategic Planning Meeting, May 2008

The goals are not new, nor is the learning that follows from them. These include:

- **an ability to think and express oneself well;**
- **an understanding of the human experience and the natural universe;**
- **knowledge of oneself and others;**
- **a disposition to make a positive difference.**

However, our graduates will need not only to employ the best of traditional scholarship, but also to discover new knowledge and find new solutions. Much of what they must understand cuts across or does not fall within the bounds, or “silos,” of the traditional disciplines. We might consider this a core curriculum plus.

## **Elements of the Core Curriculum for the Future**

The core curriculum for the future includes a coordinated focus on critical and original thinking; efforts to develop students’ capacity to apply knowledge to problems with no clear answers; specific attention to global warming, ethnic conflict and other issues that are the essence of the social and hard sciences and the humanities; activities that dispose students to an ethic of service.

We teach pieces of this curriculum in our traditional courses. For the largest number of students to master the core curriculum at a high level, however, we require more coordinated instruction that makes use of new technologies and approaches. These include:

- Deeper, richer learning experiences: e.g. Advanced Topics and Primary Math
- A coordinated focus on thinking and inquiry through [the Arts](#) and other instruction
- Interdisciplinary teaching about global issues: e.g. [Sustainability](#)
- Exposure to diverse peoples through world languages and [Interdependence](#) activities
- [Technology](#) that transforms and enhances teaching, learning, and professional development
- Student-initiated research such as the [Capstone Project](#) and science research
- *Non sibi* service opportunities and activities: e.g. Circle of Friends, Human Rights Day, freshman service “expectation”
- Instruction aimed at developing key dispositions: e.g. Middle School Empathy Project

**What is not on this list that currently exists?**

**Do you have suggestions for future curriculum development?**

## **Next Steps:**

### **1. Content:**

Many elements of the core curriculum for the future described above already exist to some degree in Scarsdale programs. While we will continue to focus long term on the district's three overarching goals:

- To prepare our students for effective participation in an interdependent world
- To develop minds and spirits to inspire a love of learning
- To foster decent, responsible, contributing citizens (*non sibi*)

...two areas have been identified for sharper focus in the short term:

- Critical/Creative Thinking
- Complex issues taught in a cross disciplinary focus

## ***Essential Questions***

### **Classroom**

Given your recent focus on:

- Critical/Creative Thinking
- Complex issues taught in a cross disciplinary approach

*How has your teaching changed and where do you see it going?*

## **Department**

Given your department's focus on:

- Critical/Creative Thinking
- Complex issues taught in a cross disciplinary approach
  - *How has your department moved forward?*
  - *What are the next steps?*

## **School**

Given the school's focus on:

- Critical/Creative Thinking
- Complex issues taught in a cross disciplinary approach
  - *With reference to the new curriculum core, where do these elements exist in your school?*
  - *To what extent are these elements taught and learned?*
  - *What would constitute good evidence for you that this is happening?*

*After completing the above analysis, what is the next step?*

## **District**

Given the district's focus on:

- Critical/Creative Thinking
- Complex issues taught in a cross disciplinary approach
  - *Review a current unit of study and suggest ways it might be written in a way that fosters deeper, richer learning with higher levels of critical/creative thinking.*
  - *Compare/contrast the original unit with the rewritten unit.*

## **Professional Community**

Given your recent leadership/workshop on:

- Critical/Creative Thinking
- Complex issues taught in a cross disciplinary approach

*How can we further extend the work you are engaged in to your colleagues?*

## 2. Structure

The Scarsdale Schools are organized traditionally, with a typical grade level structure at the elementary level and with strong academic departments at the middle and high school levels.

- *Determine where the existing structures support cross-disciplinary learning (horizontal) as well as subject learning (vertical).*
- *Given the work we need to do, what new organizational patterns are needed to support it?*

### Time Line to Review Document and Develop a Work Plan

March 16:	Cabinet
March 18:	Secondary Principals
March 19:	Elementary Principals
March 26:	Elementary Leadership
March 27:	Superintendent's Conference Day: Dr. DiYanni presents
March 31:	Frank Smith and Cabinet plus Trudy/Susan to review process
April 1:	Administrative Council
April/May	Elementary Faculty Meetings
April/May	Middle School Cabinet/Department Meetings
April/May	High School Cabinet/Department Meetings
May	Strategic Planning Meeting
Summer	Program Improvement Work