

# Global Leadership

## RATIONALE

In *Educating for Global Competence*, Veronica Boix-Mansilla and Anthony Jackson define global competence as “the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance.” In this context, the word “global” refers not just to different places on the planet, but to the great variety of interconnected people, cultures, ideas, problems, and opportunities that constitute all human experience. The globally competent student learns how to synthesize information and ideas from many different sources and perspectives, and makes well-informed decisions to act on what is learned. It is this constellation of knowledge, disposition, and action that characterizes Global Leadership.

Global Leadership gives students many opportunities to transcend their local boundaries by developing global competence across disciplines of art, English language arts, history/social studies, mathematics, science, and world languages. A well-rounded global curriculum not only opens students’ eyes, but sets the stage for them to act in ways that are inspired by their course of study and driven by a desire to make a difference locally, regionally, and globally.

The skills required for successful participation in the world—such as responsible citizenship, innovative entrepreneurship, and active leadership, among others—are not specific to any one course or classroom. A globally focused school fosters the development of these skills through service learning, internships, field trips, performances and exhibits, and other experiential projects during the school day and via afterschool and summer programs.

In the course of developing global competence, students investigate the world, learn more about where people come from and how they live, and come back to reflect on their own lives with honesty. Recognizing different perspectives, communicating and defending ideas with respect and empathy, and accounting for the thoughts and opinions of others are the roots of effective leadership and collaboration. The seeds of action—identifying a local, regional or global issue, researching questions about its causes and possible solutions, and taking responsibility for personal action in response—may be sown in a class or in an afterschool program, but in a globally-focused curriculum, those seeds germinate everywhere in school, at home, and in community life.

Students need to know they do have an impact and that they are not powerless in the face of large, complex, and often seemingly intractable global issues they study. Grounding a decision to act in Global Leadership allows them to demonstrate their knowledge of the world and teaches them how to be part of a global community.