



# **MOUNT VERNON** *School*

---

**New & Aspiring Leaders| SAIS April 2025**

# Connections

**Trish Bogdanchik**

Head of Upper School

[tbogdanchik@mountvernonschool.org](mailto:tbogdanchik@mountvernonschool.org)

**Dr. Stacey M. Jones Lee**

Chief of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Action

[slee@mountvernonschool.org](mailto:slee@mountvernonschool.org)



JOURNEY OF

**PURPOSE**

## OUR IDENTITY

### OUR PURPOSE ■ **Mission Statement**

We are a school of inquiry, innovation, and impact. Grounded in Christian values, we prepare all students to be college ready, globally competitive, and engaged citizen leaders.

### OUR COMMITMENT ■ **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Action Statement**

We commit to creating and sustaining a school culture where all members feel valued and safe, sharing their authentic selves to design a better world...together.

### OUR STRATEGY ■ **Foresight & Strategic Plan**

We cultivate and inspire growth through a strategic response to the disruptive shifts in the literacies, skills, attributes, and relationships required for current and future, local and global contexts.

### OUR APPROACH ■ **Teaching & Learning Program**

We design relevant, transformational curricular and learning competencies from Preschool through Upper School, explored through an inquiry-based approach and assessed on levels of proficiency.



**THE  
MOUNT  
VERNON  
SCHOOL**

# Professional Competencies

It is critical to normalize, and encourage development of IDEA competencies in the same way the organization supports depth & growth in teaching/learning. As a result inclusion and equity is foundational and not additional.

**33**

**SELF AWARENESS**

IDEA1

**34**

**SELF MANAGEMENT**

IDEA2

**35**

**SOCIAL AWARENESS**

IDEA3

**36**

**RESPONSIBLE  
DECISION-MAKING**

IDEA4

**37**

**RELATIONSHIP SKILLS**

IDEA5

**38**

**CULTURALLY PROFICIENT  
& EQUITY LITERATE**

IDEA6

*journey of purpose*



# What guides your community?

- Mission Statement
- Commitment - Ways of being in community
- Strategy - Action toward vision
- Approach - Methods of teaching and learning unique to the institution



# The Mount Vernon School Office of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Action



## **Coordinators**

Ms. Terrika Mays	Preschool
Ms. Constanza Pizano	Lower School
Ms. DeShawn Jenkins	Middle School
Mr. Chris Byrum	Upper School
Ms. Sharon Burnette	Upper School

## **Directors**

Ms. Elisse Hayes	Lower Campus
Dr. Chaundra Suddith	Upper Campus

## **Chief of IDEA**

Dr. Stacey M. Jones Lee





# Guardrails & Tools for Navigating Polarity

**Welcome & Connect**

**The Dialogic Model**

**Agreements/Intentions/Structures**

**Research, Data & Stories**

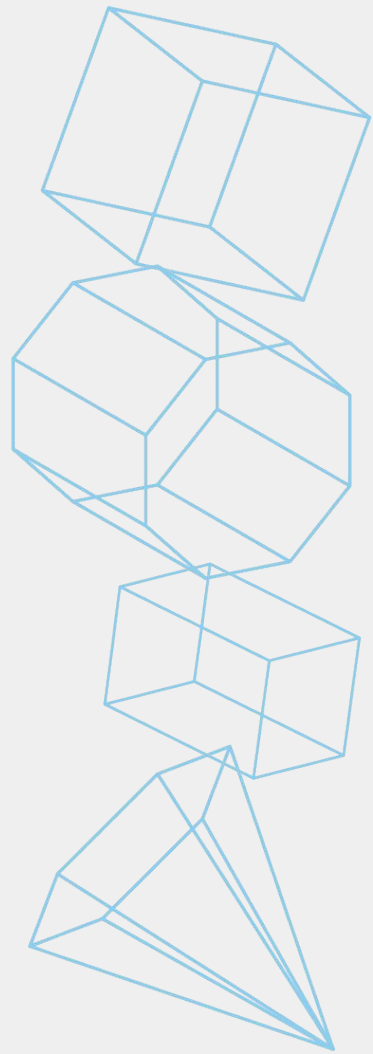
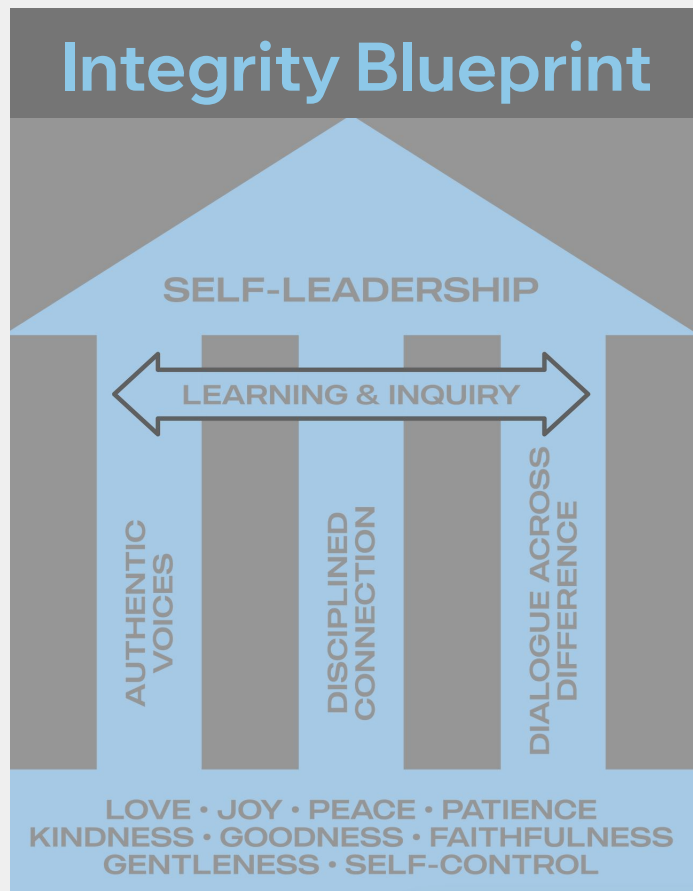
- Your Brain on Threat
- Destructive vs. Constructive Communication Cycles
- Spark!

**The Tools**

- Structured Dialogue
- Dialogic Components & Varied Use (mediation)
- Student Dialogue Series (Example)



If we want to shift our typical ways of discussing difficult or polarizing topics we need to create a different kind of structure, process, and pattern of speaking, listening, and inquiring. We need to build a better container for conversations - one that can hold strong emotion and disagreement and invite stories, complexity, and understanding.



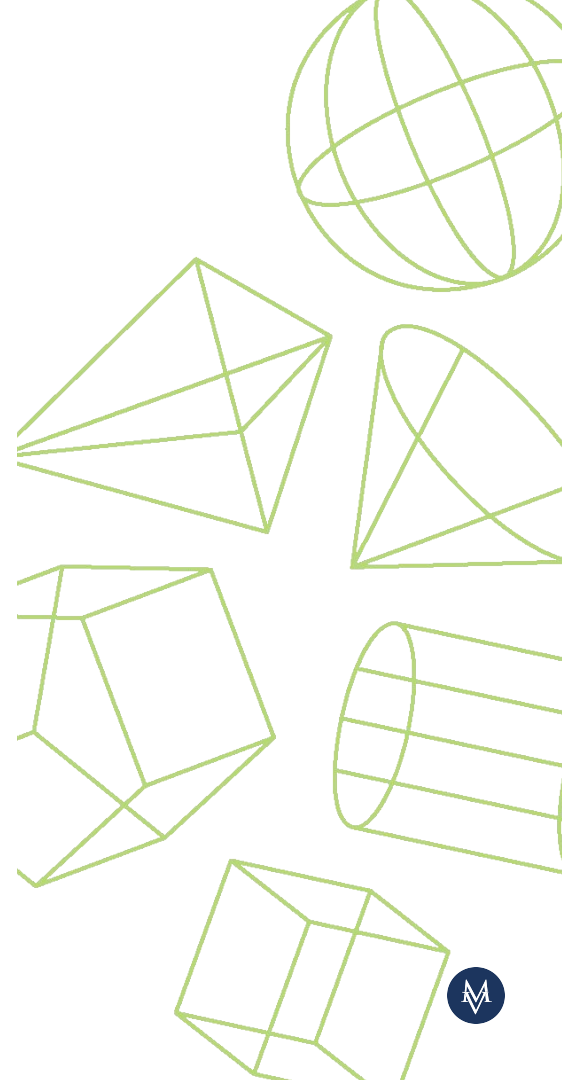
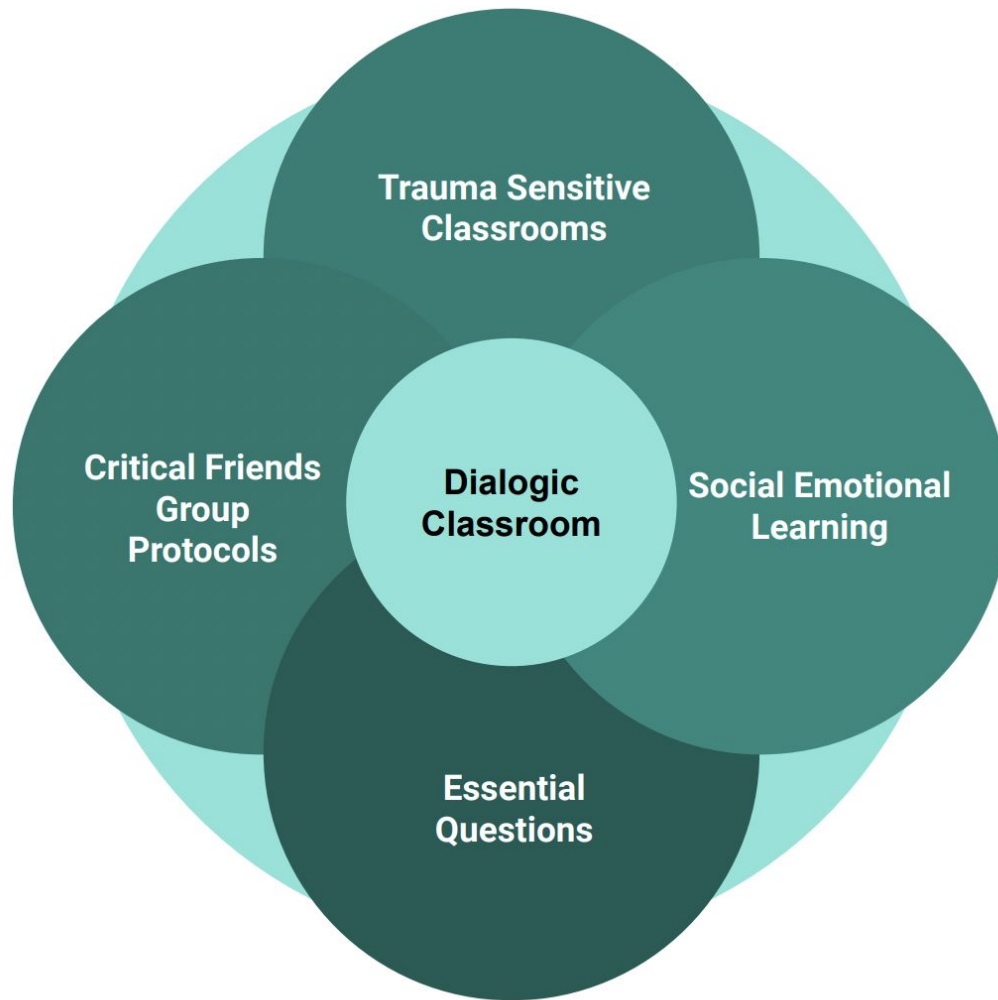


# The Dialogic Model

INQUIRY  
*innovation*  
& IMPACT



# Why?



# Research tells us so...

## Trauma Sensitive Classrooms

Practices/policies that address trauma's impact on learning & behavior

Include structures that address core values of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration & empowerment

## Social Emotional Learning

Sometimes focuses more on decision making: brainstorming/analysis

Includes structures that promote self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills, and responsible decision making

## Essential Questions

Invite higher order thinking: problem solving, critical thinking—rather than personal perspectives & self-reflection.

Questions are open-ended with multiple answers.

Questions invite students to engage and interact with course content.

## CFG Protocols

Pre-structured conversations with a problem→solution orientation.

Generally for practitioners with similar goals/experiences.

Conversations are structured.

Focus on groups coming together to learn from one another



# Structured dialogue involves:

- **Preparation** for the conversation
- **Reflection** on one's own and others' perspectives
- **Shared purposes & agreements** that guide the conversation
- **Questions** that elicit fresh information
- **Structured** exchanges to enhance thoughtful speaking and listening
- Opportunity to **explore genuine interest** in the other



# Agreements

Things everyone can agree to hold to - objective and observable.

# Intentions

Things people can ground themselves into or prepare to bring forward in dialogue. They cannot be enforced by others, only encouraged.

# Structures

Things facilitators implement through design to help everyone participate fully.

*journey of purpose*



# SPARK



# Your Brain on Threat

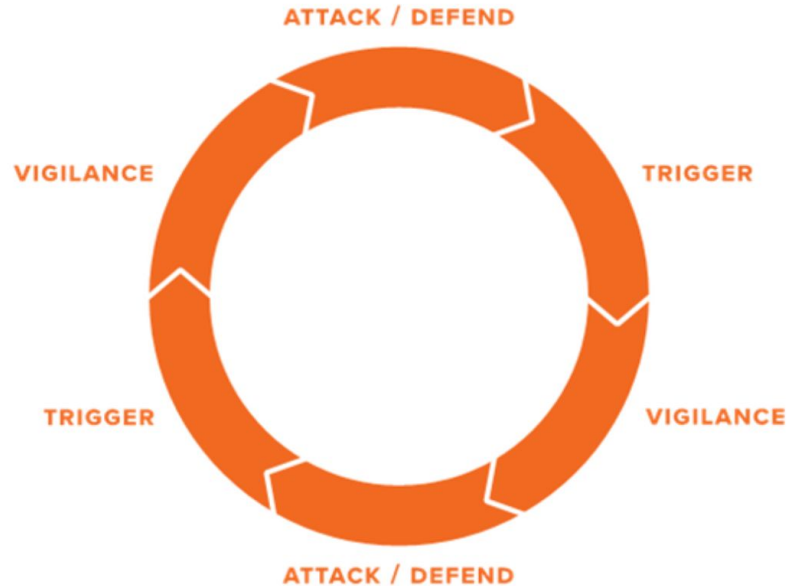
Think of a time when you became upset about something that was said about something that was important to you (e.g. core social or political values or beliefs, family, friends, race, religion, ethnicity). This will work better if it was a person you wanted to have a good relationship with. Think about:

- What was it that impacted or upset you? How did that manifest?
- What did you feel tempted to do?
- What could you have done instead?

You will **not** be asked to share this story with anyone. You will be invited to share a headline that summarizes the story and whatever you'd like to share from the table below.

IN MY BODY	FEELINGS and THOUGHTS	IMPULSES	BUT INSTEAD I COULD...
------------	--------------------------	----------	------------------------

# Cycle of Defensive Response



essential PARTNERS



# Constructive Cycle



essential **PARTNERS**

# The Hope Behind the Complaint

*Complaining does not have to be thought of as negative. We can, instead, see it as an expression of hope for something better. What does the complaint say about what we hope for, and what does that hope say about what we care about?*

## Example

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Hope</b> <i>(what I want instead)</i>	<b>Value</b> <i>(what/why is this important)</i>
I hate having to do homework.	I want to have more free time to play with my friends.	Having good relationships with my friends is important to me.



# Let's Work!

INQUIRY  
*innovation*  
& IMPACT





# Full Spectrum Listening

Listening happens at many levels because many different things are expressed when a person speaks. This exercise is a way of tuning into one of the many “wavelengths” of the listening spectrum.

In groups of two: **S-A-V-E** (**S**taories, **A**ctions, **V**alues, **E**motions; rotate roles)

- Each person will have two minutes to share a headline that summarizes the story.
- While your partner shares, you will listen from the roles listed below (**actions**, **emotions**, and **values**).
- At the end of the story, each person will tell the speaker what they heard from their role.

## ACTIONS

When listening for actions: Be a reporter. Listen for the Who? What? When? Where? How?

## VALUES

When listening for values:  
What were the values beneath what was shared? What does the speaker care about? What is important to them?

## EMOTIONS

When listening for emotions:  
Notice what emotions are mentioned in the story. How would you describe the storyteller's emotions both in the story and as they are telling it?



## **SELF- LEADERSHIP**

self /self/ leadership /lē-dər-ship/

an attribute focused on self-awareness and self-management, entrepreneurship, and goals achievement

# Dialogue Prompt

**Tell a story about a time when you observed or took part in a tense situation in your school community.**



# Dialogic Components **Parts & Pieces to Mix & Match**

- ❑ Preparing learners in advance of a group discussion
- ❑ Using communication agreements & enforcing them
- ❑ Giving think time before asking for responses
- ❑ Setting time for asking questions out of curiosity or to better understand rather than asking learners to analyze, critique or give rebuttal
- ❑ Being a facilitator; decentering yourself and letting learners speak to one another rather than to you
- ❑ Committing to reflection time to synthesize content & reflect on the participant experience



## SELF-LEADERSHIP

self /self/ leadership /lē-dər-ship/

an attribute focused on self-awareness and self-management, entrepreneurship, and goals achievement

# Case Studies in Mediation

Two faculty members can't seem to get along. Each of them is coming to you at different times to complain about the other. It continues to get worse with no end in sight, and it is spreading to other faculty members. It feels like "sides" are forming.





# **MOUNT VERNON** *School*

---

**Student Dialogue Series | 2024-2025**



# Dialogue 1

Purpose: Empathy

First dialogue experience. Setting agreements, encouraging intentions and using structures to support freedom of expression and authentic voices.

Practicing listening to Stories for Actions, Values and Emotions.

People:

Lower School Home Rooms

Middle School Mentor Groups

Upper School Advisory Groups

Connected Faculty



## Question:

Tell a story about a time when you felt you were welcome in a space, where you felt accepted and understood for who you are - a time where you felt comfortable being yourself.

How did feeling welcome/accepted impact what was possible for you to do or say?



## THE MOUNT VERNON ORGANIZATION

The Mount Vernon School anchors the Mount Vernon Organization as a destination of inquiry, innovation, and impact. Through MVSO and MV Ventures, our school is living its mission to design a better world by providing unique and differentiated value for all community members now, and into the future.



### MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL PK3-12 Flagship Campus

Mount Vernon is an independent school serving over 1250 students from Preschool through Grade 12. Mount Vernon School is a community where curiosity is cultivated, multiple perspectives are valued, and prototypes are built and iterated until mastery is achieved. Learning is amplified through real-world problem-solving, creating limitless possibilities for meaningful impact.



### MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL ONLINE 9-12 Global Campus

Serving grade 9 - 12 families and students who seek an alternative to a traditional in-person school setting, MVSO shares the same quality Upper School curriculum but in a virtual and asynchronous format.



### MOUNT VERNON VENTURES Research, Development, and Educational Consultancy

Through Ventures, the School has access to the latest educational research and tools including quarterly R&D reports, creating a host of benefits for our students, faculty, staff, the community at large, and beyond.



**Mount Vernon Ventures**  
mvventures.org  
consulting@mvventures.org

**Let's stay connected.**

Scan the QR code to sign  
up for our MVV newsletter.

