FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION FORWARD

Secondary Academic Design Team Recommendations

August 2014

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"The issue today is not what you know; there's no competitive advantage today in knowing more than the person next to you. The world doesn't care what you know. What the world cares about is what you can do with what you know."

~ Tony Wagner
Expert in Residence at Harvard University's Innovation Lab

Abstract

Across the United States, schools are evaluating their ability to prepare students for the changing needs of college and career readiness. In response to this need and as part of Shakopee schools *Framework for Education Forward* the Secondary Academic Design team has undergone a several month process to research and create recommendations based on the best and next practices in education that will help prepare students for their future world of education and work. The Academic Design Team met twice monthly from March 2014 through August 2014. During this time, the committee reviewed cutting edge educational settings, the current instructional and achievement conditions of Shakopee, and what practices would have the greatest impact for Shakopee students. The Academic Design Team identified key shifts in practice and initiatives in the areas of tracking and communication of student learning, academic programming, resources and structures, and beliefs and practices. As a result of this work, implementation teams will be created around these four areas to create an action plan that may take up to five years to implement. As the Academic Design Team learned from personalized learning expert Jim Rickabough, changing schools isn't an effort problem, but rather a systems problem.

Table of Contents:

Overview of Design Team Recommendations:

Each Recommendation template includes the following:

- Connection to District Strategic Plan 2016
- A vision for Shakopee Schools after implementation
- The recommended outcomes for each design area
- Key required shifts to beliefs and practices needed to implement initiatives to meet these objectives
- Key initiatives for the implementation teams to focus changes to secondary programming
- Five year action plans, developed by implementation teams, to put the initiatives into practice

Shakopee Public School District

Strategic Roadmap 2016

Mission Statement

Our Core Purpose with Distinction

Develop and empower lifelong learners

to achieve their highest potential and success

Core Values

What Drives Our Words and Actions

Stewardship	*Responsible use of all resources*
Excellence	*To be our best, expect our best*
Integrity	*Do the right thing even when no one is watching*
Community	*Together, we achieve more by creating strengths out of our differences*
Respect	*Treat others as they wish to be treated*

Vision - 2016

What We Intend to Create

By 2016, Shakopee Public Schools will provide:

- High value educational experiences for each student
- Robust educational tools for learning in all classrooms
- Clear Shakopee Public Schools identity and brand
- Aligned programming and facilities for lifelong learners
- High quality staff – the right people, in the right seat, doing the right work
- Partnership with engaged parents and community

Strategic Directions

Focused Allocation of Resources

A. Moving toward clear and accessible pathways for readiness at each level

B. Applying information to increase learning and drive decision making

C. Developing technology and infrastructure to improve learning and operations

D. Strengthening our systems for evaluation, accountability, and development

E. Implementing a comprehensive facilities plan

Background

During the 2013-14 school year, Shakopee Public Schools underwent a process to create recommendations for changes to academic programming at the secondary level. The School Board charged the Secondary Academic Design Team to use the following vision outcomes to guide their planning:

- A District of Excellence
- High expectations of students and staff
- Relentless focus on student achievement, with no excuses
- Continuous improvement mindset and practices
- All students Career and College Ready
- Integration of Career Readiness Skills
- Electives and learning experiences organized through a framework of Academic Areas of Interest (6-12)
- Structured support of students to perform at grade level standard or above (guaranteed floor with no ceiling)
- Elimination of the achievement gap
- Transformation of the learning environment and experience through the use of digital tools and online learning
- Personalized learning environment

Key Recommendations

ALL of our students need relevant, authentic learning and real world experiences, connected through community, business, and post-secondary partnerships that emphasize career readiness skill development. We need a system in which students' personalized learning plans guide them through appropriate paths to readiness for their next steps.

The vision of the academic design team is a culture of excellence and equity, built upon continuous improvement and engaging, student-centered learning opportunities in order to fulfill the district mission and vision.
In order to create this culture, the design team has identified necessary shifts and initiatives in the following four areas:

- Tracking and Communication of Student Learning
- Academic Programming
- Resources and Structures
- Beliefs and Practices

Next Steps

The process of implementing the work of the academic design team will begin during the 2014-15 school year and continue for **up to five years.**
Implementation teams will be formed during the fall of 2014 around each of the four recommendation areas. These teams will work in conjunction with the curriculum articulation teams to develop action plans for each of the design team initiatives.

Shared Definition of Terms

Career Readiness Skills (The 6Cs):

- **Critical Thinking:** *Reason effectively, use systematic thinking, and make judgments and decisions to solve problems in both conventional and innovative ways.*
- **Collaboration:** *Working together to share, advocate, and compromise on issues critical to a team's success using intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in both digital and traditional settings.*
- **Communication:** *Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts.*
- **Creativity**: *Exploration of imagination (curiosity); refining and improving original ideas; viewing failure as an opportunity to learn (persistence).*
- **Cultural Competency**: *Learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, lifestyles in personal, work, and community context.*
- **Character:** *The inward values that determine outward actions: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and resilience.*

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP):
An individualized learning plan is a tool, which organizes and presents a variety of student information. The ILP can be utilized by the student, educators, and parents to personalize the learning experience, provide intervention, and prepare students for post-secondary plans. ILPs may include standardized assessment data, classroom achievement results, interest surveys, academic and non-academic student history, and other student-specific information.

Personalized Learning:
Personalized learning is a student-centered approach to teaching and learning that utilizes the best instructional strategies available, combined with specific, up to date ILP information to help students leverage their interests and abilities to maximize each of their educational experiences. Personalized learning moves the educational focus from what teachers are planning and doing in classrooms to what students are doing and learning, with the support of all educators.

Professional Learning Community (PLC):
Professional learning communities are a vehicle for professional development that moves the focus from hoping instructional practices are effective to evaluating their true impact on student learning. In a professional learning community, educators come together to investigate how their practices or possible practices are successful by asking four questions:

1. What do we want each student to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning it?
4. How will we respond if they already know it?

SAMR model *(*From: *Puentedura, R. R., Ph.D.)*
A framework used to plan and evaluate any instructional strategy utilizing technology.

Substitution – Technology acts as a direct tool substitute, with no functional change.
Augmentation – Technology acts as a direct tool substitute, with functional improvement
Modification – Technology allows for significant task redesign.
Redefinition – Technology allows for creation of new tasks, previously inconceivable.

Standards-based Assessment and Grading (SBG):
A method of assessment and reporting that moves grading from point accumulation and averaging based on general performance and behaviors to assessing and reporting mastery of essential learning and skills.

Shakopee Public Schools

Recommendation Area 1: Tracking and Communication of Student Learning

Linkage to District Strategic Roadmap	Recommendation Outcomes
Vision 2016 Statement: High value educational experiences for each student **Strategic Directions and Vision Cards:** A. Moving toward clear and accessible pathways for readiness at each level B. Applying information to increase learning and drive decision making	**1.1 Mastery of Standards** Schools must ensure student mastery of essential standards in order to earn class credit. **1.2 Academic Skills** Key academic skills must be assessed in a similar manner across all curricular areas. **1.3 Career Readiness Skills (6 Cs)** Career Readiness skills must be continuously assessed on an E-12 developmental framework**.** **1.4 Individualized Learning Plans** Students, parents, and educators will develop and have access to a continuously updated individualized learning plan.

Vision of Recommendation Completion	Key Required Shifts
• District of Excellence with high expectations for students and staff, a focus on student achievement, and a growth mindset.	• FROM individualized teacher assessment practices TO teachers' assessment practices linked to and comparable to other teachers and visible to students and families. • FROM point accumulation and averaging based on general performance and behaviors TO assessing and reporting mastery on essential learning and skills.
• Personalized learning environment with easy and continuous access for all students, educators and parents to student profile, interests, accomplishments and needs.	• FROM teachers accountable for delivery TO a shared accountability with students and families for their learning. • FROM limited opportunities for parent and family engagement TO parents and families being active partners in supporting student learning.

Key Initiatives	**1. Create an online Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) for all students to include interest inventory, strengths, learning style, career readiness skills (6Cs), course and assessment history, and 6-year plan.**
	2. Design an assessment, grading, and reporting system based on student proficiency in career readiness skills, academic skills, and course content knowledge, utilizing standards-based assessment and grading.
	3. Create a developmental framework utilizing the career readiness skills (6 Cs) for grades E-12 and assess using a common rubric.

2014 – 15 Actions	2015 – 16 Actions	2016 – 17 Actions	2017 & Beyond
• TBD	• TBD	• TBD	• TBD

Design Parameters for Recommendation Area 1 (Tracking and Communication of Student Learning):

A. Individualized learning plans will include at least:

1. Interest inventory, strengths, learning style profile
2. Career Readiness Skills (6Cs) - Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration, Cultural Competence, Character
3. Assessment History
4. Course History
5. A 6 Year Plan including:
    - Core course plan (math, English, science, social studies)
    - Electives based on student interests and skills
    - Mentor name
    - Capstone Project options
    - My Story: personal, dynamic narrative by student
    - Life Goal: "I want to…"

B. Grading and reporting system will include:

1. An assessment system based on student proficiency in:
    - Career Readiness Skills (6Cs) assessed through the use of common rubrics across grade levels (all aligned)
    - Course content knowledge and academic skills assessed through the use of standards-based grading and reporting
2. A common understanding and implementation of standards-based grading and reporting at the classroom level.
3. A common understanding of what a grade should represent and appropriate reporting mechanisms for transcripts, grades, etc.

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Recommendation Area 2: Academic Programming

Linkage to District Strategic Roadmap	Recommendation Outcomes
Vision 2016 Statement: High value educational experiences for each student Robust educational tools for learning in all classrooms Aligned programming and facilities for lifelong learners **Strategic Directions and Vision Cards:** A. Moving toward clear and accessible pathways for readiness at each level B. Applying information to increase learning and drive decision making C. Developing technology and infrastructure to improve learning and operations	**2.1 College and Career Readiness** Secondary programming will enable students to navigate a course of study aligned to areas of interest with an added value (dual credit, internship/apprenticeship, capstone experience, certificate, cross-content, etc.) at upper grade levels. All courses will be at or above grade level and include a strong focus on literacy and career readiness skills. **2.2 Classroom Experience** Every classroom will utilize personalized learning approaches and quality assessment practices in order to provide students with relevant and engaging learning experiences that connect to previous coursework and future application.

Vision of Recommendation Completion	Key Required Shifts
• Learning environment is accessible and engaging to all students.	• FROM classroom time as the constant and learning as the variable TO time as a variable and learning as a constant.
• All students have met or exceeded grade-level standards for readiness and achievement gap is eliminated.	• FROM readiness for learning determined by age & grade TO readiness determined by demonstrated proficiency and skill.
• All educators are skilled in student-centered and personalized instruction.	• FROM teacher-focused instruction TO student-focused learning.

Key Initiatives	**1. Design a plan to organize elective courses (grade 6 – 12) based on areas of interest: Arts & Communication, Business & Entrepreneurship, Engineering & Manufacturing, Health Sciences, Human Services, and Science & Technology.**
	2. Implement a District E-12 Literacy plan to embed core literacy skills in all content areas.
	3. Implement a District E-12 model for instruction, assessment for learning, and student engagement, including practices such as inquiry learning, project or problem based learning, digital curriculum, and other personalized approaches.
	4. Design and implement a comprehensive system for intervention and acceleration.
	5. Evaluate and refine current Grade 6 – 12 course requirements to ensure Career and College readiness.

2014 – 15 Actions	2015 – 16 Actions	2016 – 17 Actions	2017 – 18 Actions
• TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Design Parameters for Recommendation Area 2 (Academic Programming):

A. All programming and instruction will remain focused on core literacy skills.

1. Literacy skills will include reading, writing, and critical thinking.
2. Literacy skills will focus on academic and industry standards relevant to the content area.

B. All course experiences will support students to learn content and skills at or above grade level expectations.

1. Interventions for students who are achieving above or below grade level standards will follow a consistent, district-wide multi-tiered system of supports.
2. Purposefully designed opportunities for acceleration will support students both above and below grade level standard.

C. Elective course options will be aligned based on areas of interests: Arts & Communication, Business & Entrepreneurship, Engineering & Manufacturing, Health Sciences, Human Services, and Science & Technology.

1. Alignment of courses in grades 6-12 and/or E-12 (when possible)
2. Provide a progression of courses that increases in depth and complexity and includes "mini" capstone experiences to prepare for 11th and 12th grade capstone experiences
3. 11th and 12th grade electives must include approved added value programming, such as dual credit, internship/apprenticeship, capstone experience, certificate or specialized programs such as CAPS or AA options, etc.
4. Focused on relevant professional or industry needs and standards
5. Involvement in community and business to ensure real world application
6. Flexibility to ensure students can explore multiple areas of interest or go deeper within a specific area of interest

D. **The E-12 instructional model will require engaging, student-centered learning experiences within each classroom. The model will focus on best and next practices for personalized learning approaches, such as:**

1. Problem/project/challenge based learning
2. Student voice/choice – less teacher directed
3. Flexible pacing (remediation/acceleration/differentiation)
4. Online/Blended Learning
5. Community, business, and post-secondary partnerships
6. Inquiry
7. Connections across curricular areas/real world experiences
8. Digital curriculum and tools to support customization

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Recommendation Area 3: Resources and Structures

Linkage to District Strategic Roadmap	Recommendation Outcomes
Vision 2016 Statement: High value educational experiences for each student Robust educational tools for learning in all classrooms Aligned programming and facilities for lifelong learners High quality staff – the right people, in the right seat, doing the right work Partnership with engaged parents and community **Strategic Directions and Vision Cards:** B. Applying information to increase learning and drive decision making C. Developing technology and infrastructure to improve learning and operations E. Implementing a comprehensive facilities plan	**3.1 Time** Daily schedule and calendar must be flexible in order to allow learning at any pace, and access to curriculum must enable learning at any time, in any place. **3.2 Space** Buildings and classrooms must have design flexibility to support a variety of student-centered instructional practices. **3.3 Technology** Learning at any time, in any place requires access to high-quality technology for all students and staff. **3.4 Grade Configuration** Secondary buildings should be configured 6-8 and 9-12.
Vision of Recommendation Completion	**Key Required Shifts**
• Flexible learning environments support new instructional practices.	• FROM current classroom configuration TO innovative and flexible space. • FROM rigid scheduling tied to student seat time TO scheduling that supports greater flexibility of the learning environment. • FROM limited and inconsistent access TO ubiquitous and equitable access to technology.
• Student learning is directly impacted by experiences in the local and global community.	• FROM isolated and insulated classrooms TO a school that is connected to and integrated with the local and global community.

Key Initiatives	
	1. Refine current daily schedule and calendar to improve student options and align with personalized instructional models.
	2. Research and recommend E – 12 model learning environments for classroom and building layout.
	3. Implement the initiatives described by the technology design team to support student learning.

2014 – 15 Actions	2015 – 16 Actions	2016 – 17 Actions	2017 – 18 Actions
• TBD	• TBD	• TBD	• TBD

Design Parameters for Recommendation Area #3 (Resources and Structures):

A. Middle School academic programs will be configured for grades 6-8. High School academic programs will be configured for grades 9-12.

B. Scheduling, physical environment, access to resources, and business practices will promote and support personalized learning.

C. Technology integration will utilize the SAMR model to support instruction in career readiness skills (6Cs), academic skills, and course content knowledge.

D. Any modification, creation, or elimination of resources and structures will increase or improve access for students, educators, and community, while improving opportunities for added value programming.

Shakopee Public Schools

Recommendation Area 4: Beliefs and Practices

Linkage to District Strategic Roadmap		Recommendation Outcomes
Core Values		**4.1 High Expectations for all staff** Staff is committed to the professional growth and development needed to ensure that all students are college and career ready. **4.2 Commitment to Continuous Improvement** All staff must be committed to the district systems for using our results to reach our vision of excellence. **4.3 Elimination of the Achievement Gap** Staff is committed to raising the achievement of all students, while eliminating achievement gaps between demographic groups. **4.4 Equity** All staff must be committed to a) embracing diversity as a fact of life and strength of our community, b) building individual and organizational capacity to meet the needs of our diverse learners, and c) removing barriers that limit access and success. **4.5 Partnerships** Students and Staff must work in partnership with community / business / higher education to ensure the relevance and application of student learning to the post-secondary world.
Stewardship	*Responsible use of all resources*	
Excellence	*To be our best, expect our best*	
Integrity	*Do the right thing even when no one is watching*	
Community	*Together, we achieve more by creating strengths out of our differences*	
Respect	*Treat others as they wish to be treated*	

Vision of Recommendation Completion	Key Required Shifts
• All staff actively engaged in the PLC process on a continuous basis with demonstrated performance improvement.	• FROM individual and sporadic efforts TO consistent and high-performing PLCs.
• Equity is used as a lens at the classroom, school, district, and board level.	• FROM assuming that our system works for all students TO actively ensuring that it works for ALL students and families.
• High performance is the norm for all staff and students.	• FROM a fixed mindset and contentment with the status quo TO a growth mindset and desire to keep getting better as an organization.

Key Initiatives	**1. Improve and expand PLC work through more embedded time and effective collaborative practices.**
	2. Design and implement a district equity plan focused on: • **Embracing the diversity of our community and improving our community outreach;** • **Removing barriers that limit students' ability to access all offered programs;** • **Building staff capacity to differentiate to meet the individual learning and cultural needs of students.**
	3. Design a system for establishing and maintaining partnerships with local community / business / higher education.
	4. Develop a district plan to move towards a culture of excellence and equity, in which all staff commit and remain accountable to high expectations and continuous improvement for self and students.

2014 – 15 Actions	2015 – 16 Actions	2016 – 17 Actions	2017 – 18 Actions
• TBD	• TBD	• TBD	• TBD

Design Parameters for Recommendation Area #4 (Beliefs and Practices):

A. Create a shared definition of equity and how to approach improvements regarding achievement gaps that is grounded in student results.

1. Incorporate equity conversations into day-to-day operations.
2. Utilize student achievement results to monitor progress toward eliminating achievement gaps.
3. Improve educator practice to respond to diverse classroom populations to better meet individual needs

B. The equity plan will strengthen community relationships by enhancing our parent outreach programs and establishing more robust community support networks.

C. Continuous improvement needs to happen at all levels, from educators improving their classrooms and moving towards student-centered learning, to departments, buildings, and the district improving at a systemic level.

D. PLC work will incorporate professional development best practices in terms of structure and organization. The focus of PLC work will be on impacting student learning.

1. Buildings will define clear meeting times, agendas, collaborative practices, and a means for communicating progress.
2. Educators will focus on student results and how instructional practices are impacting student achievement.

E. All initiatives regarding Beliefs and Practices should include a continuous feedback loop as a means to assess and improve through significant, built-in reflection and refinement at every level, from classroom to district-level improvements.

F. Any community, business, or post-secondary partnership will act in service of the E-12 instructional model.

Executive Summary of Literature

Need for Change

The world has changed dramatically since the advent of public education, but the delivery model has not kept pace with the changes. The original goal of public education was to prepare students for work in primarily industrial fields. According to Baker (2013), "to prepare for industrial work, K-12 students were taught how to read and write, along with topics that could help them in their everyday lives such as history and arithmetic. The education system emphasized memorization and judged students by their ability to recall factoids on multiple-choice exams. If the education system didn't provide the specific abilities to perform a function in a factory, the employer could fill the void."

As our current students emerge into the world of work, however, they need a vastly different level of preparation. Pervasive use of technology has transformed the way that each person interacts with the world. Technology-driven globalization has connected citizens of the world and demolished barriers between countries, fields of work, languages, and cultures. Each student entering the world of work must now compete with a global supply of workers. For that competition, the skills that students possess are far more important than the knowledge that they have. In a 2012 presentation at the Skillshare "Penny" conference, Tony Wagner, an author and expert on transforming education, noted this necessary change: "The issue today is not what you know; there's no competitive advantage today in knowing more than the person next to you. The world doesn't care what you know. What the world cares about is what you can do with what you know."

There is an overwhelming amount of data that show that students are not prepared with the skills necessary in a global economy. Students are leaving school without important college and career readiness skills like critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and innovation. Wagner (2008b) put it simply when he wrote, "Even in America's most highly regarded secondary schools, we are not teaching or testing the skills that matter most for college, careers, and citizenship in the 21st century." If students are not prepared for college, their careers, or their lives, then something in education needs to change.

New Models for Education

In fact, there are many schools all over the country that have begun to think creatively and create new models for education. Sir Ken Robinson, an international advisor on education, has recently gained fame for a series of talks that dramatically highlight the inherent problems in our current system and offer some suggestions for change. In a talk entitled "How to Escape Education's Death Valley" (2013), he points out the common features of successfully innovative schools: "They're very personalized. They have strong support for the teachers, close links with the community, a broad and diverse curriculum, and programs that involve students outside school as well as inside school. And they work." The Team looked at a variety of instructional environments and identified common features that effectively improve student achievement.

When comparing and contrasting these and other new models, the Team came across similarities. These similarities matched closely with the list of "8 Building Blocks for the Future of Schools" compiled by Scott McLeod (2013a):

- Project- and inquiry-based learning environments
- Authentic, real-world work
- Competency-based education and standards-based grading
- 1:1 computing initiatives
- Digital and online information resources
- Online communities of interest
- Adaptive software and data systems
- Alternative credentialing mechanisms

Almost all effective new models for education incorporate these elements. These new models support the needs of students, provide personalized learning, and have established effective technology integration. Along with the new models for education above, there are specific elements and educational methods that need to change to support the current needs of students. The following graphic from Scott McLeod lays out the three big shifts that schools need to make.

FROM	TO
Low-Level Thinking An overwhelming emphasis on students doing lower-level thinking tasks (factual recall, procedural regurgitation)	**High-Level Thinking** Students more often engaging in tasks of greater cognitive complexity (creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, effective communication)
Analog Local classrooms that are largely based on pens/pencils, notebook paper, ring binders, and printed textbooks	**Digital** Local and global learning spaces that are deeply and richly technology-infused (devices + Internet)
Teacher-Directed Classrooms that are overwhelmingly teacher-controlled	**Student-Directed** Learning environments that enable greater student agency (ownership and control of what, how, when, where, who with, and why they learn)

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These shifts manifest themselves in a number of ways to create a new school paradigm. The following chart elaborates on the concrete changes one might see in a new school model:

Typical Current Practices	Examples of Transformative Practices
Age-based cohorts	Learning/progress-based grouping
Classrooms with randomly assigned age mates	Small, collaborative, flexible learning groups
Standardized solutions	Customized learning plans and processes
Indirect measures of learning	Direct measures of learning
Inefficient, partially productive systems	Focused, aligned, efficient learning organizations
Largely face-to-face teacher-directed instruction	Electronic, digitally-blended instructional approaches
Patchwork of standards and parameters driving educational organization and processes	Coherent, flexible, research-based, innovation-focused, teaching and learning processes
Largely print-based instructional materials and textbooks	Electronic/digital, highly customizable textbooks and on-line instructional and learning resources
Highly structured, traditional staffing models	Student-centered, relational staffing, featuring professional partnerships with experts, certified staff, community resource people, and mentors
Technology-assisted teaching and learning	Technology integrated and delivered learning options
Educational progress measured by seat time and credits	Progress toward graduation measured by authentic learning, using direct measures
Traditional annual school calendar and schedule	Instruction and learning delivered anytime, anywhere, 24/7 when students are ready to learn
Learning almost exclusively based in schools	Learning occurring where students are, with schools as the base from which students and teachers work

credit: CESA #1

Personalized Learning

The Institute @ CESA #1 works in partnership with twenty-nine school districts in Southeastern Wisconsin to create a personalized learning education system and to test personalized learning models and strategies. They then provide their research and learning to the public. The Institute believes that "a public education system that is student-centered and based on personalized learning will be more effective, dynamic, financially sustainable, and better able to meet the needs of today's learners." ("Personalized Learning," 2014).

According to The Institute (2014), at the core of personalized learning are three components: learner profiles, customized learning paths, and proficiency-based progress.

- **Learner Profiles –** Learner profiles are the first step in understanding each student as an individual. Compiled with data, learner profiles provide extensive information on how students learn best. With this information, educators can most effectively plan what learning environment and strategies to use for each student.
- **Customized Learning Paths –** With personalized learning, rather than looking at a class as a whole, each student is looked at as a unique individual. In this environment and with a customized learning path, the educator is able to understand and use each student's individual interests, strengths, and learning style.
- **Proficiency-based Progress –** All too frequently, a class pace is defined by time instead of student proficiency. In a personalized learning model, advancement is determined by student proficiency in regards to pre-established standards.

When learning is personalized in a classroom, students are co-owners of their learning experience. Opportunities for student achievement and student engagement lead to student investment in learning. Fundamentally, each student is recognized as an individual, and the unique learning traits of each individual are used to provide choice and flexibility, which result in student ownership and growth in learning.

Career Readiness Skills

Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), a group whose mission is "to serve as a catalyst to position 21st century readiness at the center of US K-12 education by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders" ("Our Mission"), has identified the existing gap between what students learn in school and what they need to know in 21st century communities and work environments.

Drawing from existing and credible educational resources, including Bloom's Taxonomy, literature from Sir Ken Robinson, and more, P21 identified the following learning and innovation skills necessary for students: creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration. Tony Wagner, author of *Creating Innovators* and *The Global Achievement Gap*, also created a list of survival skills for students that he accumulated from interviews with business leaders – critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurship, effective oral and written communication, accessing and analyzing information, and curiosity and imagination (2008a). In an effort to be simultaneously concise and comprehensive, the Team synthesized the following list from those and other sources:

- **Critical Thinking**: Reason effectively, use systematic thinking, and make judgments and decisions to solve problems in both conventional and innovative ways
- **Collaboration:** Working together to share, advocate, and compromise on issues critical to team's success using intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in both digital and traditional settings
- **Communication:** Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts
- **Creativity**: Exploration of imagination (curiosity); refining and improving original ideas; viewing failure as an opportunity to learn (persistence)
- **Cultural Competency:** Learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in personal, work, and community context
- **Character**: The inward values that determine outward actions: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and resilience

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