

2012-2013 Essential Qualities Subcommittee Report Summary

Committee Members: Andrea Markert (Interim Principal), Kim Rojas, Jeff Wollenweber, Dusty Burk, Vickie Graziano, Jordan Fritts, Brad Dearing, Kirsten Hany, Jason Landes, Suzie Thetard, Tami Dean

The Essential Qualities of a U-High Graduate Subcommittee met on Monday, March 4, 2013 with representatives from all of the school's content areas. This year's goal for our subcommittee was to present a recommendation to Keystone for evaluating and reporting our students' demonstration of the Essential Qualities of a U-High Graduate.

The following information details the Subcommittee's recommendation for piloting the implementation of the Essential Qualities of a U-High Graduate for the 2013-2014 school year. This recommendation was approved by both the Keystone Council and the administration in April 2013 as a school-wide pilot for 2013-2014.

A. General concepts of piloting an evaluation process of the Essential Qualities of a U-High Graduate

- The overall purpose of reporting the Essential Qualities is to provide feedback on behaviors and skills we expect students to exhibit across disciplines and to open up communication between teachers, students, parents, administrators, and student support specialists about these specific qualities observed in the classroom.
- We want to create an educational environment that is actively involved in helping students reflect and grow in all areas, both academically and behaviorally
- The Essential Qualities of a U-High Graduate will be listed in a separate section of the standards-based grade book and report card.
- Teachers could use the Essential Qualities feedback found on the report cards to help them in writing recommendation letters.

B. Evaluating and Reporting the Essential Qualities

- For this pilot, the Essential Qualities will be split up by department so that each teacher will only evaluate 3 of the Qualities for each of their students. Teachers must include these 3 Essential Qualities on their course syllabus with an explanation of how the students will be evaluated and what the teacher will be looking for in relation to the Essential Qualities.
 - Essential Quality #1 – All departments
 - Essential Quality #2 - Wellness, Fine Arts, Math
 - Essential Quality #3 - English, Foreign Language, Social Science, Fine Arts
 - Essential Quality #4 - Math, Foreign Language, Engineering/Tech, Business
 - Essential Quality #5 - Science, English, Social Science
 - Essential Quality #6 - Engineering/Technology, Science, Business
 - Essential Quality #7 - Wellness, Counseling
 - Special Education will choose the qualities they will assess based on their student population.
 - The administration will also be able to report on the Essential Qualities for individual students at their discretion.

- Each quarter, teachers will report on the Essential Qualities for each of their students using the following scale and terminology, along with any necessary comments. This information will show up on the report card.
 - 3 = Exceeds Expectations
 - 2 = Meets Expectations
 - 1 = Needs Improvement
- All students start at a 2 by default (Meets Expectations). If a teacher sees evidence to the contrary (Exceeds or Needs Improvement), s/he will report that information each quarter, along with a short explanation of why. If the student is marked as “Needs Improvement,” an explanation is required. If the student is marked as “Exceeds Expectations,” an explanation is highly encouraged in order to give specific feedback.
- The recommendation is to NOT average student scores for any given Essential Quality, but rather to report each score as received by the individual teachers. For example, with Wellness, Fine Arts, and Math reporting on Essential Quality #2, a student would be able to see the 3 separate scores from those 3 teachers instead of an average of the 3 scores. The exception to this is Essential Quality #1 since all of the departments will be reporting (and we do not believe there is enough space on the report card for 8 separate scores). The recommendation is to use the mode to report the information for that specific Quality. Individual comments located in the comment box will dictate to parents how the child is doing in a specific class.
- The Essential Qualities will be numbered on the report card so the comments written in the comment box can be numbered to match the Essential Quality it is describing.
- We are currently working on a system to collect the Essential Qualities scores from each teacher per quarter so they can be compiled and entered into the Essential Qualities section of the standards-based grade book.
- Even though each department will only be formally evaluating 3 qualities on the report card, students are expected to demonstrate these qualities in all of their classes, not just the ones evaluating certain qualities. Teachers are encouraged to contact students’ parent/guardian if a student demonstrates that they need improvement in any of the qualities at any time during the quarter or semester.

C. Educating students and teachers about the Essential Qualities and our plans to evaluate them

- The faculty will be informed about the Essential Qualities evaluation system by the end of the 2012-2013 school year.
- During the faculty in-service days prior to the 2013-2014 school year, there will be time set aside to train the faculty members on the evaluation of the Essential Qualities.
- The big idea of implementing the Essential Qualities will be introduced to the students at the all-school assembly on the first day of school.
- Also on the first day of school, we will have small, grade-based breakout sessions in which the faculty (possibly 2 per group) talk with the students about the Qualities and explain the overall importance and general evaluation/reporting process of this year’s pilot. There will be a “script” that all faculty members will receive during the in-service training to help them with this small group discussion. A draft of the script is provided below.
- Individual teachers will relay information to their own students about the specific Qualities that the class will be focusing on and their expectations for meeting or exceeding each Quality.

- We could possibly have the Student Senate create a video each month highlighting one of the Essential Qualities. The video could be shared with the U-High community via the website.
- Visuals (banners, posters, etc.) can be hung throughout the school to reinforce the importance of the Essential Qualities both in and out of the classroom.

Sample script for breakout sessions to inform students about how they will be evaluated

15-20 minutes

(DISPLAY SLIDE 1 – title slide)

Welcome back to UHigh Students. This year your report card will look different than the previous years. As you know, we have been moving toward Standards Based Grading. Some of your teachers have been piloting this system. This year, all teachers will use a Standards Based Report Card. On the report card, there will be one section for mastery of course content for each class and a separate section to report on the Essential Qualities of a UHigh Graduate (GO TO SLIDE 2 – READ THROUGH QUALITIES).

Each department will be evaluating specific Essential qualities (CLICK 8 TIMES TO DISPLAY DEPARTMENTS ASSIGNED TO EACH QUALITY). However, demonstrating these qualities is an expectation in all of your classes, not just the ones evaluating certain qualities. Teachers may inform your parent/guardian if you need improvement on any of the qualities at any time during the quarter or semester.

Here’s a sample of what the Essential Qualities will look like on the report card (GO TO SLIDE 3).

Each quarter teachers will report on the Essential Qualities for each of their students using this scale and terminology (POINT OUT WHERE IT IS FOUND ON THE REPORT CARD) along with any necessary comments. This information will show up on the report card.

All students start at a 2 by default (meets expectations). If a teacher sees evidence to the contrary (exceeds expectations or needs improvement), he or she will report that information each quarter on the report card.

(GO TO SLIDE 4) If a student needs improvement in one or more of the Essential Qualities, he or she will be referred to the Student Assistance Program for support.

(GO TO SLIDE 5) Each of your teachers will relay information to you about the specific qualities that the class will be focusing on and their expectations for meeting and exceeding each quality.

(GO TO SLIDE 6) You may be asking yourself “Why did UHigh make this change?” We want to create an educational environment that is actively involved in helping students reflect and grow in all areas, both academically and behaviorally. We also want to provide students and their parents/guardians with quarterly feedback about their student’s growth toward the Essential Qualities.

This information can be used when writing recommendations and applying for college admissions, internships and scholarships.

Measuring the effectiveness of the Essential Qualities pilot:

In April 2014, the Essential Qualities Subcommittee will collect data about the effectiveness of the pilot to make recommendations for the following school year. The data will be collected through a survey given to the U-High community (parents, students, teachers, etc.).