

Building Student Independence Through Custom School Planners

Harriet Tubman Elementary

When Tonya Hammaker joined Harriet Tubman Elementary as Head of School three years ago, the tradition of designing custom print planners had already been established. After seeing the impact firsthand, continuing the investment became an easy decision.

“ It took only a few weeks of seeing them in action to recognize their immense value, and I have happily prioritized funding for them in our budget every year since, Hammaker said.

As a Fine & Performing Arts Magnet and an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Hammaker says Harriet Tubman Elementary is committed to developing students who are not only academically successful but also organized, responsible, and prepared for lifelong learning. For the school's leadership team, a custom student planner has become one of the most valuable tools in achieving that mission.

Rather than using a generic or off-the-shelf planner for students, Harriet Tubman Elementary collaborates with School Planner Company each year to create a truly custom school planner that reflects the school's unique goals and instructional approach.



Building a Custom School Planner as a Daily Tool for the Whole Child

The customization process begins with feedback from teachers. The school's IB Coordinator works closely with staff to determine which features will best support classroom instruction, student organization, and communication with families. That feedback is then transformed into a customized planner tailored specifically for the school.

- Among the most valuable features are:
- School-specific policies and resources
- IB Learner Profiles integrated throughout the planner
- Customized calendar layouts that support classroom routines
- Content that reinforces the school's culture and expectations

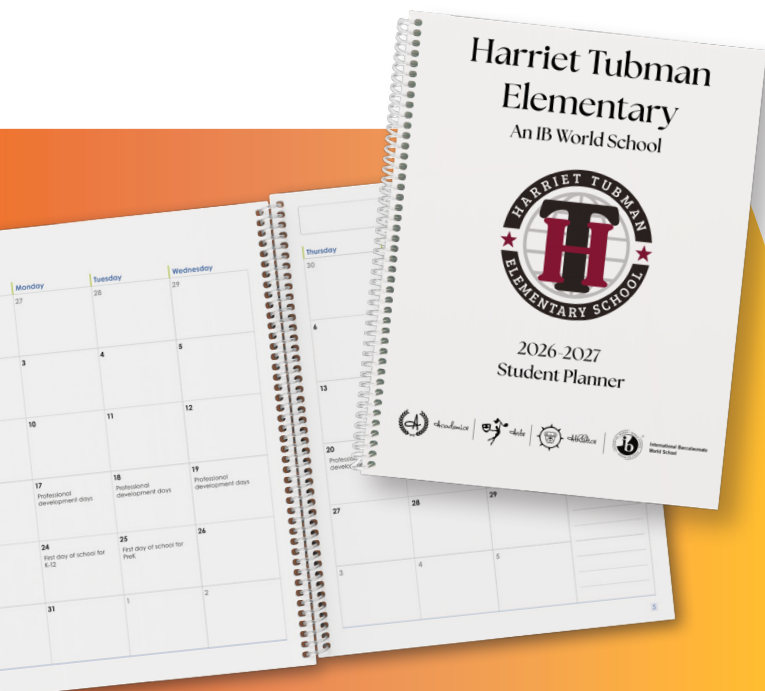
By embedding these resources directly into the planner, students carry an everyday reference guide that supports both academic success and personal growth.

Strengthening Executive Function Skills

For Harriet Tubman Elementary, the planner is much more than a place to write assignments.

It serves as a foundational tool for developing executive functioning skills, including organization, planning, time management, and personal responsibility.

“ We invested in these planners as a foundational tool to help our students strengthen their executive functioning skills, build lifelong organization habits, and take authentic ownership of their daily learning, says Hammaker.





Creating Structure and Confidence

Teachers have found that consistency is the key to success. When planners become part of the daily classroom routine, students quickly develop habits that carry over into every aspect of their school day.

The planners are intentionally incorporated into classroom routines at the beginning and end of each day. Teachers use them to review assignments, reinforce expectations, and help students prepare for upcoming projects.

This consistent practice has led to noticeable improvements throughout the school.

Students become more proactive in managing their work because they have a clear visual roadmap of assignments, projects, and important dates. With greater organization comes greater confidence.

“ **Because students have a clear, visual roadmap of their assignments and projects, they approach their academic tasks with greater confidence and less anxiety,** *says Head of School Tonya Hammaker.*

Teachers have also observed smoother classroom transitions and fewer organizational issues. Students know where their materials are, planners are less likely to be misplaced, and valuable instructional time is no longer lost searching for assignments or supplies.



Strengthening the Home-School Connection

The planner also serves as an important communication bridge between school and home.

Parents are encouraged to review planners regularly, allowing families to stay informed about assignments, project deadlines, and upcoming school events. This consistent communication helps reinforce student accountability while keeping parents actively engaged in their child's education.



Reinforcing School Culture Every Day

Because Harriet Tubman Elementary integrates its IB Learner Profiles and school expectations directly into every planner, students encounter the school's core values every day.

Rather than existing only on classroom posters or hallway displays, concepts such as being principled, caring, reflective, and open-minded become part of students' daily routines.

The planner becomes more than an organizational tool. It becomes a daily reminder of the values that define the school's community.



A Proven Investment

After 15 years as a Chicago Public Schools administrator, Harriet Tubman's principal has seen firsthand the importance of selecting tools that meet the unique needs of each school community. Her recommendation is clear.

“ **Custom school planners are completely customizable to your school's unique identity and are a proven, practical investment in developing your students' executive functioning skills,** *Hammaker says.*

For Harriet Tubman Elementary, investing in a custom planner isn't simply about helping students remember homework. It's about equipping them with the organizational habits, confidence, and responsibility they need to succeed in school, and well beyond the classroom.

Request Your Quote or Sample Kit

Ready to start your journey towards a more organized school community with students who demonstrate more initiative and independence? A custom school planner can help.

Reach out to customize@schoolplanner.com to explore pricing or to request a free sample of a custom planner to see for yourself how unique a truly custom product can be.



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