

# IOWA CORE AT INWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## Iowa Core Vision Statement

The mission of Inwood Christian School is to provide an atmosphere in which each unique child of God is challenged through a rigorous and relevant curriculum and to live as a Christian, serving Him in all areas of life. We incorporate the Iowa Core Curriculum components through effective instruction, assessment, professional development, and curriculum alignment. We strive for student success through shared leadership supported by the internal and external communities of Inwood Christian School. All of this is accomplished while remaining rooted in God's Holy Word.

The Iowa Core Curriculum is a state-wide plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the state of Iowa. The Iowa Core provides schools with a guide for delivering instructional content that is challenging and meaningful to students. The curriculum defines the essential concepts for literacy, mathematics, science and social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology, health, and employability.) The Iowa Core is also concerned with how teachers teach, empowering teachers to use the best practices and strategies that have been shown by research to help children learn. The curriculum focuses on the three areas of content, teaching, and assessment. Content should be thorough and relevant. Teaching should be focused on the needs of the child. Assessment should take place BOTH during and after teaching.

The schools in Iowa have been given six outcomes to assist them in implementing the Iowa Core:

1. School leaders build and sustain system capacity to implement the Iowa Core.
2. Community members and other supporting agencies work together to support the implementation of the Iowa Core.
3. A continuous improvement process to improve teaching and learning is used at the district and school level.
4. District leaders and other educators monitor and use data to increase the degree of alignment of each and every student's enacted curriculum and other relevant educational opportunities to the Iowa Core
5. Educators engage in professional development focused on implementing Characteristics of Effective Instruction and demonstrate understanding of Essential Concepts and Skills.
6. Educators implement effective instructional practices to ensure high levels of learning for each and every student.

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This past year the staff continued their professional development at Dordt College for training in the Iowa Core. The focus of the workshops covered the Characteristics of Effective Instruction: Education as Formation, and Deeper Investigations of Iowa Core Math. The Deeper Investigations in Math was extremely beneficial in helping the staff prepare for this year with the new Math Curriculum.

This year we have the privilege to teach Math from a new curriculum which is fully aligned with the Iowa Core. In addition to covering each component, the staff and students are working on the Mathematical Practices that are part of the Iowa core:

1. MAKE SENSE of problems and PERSEVERE in solving them.
2. Reason ABSTRACTLY and QUANTITATIVELY.
3. Construct VIABLE ARGUMENTS and CRITIQUE the REASONING of others.
4. MODEL with mathematics.
5. Use APPROPRIATE TOOLS strategically.
6. Attend to PRECISION.
7. LOOK for and MAKE USE of STRUCTURE.
8. LOOK for and EXPRESS REGULARITY in REPEATED REASONING.

The goal of these practices along with our curriculum is for the students to develop a strong number sense and be able to show and explain their approaches and answers.

Previously the staff of Inwood Christian utilized a tool called ICAT (Iowa Core Alignment Tool) for the tracking of the school's curriculum. We are now in the process of transitioning into the use of "Curriculum Trak" software. This software does what we previously did and more. It will take the staff some time to record all the information for all the subjects, but after the initial input, only maintenance will be needed compared to doing all of the work every year. This software will also help us identify any gaps in our curriculum.

Inwood Christian School is an accredited school. The state of Iowa recognizes our school as meeting the same standards and requirements with all other schools, public or private, throughout the state. Our teachers all hold current teaching licenses and are certified with the state. Being an accredited school gives us many benefits! Taxes paid to the state of Iowa provide funds for many of our programs at Inwood Christian School. Our students are allowed to ride the buses of the public school because of the transportation funds. We also receive textbook money through West Lyon as well. Inwood Christian also receives money for free and reduced hot lunches for families who qualify for this assistance. Another huge benefit we receive by being accredited is all of the services provided to us through our Area Education Agency! This organization is a huge help to the teachers!

Inwood Christian School has so much to offer our students. Although the Iowa Core is a lot of work, our students benefit from the commitment of the staff in continuing to meet the requirements. Inwood Christian also benefits from such a dedicated society whose focus is to provide quality education with Christ at its center!