

# Harmony Public Schools – PBL Initiative

The Project Based Learning initiative, launched during the 2013-2014 school year, addresses the increased need for students to acquire 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Through Project Based Learning (PBL), students are exposed to deep learning experiences that are inquiry based, student-centered, and integrated to the curriculum. The Harmony approach is to maintain the focus on standards-based and student-centered teaching while enriching and extending the learning of students through PBL projects. The goal is to promote not only collaborative skills and student ownership of learning but also to promote student success in state and national standards. Outlined below is a description of the Harmony Public Schools PBL initiative for middle and high school.

## Middle School

Middle school students will work with two different levels of PBL projects. Level I is a short term project and Level II is a long term project. Level I targets 21<sup>st</sup> century skills within the context of the curriculum, Levels II allows the application and development of these critical skills.

### Level I

In each core subject, English, Math, Social Studies, and Science, middle school students will complete *at least one PBL project in class each semester*. Some of the major features of the Level I PBL projects are outlined below.

- The projects are based on the standards covered within the context of the curriculum as described by the scope and sequence of the course.
- The projects are conducted as in-class group projects. Student groups of 3-4 students are recommended.
- The time required for completion of projects should be no more than one week.
- PBL teacher guides and training for effective planning and integration of the PBL projects into the curriculum will be provided at the start of the school year.
- Relevant information, timelines, documents, assessment rubrics and guidance for the successful completion of projects will be provided by the teachers to their students in a timely manner.
- Upon completion of project, students are expected to produce a three dimensional display as well as a digital presentation of their work.
- Project assessment will be completed in each of the core content areas by the respective teachers using provided rubrics.

### Level II (Pilot 2013-14)

In addition to the Level I projects outlined above, *each student will complete one Level II PBL/STEM research project* based on math, science or engineering content. Some of the major features of the Level II PBL projects are outlined below.

- The projects are completed individually.
- The project focus or question will be assigned by the teacher at the beginning of school year.
- Students will begin project work in the first semester and work will continue through the second semester.

- Relevant information, timelines, documents, assessment rubrics and guidance for the successful completion of projects will be provided to students in a timely manner by their teachers.
- Upon completion of project, students are expected to produce a digital presentation of their work.
- Project assessment will be completed in math/science content areas by the respective teachers using provided rubrics.

## High School

In high school there are three different levels of PBL projects. Level I is a short term project and Level II and III are long term projects. Level I targets 21<sup>st</sup> century skills within the context of the curriculum, Levels II and III allow the application and development of these critical skills. All students will complete Level I projects. Students may complete either a regular Level II or an advanced Level III project.

### Level I

In each core subject, English, Math, Social Studies, and Science, students will complete **two PBL projects in class each semester**. Some of the major features of the Level I PBL projects are outlined below.

- The projects are based on the standards covered within the context of the curriculum as described by the scope and sequence of the course.
- The projects are conducted as in-class group projects. Student groups of 3-4 students are recommended.
- The time required for completion of projects should be no more than one week.
- PBL teacher guides and training for effective planning and integration of the PBL projects into the curriculum will be provided at the start of the school year.
- Relevant information, timelines, documents, assessment rubrics and guidance for the successful completion of projects will be provided by the teachers to their students in a timely manner.
- Upon completion of project, students are expected to produce a report of their work.
- Project assessment will be completed in each of the core content areas by the respective teachers using provided rubrics.

### Level II (Pilot 2013-14)

In addition to the Level I project described above, *each student will complete one interdisciplinary PBL/STEM type project* based on math, or science content. These Math or Science projects also contain integrated Social Studies and ELA components. Some of the major features of the Level II PBL projects are outlined below.

- The projects are completed individually.
- The project focus or question will be selected by the student from a list of 20-25 investigations in math or science. This list of topics of study will be provided by the teacher at the beginning of school year.
- Students will begin project work in the first semester and work will continue through the second semester.
- Relevant information, timelines, documents, assessment rubrics and guidance for the successful completion of projects will be provided to students in a timely manner by their teachers.
- Communication between students and teachers throughout the project will occur via a Google site specifically created for this purpose.

- Upon completion of project, students are expected to present their findings through a short presentation video and/or web content.
- Project assessment will be completed in each of the content areas (math/science, social studies, ELA, and technology) by the respective teachers using provided rubrics.

### **Level III (Pilot 2013-14)**

Level III projects are options for students who like the challenge of creating and conducting their own project.

Some of the major features of the Level III PBL projects are outlined below.

- Level III projects are multidisciplinary. These projects will incorporate and address each core content area using integrated technology.
- The content and quality of project must be appropriate for high school and deserving of advanced credit.
- The project must follow ethical guidelines and must be conducted using fairly accessible materials.
- Parameters of the project such as driving question, guidelines and expectations will be drawn up collaboratively between student and teacher.
- Relevant information, timelines, documents, assessment rubrics and guidance for the successful completion of projects will be provided to students in a timely manner by their teachers.
- Project assessment will be completed in each of the content areas (math/science, social studies, ELA, and technology) by the respective teachers using provided rubrics.