

Discovery Program FAQ

www.discoveryprogram.net

What is Discovery?

Discovery is a social emotional curriculum for developing leadership skills and an alternative school model.

What is the curriculum?

As a curriculum, Discovery provides a systematic approach for students to strengthen their communication skills in order to become reflective, assertive and proactive problem solvers. These skills empower them to access resources and maintain positive relationships at school, work and home. Discovery also builds a foundation for rigorous academic learning in order for students to graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

Discovery units include teamwork, anger management, communication, assertiveness training, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Discovery activities include team initiatives, daily circle up, PE, writing autobiographies, role plays, class art project, and weekly tests.

What is the model?

Discovery schools accept new students into cohorts that meet all day, every day for six weeks to build their skills through the Discovery curriculum. Students must pass the high standards of Discovery as a prerequisite to taking other classes. This approach builds a school culture of high expectations and high supports.

Discovery schools have clear expectations for academics and behavior. Staff, students and families focus on problem solving through restorative practices and personal accountability. The model is community responsive, highly relational, and focuses on empowering young people to pursue futures of which they are proud.

What is the research on Discovery?

Kenneth Merrell, Ph.D., and Karalyn Tom, Ph.D. (University of Oregon) evaluated the effectiveness of the *Discovery Program* on alternative high school students deemed to be at-risk. Evaluations were based on strengths-based self-report measurements of students' assets and resilience.

Results garnered from pre and post-test measures indicate "students who completed *Discovery* perceived statistically significant and meaningful personal improvement" in the following four areas: Improvements in Social Competence, Increased Self-Regulation Skills, Increased Empathy, Improvements in Social Responsibility. Dr. Merrell and Dr. Tom concluded that "such a strong difference is seldom found in social-emotional learning or social skills intervention programs." (2009, p. 4-5).

Amy Molina, Ph.D., (University of Northern Colorado) evaluated the effectiveness of the *Discovery Program* at strengthening positive psychological constructs among Latino and non-Latino youth. Outcome measures indicate a significant increase in students' social and emotional well being, across ethnic groups, in all four of the following areas: Wellness, Emotional Intelligence, School Satisfaction, and Hope. Further, this study found that participation in the *Discovery Program* significantly improved school attendance and academic achievement, across ethnic groups.

What other districts in Oregon are using Discovery?

Forest Grove (*Community Alternative Learning Center*) David Douglas (*Fir Grove*)
St. Helens (*Columbia County Education Campus*) Newberg (*Catalyst*)
Tillamook (*Wilson River, Tillamook High School, Tillamook Junior High*)

Please contact us and visit Merlo Station High School for more information.

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