



7 Thriving Dispositions in Whitefish Bay Schools

Whitefish Bay Schools has adapted Tony Wagner's (2008) work on the "Seven Survival Skills" in the form of "Seven Thriving Dispositions" from the book, *The Global Achievement Gap*. Within Wagner's (2008) book, he explains the competencies high school and college graduates need in order to be successful young professionals and global citizens in today's society. The 7 Thriving Dispositions as well as their definitions can be found below:

1. **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** Organizations have flattened over time, and are organized in teams for specific projects. Work is no longer defined by a specialty; it is defined by the task or problem a person and their team are trying to solve or the end goal to be accomplished. The solution to a problem is not always prescribed, and the biggest challenge is to have the critical thinking and problem solving skills to be effective in teams.
2. **Agility and Adaptability:** The shift from hierarchical authority that tells a person what to do to a team-based environment has been both rapid and profound. Similarly, the intensifying rate of change, the overwhelming amount of data, and the increasing complexity of problems that individuals and teams face every day in their work are dramatic new challenges for everyone.
3. **Curiosity and Imagination:** These are key factors not only in solving problems, but also in developing new or improved products and services needed in our global society. These dispositions will be our competitive edge in the future. The world needs people who can think in disciplined ways, but also those who have burning curiosity and a lively imagination; the true knowledge worker.
4. **Initiative/Entrepreneurialism:** Leaders today want to see individuals that take more initiative and even be entrepreneurial in terms of the ways to seek out new opportunities, ideas and strategies for improvement.
5. **Access and Analyze Information Skills:** In the twenty-first century, people have to manage an astronomical amount of information flowing into their lives on a daily basis. People have to be able to access and evaluate information from many different sources.
6. **Effective Oral and Written Communication Skills:** As more and more people are working in "virtual" offices, the ability to express one's views clearly and to communicate effectively across cultures is becoming increasingly valuable. Communication via email, and google hang-outs, requires the ability to communicate one's thoughts clearly and concisely but also the ability to create focus, energy and passion.
7. **Collaboration:** The skillfulness of individuals working with networks of people across boundaries and from different cultures has become an essential prerequisite for a growing number of multinational corporations.

Bibliography

Wagner, T. (2008). *The Global Achievement Gap*. Basic Books, New York, NY.