

2024/2025

*LaFayette Big Picture  
High School*



*Educating One Student at a Time*

**Lafayette Big Picture High School**

**3122 Rt.11 North  
Lafayette, New York 13084**

**School Schedule**

**Doors open/ drop off: 7:30am  
School day starts: 7:55am  
Dismissal: 2:42pm**

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## Staff Directory

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**TGIF:** Are you receiving our weekly TGIF newsletters? If not, please send your email address to Brandy at [btremblay@lafayetteschools.org](mailto:btremblay@lafayetteschools.org)

## **School Philosophy and Structure**

### **Pursuing Passions**

We believe that students learn best when they are doing something that they are passionate about in the real world. Students are encouraged to explore their interests and curiosities.

### **Learning Through Internship (LTI)**

One of the basic structures of Big Picture schools is that students spend two days a week out at an internship site. By Learning Through Internship (LTI), the student will learn math, science, reading, writing and many more skills that he or she cannot learn in a classroom. LTIs are not meant to help students pick out a particular career. At their LTIs, students will learn the skills needed to go on to college and beyond. We schedule 40% of our school week for internships. This is a significant amount of time! If your child is not interested in finding an internship we would need to discuss if this was the correct placement/school for your student.

### **Personalized Learning**

Each student has an Individual Learning Plan. The Learning Plan team (the student, parent, mentor and advisor) work together to create a challenging and exciting plan. Learning Plan meetings for your student will be held four times a year

### **Assessment**

Students are expected to work toward the goals they've set, and reflect on their work and learning. Three to four times a year, the student will exhibit his or her work to you and a panel of evaluators. Through this process of planning, doing and reflecting, students discover how to take responsibility for their own learning. Also, each quarter, advisors write a narrative assessing student work and learning.

### **Advisor**

Each student is part of a small 12 -16 person advisory group. Their advisor knows them well and helps them build a strong community while working on the goals in their individual Learning Plans. You will be in close communication with your student's advisor. This advisory will stay together for 4 years. Advisories go on trips together, debate issues, do community service, critique each other's work, plan school activities, and more.

### **Enrolling Families**

Families play an important role in a student's education. From helping the student plan his or her Learning Plan to participating in events, we rely on parents as an integral part of our community.

### **Journal Writing**

Each student writes in a learning journal a few times per week. This is a way for students to reflect on their life and learning as well as communicate with their advisor. Advisors read and respond to these journal entries each week.

### **Organization, Self-Motivation and Time Management**

These are probably three of the most important keys to success. At Big Picture schools, students must learn to organize themselves, motivate themselves and follow the project timelines they've created.

## **School Philosophy and Structure *continued***

### **Team Building**

Because advisory groups work closely, a strong team must be built. Camping trips, games, and trust building activities are all an ongoing part of creating an advisory culture. Advisors invest time towards building a safe, caring learning environment for their students.

### **Respect and Diversity**

Respect and diversity are two important elements of life and learning at a Big Picture school. The students have a great deal of responsibility for their own learning. However, with the freedom to pursue their passions, comes the responsibility to create the kind of community that is a safe learning environment for all students. As a community we respect the diversity within our own community as well as throughout the world. The first month of each school year focuses on issues of respect and diversity. As a community we seek to understand our cultural, religious, ethnic, gender, and class differences as well as perspectives outside our community.

### **Workshops**

Workshops tend to be year long classes that meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The workshops are a way for students to earn some of the credits that New York State requires. All required Regents exams have a workshop class to prepare students for the exam.

### **Community Service**

All Big Picture schools strive to have a positive effect on their communities. Community service benefits the community and provides rich learning opportunities for students.

### **Mediation**

When there are conflicts between members of the school community, they are mediated to allow both parties to explain their thoughts and actions. Logical consequences are decided upon if further action needs to occur. Every decision is made one student at a time. Each situation is looked at separately to decide on the best decision for everyone involved.

### **Preparing for College**

All students are required to apply to college during their senior year. Although they may decide not to attend, we feel that every student should have the option of attending college. Therefore, all students create a college portfolio, visit colleges, go on interviews, write essays, fill out applications and evaluate taking the ACT or SAT. Students are also encouraged to take a college class at a local college before graduation, so that they have already had some college experience before they graduate.

## **The Big Picture Learning Cycle**

The Learning Plan is a description of all the work and learning your student plans to do over the quarter. At each exhibition, the Learning Plan team assesses the student's progress. A Learning Plan is not cast in stone; rather, it is updated and revised as the student develops. The Learning Plan is supposed to "fit" each student. It should be challenging but not become overwhelming to the student.

### **Learning Plan Team**

Each parent is a part of a student's Learning Plan team along with the advisor, student, mentor, and anyone else who may be useful to your student's learning.

### **Learning Plan meetings**

Learning Plan meetings happen three/four times a year. Meetings can be held at school or at home. The Learning Plan team gathers to create a detailed plan specifically for your student who will come with some ideas about how to pursue their interests. After you attend your student's first Learning Plan meeting, subsequent meetings will allow for progress checks and feedback.

### **Accountability**

Students are accountable for the work they plan into their Learning Plan as well as any advisory work. Advisors keep track of how the student is progressing through the work and will keep you updated. You can help your student be accountable by asking to see their progress on the goals they have set.

### **Learning Goals**

In today's changing world, the most important thing students must learn is how to learn. The Learning Goals at Big Picture schools focus on reasoning and problem solving as well as skills like reading, writing and mathematical thinking.

### **Top Ten Questions to Ask Yourself About Your Student's Learning Plan**

1. How does the plan address your student's interests and passions?
2. In what way did your student help to create the plan?
3. How is the work authentic? Does it have a real world application?
4. How is the plan challenging?
5. How realistic is it?
6. Which adults are listed as resources and mentors for your student?
7. What are the specific goals for your student's next exhibition?
8. How does the plan let the student use his/her hands and mind together?
9. Which Learning Goals does the plan primarily address?
10. How does the student feel about his/her Learning Plan?

## The Learning Goals

Students use the Learning Goals to help expand their project work and challenge themselves with new ideas. These are the seven Learning Goals.

### **1. How do I prove it? Empirical Reasoning**

This goal is to think like a scientist: to use empirical evidence and a logical process to make decisions and to evaluate hypotheses. It does not reflect specific science content material, but instead can incorporate ideas from physics to sociology to art theory.

What idea do I want to test? (essential question)

What has other research shown?

What is my hypothesis?

How can I test it?

What information (data) do I need to collect?

How will I collect the information?

What will I use as a control in my research?

How good is my information?

What are the results of my research?

What error do I have?

What conclusions can I draw from my research?

How will I present my results

**2. How do I measure, compare or represent it? Quantitative Reasoning** This goal is to think like a mathematician: to understand numbers, to analyze uncertainty, to comprehend the properties of shapes, and to study how things change over time.

How can I use numbers to evaluate my hypothesis?

Can I estimate this quantity?

What numerical information can I collect about this?

How can I measure its shape or structure?

How can I interpret this formula or graph?

How can I represent this information as a formula or diagram?

What predictions can I make?

What trends do I see?

How does this change over time?

Can I show a correlation?

### **3. How do I take in and express ideas? Communication**

This goal is to be a great communicator: to understand your audience, to write, read, speak and listen well, to use technology and artistic expression to communicate, and to be exposed to another language.

How can I write about it?

What is the main idea I want to get across (thesis)?

Who is my audience?

What can I read about it?

Who can I listen to about it?

How can I speak about it?

How can technology help me to express it? How can I express it creatively?

How can I express it in another language?

**4. What are other people's perspectives on this? Social Reasoning** This goal is to think like an historian or anthropologist: to see diverse perspectives, to understand social issues, to explore ethics, and to look at issues historically.

How do diverse communities view this?	How does this issue affect different communities?
Who cares about this?	To whom is it important?
What is the history of this?	How has this issue changed over time?
Who benefits and who is harmed through this issue?	What do people believe about this?
What social systems are in place around this?	What are the ethical questions behind this?
What do I think should be done about this?	What can I do?

#### **5. What do I bring to this process? Personal Qualities**

This goal is to be the best you can be: to demonstrate respect, responsibility, organization, leadership, time management, and to reflect on your abilities and strive for improvement.

How can I demonstrate respect?	How can I empathize more with others?
How can I strengthen my health and well-being?	How can I communicate honestly about this?
How can I be responsible for this?	How can I persevere at this?
How can I better organize my work?	How can I better manage my time?
How can I be more self-aware?	How can I take on more of a leadership role?
How can I work cooperatively with others?	How can I enhance my community through this?

#### **6. How do I learn this? Knowing How to Learn**

The goal is to be curious, with a drive to explore and be open to doing hard work. To understand that there are many ways of learning, knowing and making meaning in the world. It includes valuing learning from and with others inside and outside of school.

How do I work with others	How do I communicate my learning
How do I engage with experts	How do I identify questions of interests
How do I formulate a plan	How do I seek knowledge and skills
How do I create solutions or product	How do I reflect on my learning
How do I take responsibility for learning	How do I use feedback

#### **7. What do I create? Aesthetic Expression**

Through my exploration of my interests and curiosities, what physical products do I create. How do I display and exhibit my creations?

How do I display and exhibit my creations?	How do I display my creations?
Is my work neat and attractive?	Is my work accurate?
Is my work labeled?	Is my work creative?
Is my work organized?	Is my work unique?



## **Learning Through Internship (LTI)**

**Why LTI?** The primary purpose of a student's Learning Through Internship (LTI) at a Big Picture school is to build knowledge, understanding and skills in the context of authentic work. By making the learning process real, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and become inspired life-long learners.

**Mentors:** Each student has a mentor in the community who shares the student's interest. The mentor guides and coaches the student intern at the work site, while the student receives additional project support from the advisor back at school. The student is expected to contribute a substantial project of real consequence to the LTI site. The mentor becomes part of the student's learning team.

**LTI Visits:** The advisor regularly communicates with the mentor to monitor and assess the student's progress. Together they plan authentic challenging projects, which become part of the student's Learning Plan. The best LTI projects occur when both the student and mentor are helped by the work.

**Interest Exploration:** In order to pursue their passions, students must find out what they are passionate about. As part of the advisory, students will begin to explore their interests. Exposure to new ideas, places, cultures and information is a part of the school experience.

**LTI Search:** Students learn to make professional phone calls, conduct informational interviews and spend the day at workplaces around the community in order to find a good internship. A good internship is one that the student is interested in, where the mentor is a good match for the student and where there is the potential for real, rigorous project work which will help the student and the LTI site.

**LTI Set-Up:** At the set-up meeting, the advisor and student go over the student's Learning Plan with the mentor and talk about future goals.

**Project Development:** About 2 weeks after the start of the LTI, the advisor, student and mentor sit down for a project meeting. This project will be added to the student's Learning Plan and exhibited at the student's exhibition.

**Integrating the Learning Goals:** Often students will need to learn new skills in order to complete their LTI project. To do this they work with their advisor or other knowledgeable adults back at school. Math skills, new computer programs or research can all be done back at school with help from an advisor or other resource.

## **Exhibitions Overview**

Students present their work and learning at the end of each quarter. The student's parents, mentor, advisor, peers and others come to reflect on and evaluate his or her process and products. The student creates visuals, an agenda and note cards to create a professional presentation. Your role is to help your student reflect on his or her work and to evaluate how the student has grown and worked toward the goals on the Learning Plan.

What Makes a Great Exhibition?

A well prepared presentation:	Note cards	Agenda
	Visuals	Eye contact
	Speaking clearly	

A packet for panelists  
(including Learning Plan, agenda, exhibition feedback form and sample work)

Evidence of Learning Plan work

Evidence of the process the student went through  
(drafts, journal entries, meeting notes)

Creative activities that involve the panelists

Honest self-reflection  
(discussion of growth and struggles throughout the quarter)

Evidence of improvement  
(depth of learning, excitement about projects, more responsibility for his or her own learning)

### **Ten Great Questions to Ask at an Exhibition**

1. What are you most proud of this quarter?
  2. What have you learned most about?
  3. What was the most challenging part of this quarter?
  4. How could you have gone deeper with your work?
  5. How was your work connected to your interests?
  6. How have you worked with your mentor? How have other adults been resources? 7.
- Describe a day at your LTI.
8. Describe what role you play in advisory and in the school.
  9. What did you think of this exhibition? How did it compare to your previous exhibitions? 10.
- What are some ways I could support your work next quarter?

## **Helping Your Student in the Big Picture**

### **Attendance and punctuality**

Helping your student get to school on time and make sure that he or she is there everyday. This is your student's job and they have an important responsibility to their advisory, their LTI and to their own education. Being on time shows respect and responsibility.

### **Talk with your student about his/her work**

Know what your student is working on. What's on his or her Learning Plan? When are the next exhibitions? Ask to see your student's Learning Plan. You can also view what students are working on in Google Classroom. Your child can show you all of their digital work. If you need additional help with this please talk with your child's advisor.

### **Checking In**

If you're not sure how your student is doing, have a concern or just want to say hello – keep in contact with his or her advisor. All advisors' contact information is located in the front of this handbook. Please note that we all have families and obligations after school hours. We are committed to responding to you as soon as we can but a reply may not be immediate.

### **Attend Learning Plan meetings and exhibitions**

Support the learning process by meeting with the team to create your student's Learning Plan and attend exhibitions and help evaluate the work and learning. This is so important to your student and us. We will do our best to accommodate your schedule. Please do your best to attend exhibitions.

### **Encourage at home project work**

Look at your student's project timeline and learning plan. Encourage project work at home. Help your student establish an organized workspace at your home. Doing work at home is a valuable skill and habit.

## **What can you do to help support your student's learning on the school level?**

### **Family Engagement Events**

At Big Picture schools, parents are an active part of the community. Each year there are several big events where the whole community comes together to celebrate:

- Pot Luck Dinner: usually two times per year. Once in September and the second is held mid-year. This is a great time to meet families and staff.
- Gateway Ceremony: 201 students who are transitioning into the 301 year gather to celebrate their accomplishments. This typically takes place in June or September.
- Open House: This event features the Senior Thesis Projects and welcomes potential incoming students to visit our school

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring a student from the school is another way to share your skills and resources with the community.

## **Expectations by Grade**

There are general expectations for students at Big Picture schools. Every student learns and grows at his or her own pace – the important thing is for students to show growth in each area. It is up to the advisor and Learning Plan team to determine these expectations based on the needs of each student. Some of these expectations are listed below.

### **All Grade Levels**

- Attend school every day and be on time
- Be responsible for their locations and actions
- Follow their interests in the real world (conduct informational interviews, shadow days and work toward an Internship (LTI))
- Complete a Learning Plan each semester
- Have a positive impact on the community (service learning, etc.)
- Show respect for themselves and others
- Take responsibility for the learning process
- Take advantage of opportunities
- Exhibit their work during exhibition week.
- Participate in mediation/restoration if conflicts arise
- Write and reflect in journals
- Participate in Physical Education
- Reflect on gaps in learning and address them through project work.
- Learn to interact with the advisory community in a positive manner

### **101 : 9th grade**

During the first year: 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are expected to:

- Begin building their portfolio of work samples
- Prepare for the NYS Regents exams in Living Environment and Integrated Algebra
- Earn at least 6 credits toward graduation

### **201: 10th grade**

During the second year: 10th grade students are expected to:

- Secure a LTI(s) lasting throughout the school year
- Begin building their portfolio of work samples
- Create a Gateway portfolio with required elements
- Earn at least 6 credits toward graduation
- Prepare for the NYS Regents exams in US History
- Be a role model for students in our school community

## **Expectations by Grade *continued***

### **301: 11th grade**

During the third year: 11th grade students are expected to:

- Demonstrate heightened personal qualities and leadership
- Prepare for the NYS Regents exam in English
- Begin brainstorming for a yearlong Senior Thesis Project
- Build an online portfolio for the IBPLC (International Big Picture Learning Credential)
- Explore taking college classes at OCC
- College visits
- Create a draft of a college essay
- Explore post secondary opportunities and pathways

### **401: 12th grade**

During the fourth year: 12th grade students are expected to:

- Propose a Senior Thesis Project
- Complete and Present their Senior Thesis Project
- Complete an Autobiography
- Complete an online portfolio for the IBPLC (International Big Picture Learning Credential)
- Apply to post secondary opportunities
- Explore employment opportunities
- Complete college applications

## **What you can expect from Advisors and Principal:**

- Develop a community with the advisory and the school as a whole
- Know each student and family well
- Develop a relationship with students, mentors and families.
- Understand the baseline of skills students have so future goals are realistic and data driven.
- Develop a culture of respect and responsibility
- Participate in mediation and/or restorative conversations
- Help students identify and pursue their passions and interests
- Help students to take responsibility for their own learning
- Foster a culture of documentation: help them build portfolios
- Help students develop a culture of critique: how to give and receive feedback
- Help students develop leadership skills
- Guide students in earning the necessary credits toward graduation
- Communicate with parents, mentors and principal

## **Glossary of Terms Used at Big Picture Schools**

### **Advisor**

Groups of students are led by a teacher who is referred to as the advisor. The advisor is the facilitator of each student's Learning Plan and LTI. The advisor has primary responsibility for each student's progress in his or her advisory but also teams with other advisors.

### **Advisor Narrative**

Each quarter, the advisor develops a written document for each student in his or her advisory. This document assesses and reflects on the student's work and makes recommendations for the following quarter.

### **Advisory**

Each student is part of an advisory group. This is the student's "home base" at the school. Each advisory is composed of approximately 12 – 16 students. This group stays together with the same advisor for 4 years.

### **Big Picture Learning Goals**

The seven general Learning Goals provide a framework for thinking about project depth and student learning. Expectations of Big Picture school graduates are focused around these seven main areas: Communication, Empirical Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, Social Reasoning, Personal Qualities, Knowing How to Learn and Aesthetic Expression. Each area has detailed reasoning abilities associated with it. The Learning Goals are the guideposts for all real world project work conducted by students.

### **Exhibition**

Big Picture schools schedule exhibitions of work on a quarterly/trimester basis. Each exhibition within a school year has requirements based on the student's grade level and the status of the individual student's project work. It is through this exhibition of work that the student demonstrates his or her accountability for all facets of the Learning Plan. Exhibitions are presented to a panel of parents, students, advisors, mentors and others who provide specific feedback.

### **IBPLC**

The International Big Picture Learning Credential is a personalized and detailed statement of a student's demonstration of learning. This is not a comparison model where students are compared based upon each other. The IBPLC provides a personalized assessment of where the student is based on our learning goals. It culminates in a digital portfolio that could be used for college admission, employment, and/or apprenticeship.

### **Intern**

A student from a Big Picture school who has an LTI in the community.

### **Learning Plan**

Each student has a personalized curriculum that is described in his or her Learning Plan. This incorporates the student's interests and passions and connects them, through project work, to the Learning Goals. The student and advisor develop the Learning Plan in conjunction with the parent or guardian and the student's mentor. The Plan is updated on a regular basis.

## **Glossary of Terms *continued***

### **Learning Plan Meeting**

This is a meeting of the student, advisor, parent and mentor to discuss the Learning Plan. Each party contributes to the student's personalized plan. As students progress through their years at a Big Picture school, they become more and more responsible for running these meetings and documenting the outcomes, which are incorporated into the updated Learning Plan.

### **Learning Plan Work**

This is the detail of the Learning Plan that the student agrees to carry out. The work is presented at regularly scheduled exhibitions.

### **Learning Plan Team**

This group is made up of the student, advisor, parent/guardian and mentor. The team works together to plan and assess the student's learning.

### **LTI – Learning Through Internship**

Based on the Big Picture philosophy, each student learns through pursuing his or her own interests and passions. By establishing an intern/mentor relationship with an adult in the community who has the same interest or passion and who works in that area, the student has the opportunity to build skills and knowledge that are relevant and real. The student's advisor assists the intern and mentor in developing project work and supports that work back at school.

### **LTI Project**

The authentic project a student does at the LTI site, including the product and associated research, investigation and reflection on the project. This work should be of value to the internship site and directly connect to the student's Learning Plan.

### **Mentor**

The adult guide at the workplace who becomes a part of the student's Learning Plan team.

### **Mentor Assessment**

At the end of each LTI, mentors are asked to assess the intern's LTI experience and performance. The mentor, advisor and student review the completed form together, which helps the student better understand their work and prepare for his or her next LTI. Excerpts may be used in the advisor's narrative.

### **Personalized Education**

The Big Picture philosophy of educating each student one at a time around their interests and passions.

### **Portfolio**

Each student keeps documentation of his or her work. It may be organized in a portfolio binder and/or digitally. Student's use the work in their portfolio as evidence of their learning growth.

### **Shadow Day**

In the search for the appropriate LTI site and mentor, Big Picture students take part in one or more shadow days, which are one-day experiences at a site of interest to the student. The student follows a potential mentor in the regular course of his or her work.

### **Personal Narrative (PEN)**

Each quarter, the student assesses and reflects on the work, the goals that were established and

accomplished, and the next stage of work. These written narratives are combined with the advisor's narrative, which is provided for the parents and maintained in the student's records.