

Academic Integrity Report

September 10, 2012

## Academic Integrity Committee Mission

The mission of the Academic Integrity Committee is to encourage a positive learning environment that emphasizes pride in accomplishment in all academic and extra-curricular activities. The AIC will support policies that establish and enforce our mission.

## Academic Integrity Committee Members

Mary Mediate                      Chairperson and Director of Guidance and Counseling

### **Administration**

Karen Bronson                      Former Middle School Principal

Gina Healy                          High School Principal

Patricia Lambert                      Middle School Principal

Todd Richard                      Middle/High School Assistant Principal

Tracy Taylor                      Elementary School Principal

### **Staff and Faculty**

Maggie Brennan-Juana              High School/ Middle School World Language Teacher

Deborah Dubin                      High School Counselor

Susan Foss                          Former High School Art Teacher

Rita Gianfrancesco                  High School Writing Center Coordinator

Marko Markolovic                  High School Social Studies Teacher

Janeen Sucharski                  High School/Middle School Science Teacher

James Tamucci                      Middle School Mathematics Teacher

Robin Willig                      Elementary School Fifth Grade Teacher

### **Students**

Melissa Blum                      Middle School Student

Tristan Chang                      High School Student

Sydney Chason                      High School Student

Matthew Christal                      High School Student

Justin Cray	High School Student
Mitchell Kaliner	High School Student
Blake Kaplan	High School Student
Zachary Kratochvil	High School Student
Samantha Leder	High School Student
Kyle Mak	Middle School Student
Renee Mango	High School Student
Alex Nadasi	Middle School Student

**Parents**

Wendy Adler	Middle and High School Parent
Joyce Askinasi	High School Parent
Marnie Korpi	Elementary and Middle School Parent
Angela Flannigan	Middle School Parent
Abbe Fleishaker	Middle School Parent
Dani Pariser	Elementary School Parent
Laura Portin	High School Parent
Peggy Reed	Elementary School Parent
Tammy Vavolizza	Elementary and High School Parent

**Disclaimer: Work knowingly replicated from other sources has been cited. The core framework and methodology has been inspired by the work of Jason M. Stephens and David Weingaard “*Creating a Culture of Academic Integrity – A Toolkit for Secondary Schools.*” The toolkit is designed to be used in the school setting.**

## Academic Integrity

### History and Rationale for Academic Integrity Work

On November 16, 2009, 100% of the faculty at Blind Brook High School and 396 of the 407 students enrolled in grades 9-12 participated in a research study utilizing a national research-based Academic Integrity Survey designed by Dr. Donald McCabe, a nationally recognized researcher on cheating and President of the Center for Academic Integrity. Dr. McCabe, a Princeton University graduate and professor at Rutgers University has done extensive research surveying over 111,000 college students and 18,000 high school students.

In response to the survey results, an Academic Integrity Committee was formed to analyze the data in the survey and to make recommendations to address the presenting issues.

It is important to note that the Blind Brook School District has always had an academic integrity policy. The District Board Policy which can be found on the district website and is outlined in the *Family Guidebook* at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Integrity is a core value in our school community and we aspire to achieve a culture of integrity at its highest level. Aligned with this goal, the Blind Brook School District will go beyond the basic Academic Integrity Policies and implement a K-12 Honor Code and a grade appropriate Honor Pledge to support the Honor Code in the 2012-13 school year.

### Academic Integrity – A District Goal

An overarching district goal is to foster achievement and to ensure the actions of all members in the learning community stem from a core value of integrity. The committee highlights the district *Vision of the Blind Brook Graduate* and the *District Mission* that embrace and support a climate of academic integrity aligned with this goal.

Below is the district's vision of the Blind Brook Graduate created by the K-12 Character Education Committee. It is important to keep the characteristics below in mind in our day-to-day practice.

*“Vision of the Blind Brook Graduate”* created by the K-12 Character Education Committee

The Blind Brook graduate:

- Accepts and appreciates individual differences
- Respects others
- Values different points of view
- Embraces lifelong learning
- Understands and practices ethical behavior
- Acts with the understanding of the effects and consequences of actions
- Responds with reflection, adaptability and resilience

- Is willing to take risks, make mistakes and learn from experiences
- Is able to effectively problem solve
- Acts with honesty, integrity, compassion and empathy
- Advocates for ideas and causes
- Understands democratic principles and practices good citizenship
- Demonstrates good sportsmanship, cooperation and teamwork
- Generates innovative ideas and products that tap their interests, passions and curiosities

## Blind Brook District Mission Statement

The Mission of the Blind Brook School District states:

*The Blind Brook-Rye Schools are the cornerstone of our community. Our mission is to prepare our students to be active, life-long learners who have the skills and confidence necessary to achieve their highest potential. We encourage our students to be curious, compassionate and strong in their ability to face challenges. We are committed to preparing our students to be reflective, adaptable citizens with an open world view. We aspire to instill integrity as a core value and to influence our students to be ethical and responsible members of society.*

Our vision and mission are aligned to embrace a core value of integrity. It is crucial that the vision and mission are actively modeled and demonstrated on a daily basis by administration, parents, students, teachers, staff and all members of our school community and the community at large.

## Definition of Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity Committee proposed the following **definition of integrity**:

Integrity exists when students exhibit honest behaviors which do not result in unfair advantages for themselves or others in educational pursuits or endeavors. Academic integrity is defined by honest academic work. Behaviors that violate academic integrity include but are not limited to: failing to attribute sufficient credit to other sources; unauthorized collaboration on any assignment; and use of unauthorized materials/technology for assigned work or assessments. The responsibility for achieving and maintaining an environment of academic integrity is shared by all constituents of the academic community, including students, their parents, teachers and administrators.

[The Center for Academic Integrity](#) offers the following concise definition of academic integrity:

“a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action.”<sup>1</sup>

1. *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*. The Center for Academic Integrity, October 1999. Available online at [http://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamentalvalues\\_project/index.php](http://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamentalvalues_project/index.php)

One of the goals of the committee was to develop an honor code which follows. The honor code will be embraced K-12 in the district and may one of the first implemented K-12 honor codes in the country.

## K-12 Honor Code

“A key mission of the Blind Brook School District is to instill integrity and teach students to be ethical and responsible members of society. Integrity and honest achievement foster self-respect, trust, pride in one’s accomplishments and actions, and positive relationships. While we aspire to the highest standards of academic excellence, any success without integrity reflects negatively on individuals, our schools and our community, and will not be tolerated. We believe that the responsibility for achieving and maintaining an environment of academic integrity is shared among students, parents, teachers and administrators. We pledge to uphold the five core values of academic integrity: Honesty, Respect, Trust, Responsibility and Fairness. ”

## Honor Pledge

Each student will sign an honor pledge that will be printed on every test/quiz, writing assignment to include research and major project.

## Core Values

Our academic mission, vision and proposed honor code call for high standards of ethical behavior as well as scholarship. Academic integrity is necessary to foster self-respect, pride in one’s work and actions, authentic achievement and positive relationships among all stakeholders in our school community. The purpose of the honor code is to communicate the meaning and importance of academic integrity to everyone involved in our learning community, to articulate and engage the interest of the community in maintaining the highest standards of conduct and achievement, and to identify, educate and sanction those who fail to live up to the stated expectations of our school community with regard to the following core values:

### Honesty

*“An academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.”*

### Respect

*“An academic community of integrity recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.”*

## Trust

*“An academic community of integrity fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.”*

## Responsibility

*“An academic community of integrity upholds personal accountability and depends upon **action** in the face of wrongdoing.”*

## Fairness

*“An academic community of integrity establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, and administrators.”*

2. *Definitions are attributed to The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity.* The Center for Academic Integrity, October 1999. Available online at [http://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamentalvalues\\_project/index.php](http://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamentalvalues_project/index.php)

These five fundamental values are cited by the Center for Academic Integrity and guide policies and definitions of academic integrity that serve as the foundation for college, university and high school honor codes, nationally and internationally.

## Prevention and Proactive Responses/Responsibilities

The responsibility for achieving and maintaining an environment of academic integrity is shared by all constituents of the academic community, including students, their parents, teachers and administrators. It requires a commitment to mutual respect and trust. The following are expectations in this partnership to support a commitment to academic honesty and to support the quest for authentic learning. They have been formulated by the Academic Integrity Committee that is comprised of all constituent groups with feedback from the faculty, students, administration.

### Teachers will:

- Discuss and define the district’s academic integrity policy and department guidelines as they apply to a course or grade level in the first week of every school year and reinforce the understanding of the policies and departmental guidelines related to the policy throughout the school year.
- Define the departmental guidelines aligned with academic integrity policies and the proposed honor code and honor pledge in class syllabi and require a parent and student signature indicating their awareness of policies and expectations.
- Address issues of academic integrity and enforce policies consistently.
- Comply with the district protocol to report any suspicion of a violation to administration.

- Emphasize mastery goals over performance goals.
- Assign relevant assignments with a purpose and allow ample time for students to complete assignments.
- Offer multiple grading opportunities.
- Require a series of due dates and checkpoints for research and long term projects.
- Conference with students.
- Require oral projects.
- Use protocols (testing calendars) to coordinate testing dates and assignments.
- Promote an environment of academic integrity. Toward this end, teachers will:
  - ❖ Foster a classroom environment of trust that encourages open communication, dialogue and respect for differing views
  - ❖ Consider the classroom seating arrangement
  - ❖ Consider the construct of assessments and assignments
- Develop questions that will represent the essence of the course content, inspire critical thinking and the application of the essential concepts
- Differentiate considering learning differences, ensure directions and expectations are clear and create multiple versions of the same test. Specifically:
  - ❖ Use varying types of assessments that acknowledge different intelligences, learning and cultural differences
  - ❖ Create new assessments in each school year
  - ❖ Actively monitor the testing environment
  - ❖ Have students place cell phones and bags in front of the room during testing
  - ❖ Clarify expectations for individual work as compared to group work so that students clearly understand the difference between collaboration and cheating.
  - ❖ Use all resources including turnitin.com to ensure the academic integrity of work
  - ❖ Model expectations and ethical behavior

Students will:

- Demonstrate responsibility in doing their own work with integrity. Specifically:
  - ❖ Accept responsibility for what they know and do not know.
  - ❖ Work independently on individual assignments and on individual components of group assignments
  - ❖ Submit work that relies upon their own preparation and not work from parents, tutors, peers or other unauthorized sources
  - ❖ Collaborate as defined and permitted by the teacher
  - ❖ Recognize that electronic and print copyrighted text is protected by copyright laws and agree to not cut and paste or photograph electronically



with a cell phone or any other device, copyrighted text into reports, take home exams, or any other school related documents without correctly referencing the copyrighted source.

- ❖ Recognize that it is dishonest to use information stored on calculators/computers or in any other way without explicit instructions from the teacher
  - ❖ Appropriately cite sources
  - ❖ Will not gain unfair advantage by asking for and/or copying the work of others and presenting it as their own
- Come prepared for class. Complete all reading, written and oral assignments as assigned by the teacher.
  - Read and follow directions carefully.
  - Take responsibility for individual components of collaborative assignments.
  - Check all papers to ensure correct documentation and originality of thought and make corrections as appropriate.
  - Model individual behaviors that demonstrate responsible and ethical behavior and encourage other students to act with integrity.

Parents will:

- Encourage a healthy learning environment with realistic expectations.
- Stress 100% effort over the grade and learning as a process
- Value honesty. Encourage pride in one's own work.
- Set a good moral example that models ethical behavior.
- Support the school's academic integrity policy. Work in partnership with the school.
- Enforce school policies
- Accept students for who they are; provide support; allow students to make mistakes.

Administrators will:

- Clarify policies and protocols with all constituents within the first week of the school year.
- Promote awareness of policies
- Foster an environment of trust
- Consistently enforce policies and consequences within the policies
- Enforce compliance of the policy by teachers
- Maintain a record of all academic honor code violations
- Review the academic honor code each spring considering teacher, staff, student, parent and administrator input
- Model ethical behavior

## Accomplishments of the Academic Integrity Committee:

- Reviewed and analyzed the results of the Academic Integrity Survey taken by students and faculty
- Reviewed the present Academic Integrity Policy
- Reviewed the district's mission statement as it pertains to issues of academic integrity
- Conducted a forum comprised of the various constituencies to discuss issues that affect academic integrity in the Blind Brook School District
- Conducted a S.W.O.T analysis.
- Created a mission statement for the Academic Integrity Committee
- Created a definition of Academic Integrity
- Defined core values
- Defined the responsibilities of all constituents (student, parents, teachers and administrators) as we work toward addressing issues of academic integrity
- Created an honor code. (This is a brief summative statement that encompasses our mission, values and commitment to upholding a pledge of academic integrity.)
- Principals at each level will engage constituents in creating an honor pledge to support the honor code. Examples of an honor pledge: "On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment/exam." — [University of Virginia](#)  
"I will not lie, cheat or steal to gain an academic advantage, or tolerate those who do."  
[NYU Stern School of Business](#)

## Recommendations Implemented in the 2011-12 School Year

- Building principals at each level began the school year with a review and discussion of the district Academic Integrity Policy.
- Building principals at each level clarified expectations regarding the implementation of policies and protocols.
- Each teacher at each level reviewed the academic integrity policy and protocols with students in the first week of school, defined academic integrity in classroom discussions, and clarified expectations with respect to the policy and protocols throughout the year.
- It is the expectation that teachers will follow the protocols outlined in the district policy and that teachers and administrators will enforce the policy.
- A data collection system has been designed and implemented to inform practice. Data collected indicates that as of this date there have been eleven cases of academic dishonesty brought to the attention of the administration in the middle school. Of the referrals, four were for students copying each other's homework and the other seven were plagiarism of mostly internet material for class projects/assignments. In the high

school, there have been six violation referrals. Four were for students copying each other's homework and two were for using internet material in papers.

- Teachers have been more consistently following protocols evidenced by the referrals.
- Administrators have consistently enforced protocols.
- Teachers have been proactive in addressing issues of academic integrity by modeling expectations, using multiple forms of exams and in utilizing turnitin.com for written assignments including lab work. This practice has served as both a deterrent to cheating and as an educational tool.
- The academic integrity policies have been reviewed and implemented.
- An honor code has been developed.
- The faculty and administration at the elementary, middle and high school levels have agreed to develop and implement a pledge to support the Honor Code that will be submitted and signed by students before their submission of tests, quizzes and graded written work.
- All information contained in this report, including recommendations, has been shared with the faculty in Professional Learning Community groups, middle school team meetings and a meeting with representative elementary school teachers. It has also been shared with representatives from constituent groups of students, parents and administration. Feedback from the groups has been solicited and incorporated throughout the report. The vast majority of those providing feedback are in agreement with the recommendations that follow. Recommendations reflect best practice and strategies are research-based.

### Recommendations for the 2012-13 School Year

- Communicate the academic integrity policy and constituent responsibilities in writing to parents and students at the beginning of the school year.
- Reiterate academic integrity policies at back to school night at all three levels.
- Provide staff development with a focus on academic integrity for faculty and staff. Requested topics of interest include: how to effectively deal with issues of academic integrity, integrating topics of integrity into the curriculum, dealing with difficult parents and situations.
- Students request that the present policy that states no tests and quizzes will be administered by substitute teachers without prior permission of the principal be enforced.
- Develop an Honor Code Infraction report to be submitted to administration as the form for referral of integrity violations.

- Develop parent workshops to discuss academic integrity topics such as understanding how to effectively support student learning, using technology with integrity etc.
- Teachers will focus on providing exemplars for students that model expectations.
- This year, in a shared decision making group, each principal will develop an honor pledge to support the honor code to be implemented for all assessments and graded written work submitted in the 2012-13 school year.
- A clear, simplified version of the academic integrity policy modeled after the responsible use of technology policy will be sent home to every district family and signed by each student and parent to indicate they have read and understand the policy.
- Teachers will clarify expectations with regard to academic integrity in every class syllabus. The syllabus/class expectations for each class will be signed by the parent and student indicating that they are aware of classroom expectations, including those for academic integrity.
- Written work including science labs will be submitted to turnitin.com by all middle and high school students and teachers.
- Recommended proactive and prevention responsibilities for all constituents will be implemented.
- A habitual issue of non-attendance on days of tests, quizzes and on due dates for major papers will be reported to administration, investigated and addressed, as appropriate.
- Teachers will be provided with internet sources, in addition to turnitin.com that will assist them in identifying internet sources of unauthorized data.
- Establish the following protocol for all violations of academic integrity:
  - ❖ The teacher will write a referral and submit it to administration.
  - ❖ The teacher will contact the parent.
  - ❖ Administration will investigate and set up a meeting within the same day or next day with the teacher, the student, the student's counselor and the parents to discuss the violation and the consequences.
  - ❖ Students with integrity violations will submit a written reflection that will include an explanation of the behavior, the lesson learned and how the student plans to change the behavior of concern.
  - ❖ Repeated infractions will include a counseling referral.
- To the extent that they are able, teachers will provide students with advance notice of assignments.
- Assemble a committee to propose a revised academic integrity policy of progressive discipline commencing in the elementary school. Rewrite the elementary school and early middle school policy with an educational focus that allows students to rewrite papers for half credit for the first academic integrity violation that involves improper use of citations in written work. Clarify definitions as they relate to academic integrity.

Consider including a student reflective paper, counseling, community service and suspension from extracurricular activities and disqualification for awards in response to repeated academic integrity violations at the high school level.

- Create an Academic Integrity Handbook that defines cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration. Define: citation, collusion, copyright, common knowledge, cyber-plagiarism, group work, intentional plagiarism, legitimate collaboration, paraphrasing, paper mill, public domain, quoting, summarizing and unintentional plagiarism. Include in the handbook examples of academic dishonesty, examples that model the proper citation of material, and explain topics such as using the internet as a source, citing electronic sources, citing facts and statistics, quoting, paraphrasing, choosing whether to quote or paraphrase, and good work habits. Provide students with style guides and other resources.
- It is recommended that classroom instruction, in addition to the above topics include time management, how to take effective and efficient notes, how and when to ask for help and an explanation regarding the effective use of writing centers, academic support and resources.
- Investigate the support for the creation of an “On My Honor Wall “in each school. The wall would contain the honor code and school pledge supporting the honor code. At the beginning of school, all students who commit to the pledge will sign a scroll indicating their commitment. Parents would do the same on “back to school night.” Framed scrolls will be hung in the school by class: Class of 2013 through the Class of 2025.
- Involve students in academic integrity awareness activities such as: “Caught You Doing Something Good” Campaign that recognizes acts of integrity, an Exemplar Poster Contest, an Integrity Essay Writing Contest.