Iowa BIG’s Statement of Mission, Purpose, & Values

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These serve as foundational elements to living, working and learning in the Iowa BIG community and culture.

MISSION

To unleash human potential

PURPOSE

Iowa BIG exists to ensure *learners are:

- NURTURED to own their learning and identify their interests, passions, and strengths
- EXPOSED to authentic, contextualized and organic learning
- IMMERSED in the larger community
- ENGAGED in personalized experiences and learning
- INSPIRED to create, solve ambiguous problems, and innovate
- OFFERED calculated risks to learn from failures and successes

*a “learner” is any human engaged with Iowa BIG, not simply a teenage “student”

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The principles of BIG provide an outline and direction for the values we espouse and try to live each day. The 4 principles we focus on are taken from the tenets of Modern Agile. The first two principles are focused on how we are going to “be” together and the second two are focused on what we are going to “do” together.
PRINCIPLES & THEIR ACCOMPANYING VALUES

- Make People Awesome and Make Safety a Prerequisite
  - Purpose
  - Responsibility
  - Honesty
  - Respect
  - Leadership

- Experiment and Learn Rapidly and Deliver Value Continuously
  - Learning
  - Creativity
  - Communities

MAKE PEOPLE AWESOME AND MAKE SAFETY A PREREQUISITE

MAKE PEOPLE AWESOME. Our primary job is to help make every learner, partner, and colleague as awesome as they can be - to be able to live into and maximize both their potential and their impact. This means figuring out what’s holding people back from living into their true self and potential and then making essential changes within our sphere of influence and control to help them be more awesome.

MAKE SAFETY A PREREQUISITE. Making people awesome isn’t possible if people do not feel safe. Safety is a basic human need and a key to unlocking high performance. At BIG we work to ensure learners are intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically safe. We want learners to feel confident in being their authentic selves and being accepted as a unique and valued person.

People, and young learners in particular, are often afraid to:
- voice their thoughts and opinions
- make mistakes
- be successful (because its brother, responsibility, comes with it)
- be “wrong” or look “stupid”
- accept their words and actions, instead looking for excuses or someone to blame

We value the student voice in the learning process, how to learn and succeed through failures, and how to both accept and manage one’s successes. These are powerful learning gifts and keys to current and future success. BIG commits to leveraging these learning gifts in our quest to unleash the potential of everyone at BIG.
As such, the VALUES supporting these two principles are:

**PURPOSE**
- I know why I am here and what I want to learn and accomplish
- I am invested in my work, my teams, and strive to make them awesome
- I persevere and stay focused
- I celebrate wins - mine, my team’s and others at BIG
- I inspire others with my work

**RESPONSIBILITY**
- I am prepared to engage and learn
- I am present and give my full attention to the work at hand
- I follow through with my commitments and obligations
- I communicate professionally

**HONESTY**
- I admit my mistakes, recognize successes, and learn from them
- I am true to myself and encourage others to be true to themselves
- I am willing to have difficult conversations
- I understand the difference between reasons and excuses

**RESPECT**
- I recognize the freedoms I’ve been given and am committed to honoring them
- I honor myself and others through my words and actions
- I offer problems with the intent of building toward solutions
- I value my own and others’ time and effort

**LEADERSHIP**
- I recognize myself as a leader
- I share and receive information and knowledge openly and proactively
- I know the best idea is in the room with my team
- I am willing and able to listen intently, speak my truth, be right, be wrong, and be heard

**EXPERIMENT AND LEARN RAPIDLY AND DELIVER VALUE CONTINUOUSLY**

**EXPERIMENT AND LEARN RAPIDLY.** Because our young learners - and our staff - are safe to try, reach and possibly fail, we are able to teach the power of rapid experimentation and learning. Experimenting and learning rapidly protects us from wasting time and helps us discover success faster. We make the work of projects “safe to fail” so learners are not afraid to
push themselves and “try” in pursuit of learning. At BIG, it is a constant iteration of test - reflect - revise - try again.

**DELIVER VALUE CONTINUOUSLY.** Too often we wait until the end to deliver a product, a project, an idea or an assignment. If you don’t deliver regularly, you delay learning about what works and what delights the recipient of your efforts. We seek to teach our young learners to work in such a way that value is constantly flowing out of them. We don’t want our learners waiting until things are “perfect” or “done.” We always want them thinking about how they can deliver outcomes more efficiently.

As such, the VALUES supporting these two principles are:

**LEARNING**
- I focus on process and continual improvement
- I ask questions
- I seek to understand context in order to learn and apply relevant skills and content to succeed
- I see opportunities for growth in my successes and failures
- I am an agile learner

**CREATIVITY**
- I seek meaningful problems to solve and opportunities to pursue
- I challenge assumptions and suggest different or novel approaches
- I work towards solutions to difficult problems and dilemmas
- I find ways to overcome my challenges and obstacles, and celebrate my successes

**COMMUNITIES**
- I find value in the places I go and people I meet
- I serve my communities with my work and presence
- I respect the work others have done to create community
- I make my communities better places

*These statements of belief and practice will be regularly reviewed and updated as we continue to learn more about them and how people in the BIG community live them.*