



Reimagining Middle Schools

Homeroom & Problem Based Learning

Design Team Update #1
October/November 2023

Agenda

- **Where we've been:** high-level summary of work that was done last year
- **Where we're going this year:** develop implementation plans and pilot Homeroom and Problem-Based Learning models
- **Progress update:** where we are currently in the work
- **Next steps:** process and partnership

Reimagining Middle Schools

Our goal is to serve the **developmental, social-emotional, and academic needs of middle school students** by engaging students, families, and staff in restructuring the BSD middle school experience.

<https://bsd405.org/departments/curriculum/reimagining-middle-school-steering-committee/>

Contact Us:

RMS@bsd405.org

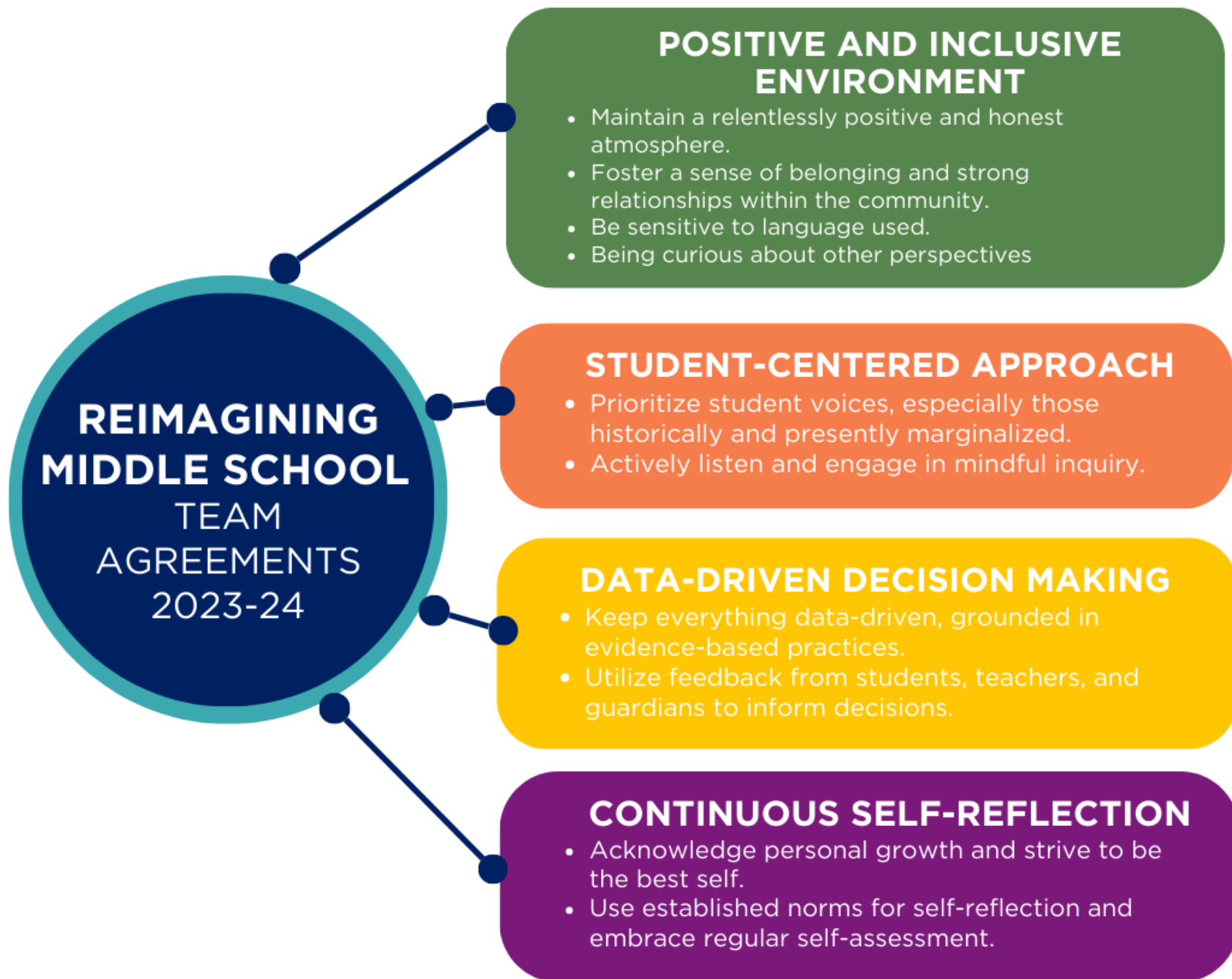
Consolidation

Having right-sized the number of elementary schools in the 2022-2023 school year by [consolidating two schools to accommodate lower enrollment](#), the Bellevue School District made a commitment to continue to study enrollment at our middle schools and the implication of our declining enrollment on our facilities and operating budget.

<https://bsd405.org/departments/finance/middle-school-enrollment-consolidation-study/>

Contact

Us: MSConsolidation@bsd405.org



Where We've Been: Reimagining Middle Schools

Part 1 (2022-23)

2022-23 RMS Goals & Objective:

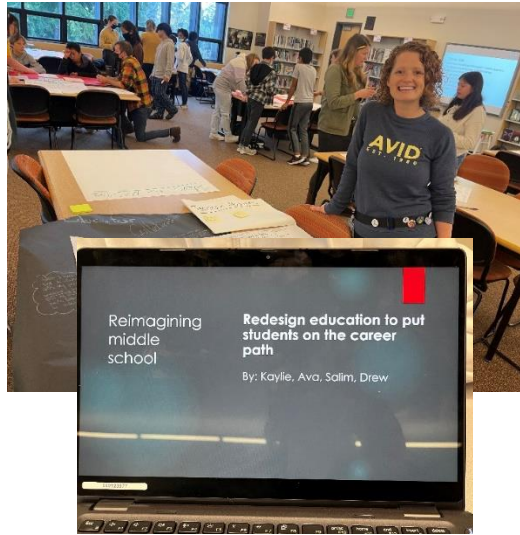
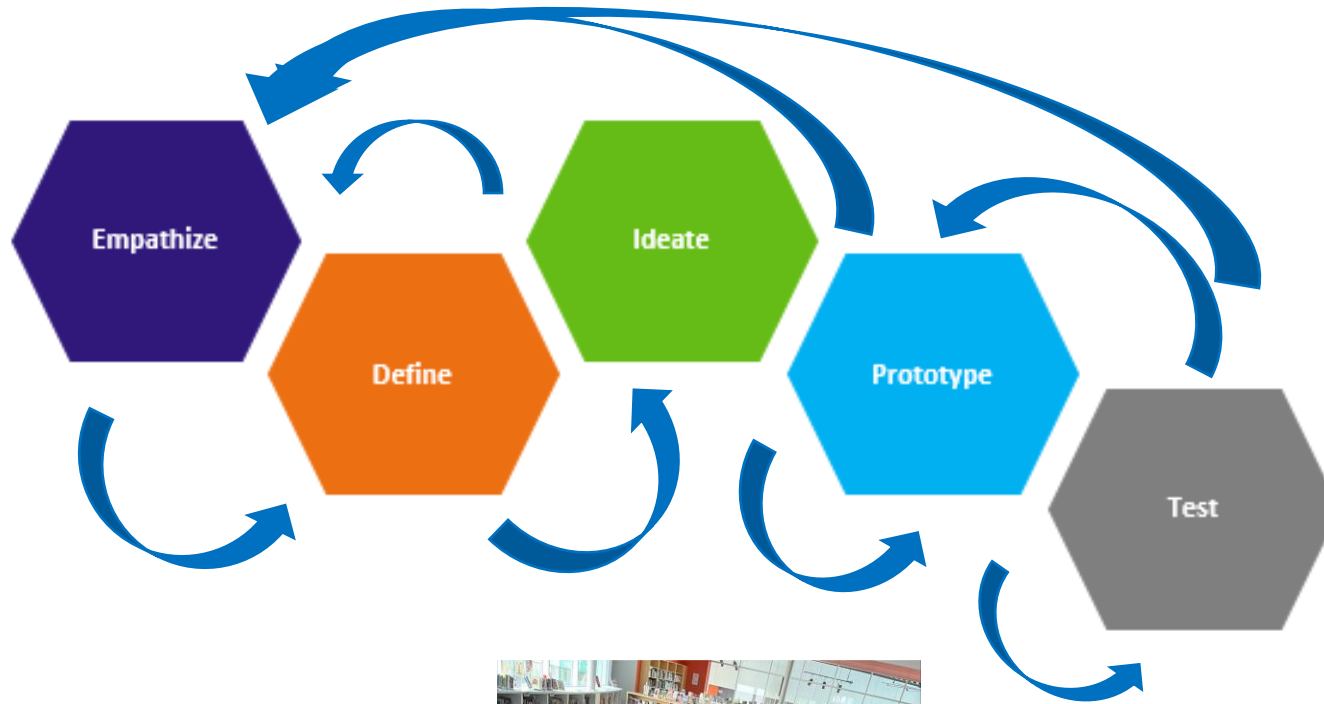
- Overall project goal: To better serve the developmental, social-emotional, and academic needs of middle school students, through engaging students, families, and staff in restructuring the BSD middle school experience. This includes infusing global competency principles and equitable grading practices into our middle school design.
- Objective: Co-design a recommendation based on research for Executive Team approval

Outcome: Executive Team approved the Team's recommendation to implement two models:

- Homeroom
- Problem-Based Learning



Equity-Centered Design Thinking Process



Our Listening Campaigns 2022-23

Empathize

Define

Prototype

Test

Round 1: Empathize & Define

- August-November
- 3 surveys
- 7 listening circles
- 10 Outreach visits
- 11 Student Panelists
- AVID Design Challenge
- Over 70 hours of Shadowing Students
- Additional data

Round 2: Prototype

- March
- 18 Outreach visits
- Over 250 invested stakeholders
- Detailed, qualitative data

Round 3: Test

- April
- MS Students
- MS Staff
- 5th -9th grade Families
- 2,925 completed surveys

Empathize

What Does Research Say?

The Successful Middle School: This We Believe

Essential Attributes

AMLE affirms that an education for young adolescents must be:

Responsive

Using the distinctive nature and identities of young adolescents as the foundation upon which all decisions about school are made.

Challenging

Cultivating high expectations and advancing learning for every member of the school community.

Empowering

Facilitating environments in which students take responsibility for their own learning and contribute positively to the world around them.

Equitable

Providing socially just learning opportunities and environments for every student.

Engaging

Fostering a learning atmosphere that is relevant, participatory, and motivating for all learners.



From *The Successful Middle School: This We Believe*, published by the Association for Middle Level Education. Build your own professional development plan with the Successful Middle School program.

Visit amle.org/sms

Characteristics

Successful middle schools exhibit the following 18 characteristics:



Culture and Community

- Educators respect and value young adolescents.
- The school environment is welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for all.
- Every student's academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate.
- School safety is addressed proactively, justly, and thoughtfully.
- Comprehensive counseling and support services meet the needs of young adolescents.
- The school engages families as valued partners.
- The school collaborates with community and business partners.



Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Educators are specifically prepared to teach young adolescents and possess a depth of understanding in the content areas they teach.
- Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and diverse.
- Health, wellness, and social-emotional competence are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies.
- Instruction fosters learning that is active, purposeful, and democratic.
- Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning as well as measure it.



Leadership and Organization

- A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision.
- Policies and practices are student-centered, unbiased, and fairly implemented.
- Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about young adolescents, equitable practices, and educational research.
- Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration.
- Professional learning for all staff is relevant, long term, and job embedded.
- Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships.

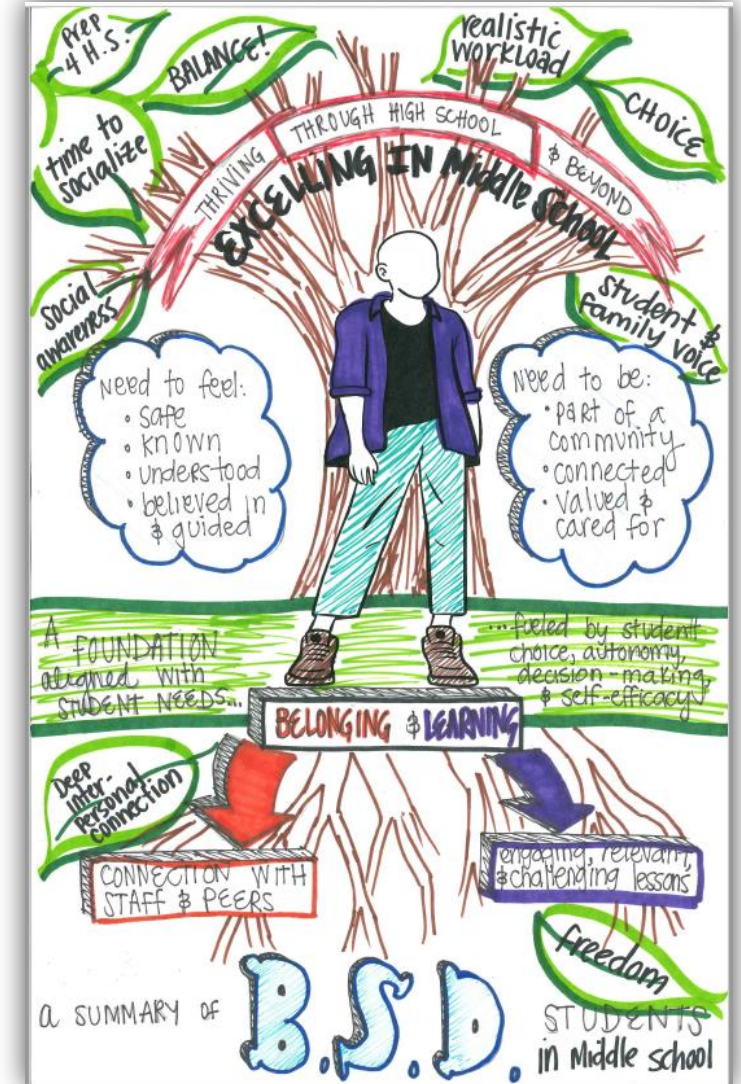
What Emerged from “Empathize” Phase: *Student Needs*

Well-Being in Middle School:

Students’ physical, social-emotional, community, and belonging needs are foundational to learning.

Academic Learning in Middle School:

Ideally defined by student voice, choice, and responsibility in relevant, challenging, interactive, engaging, empowering environments.



Committee Recommendations

This is a time when students can connect with each other and feel like they belong at school. It can also help them when they move up to a new grade.



HOMEROOM

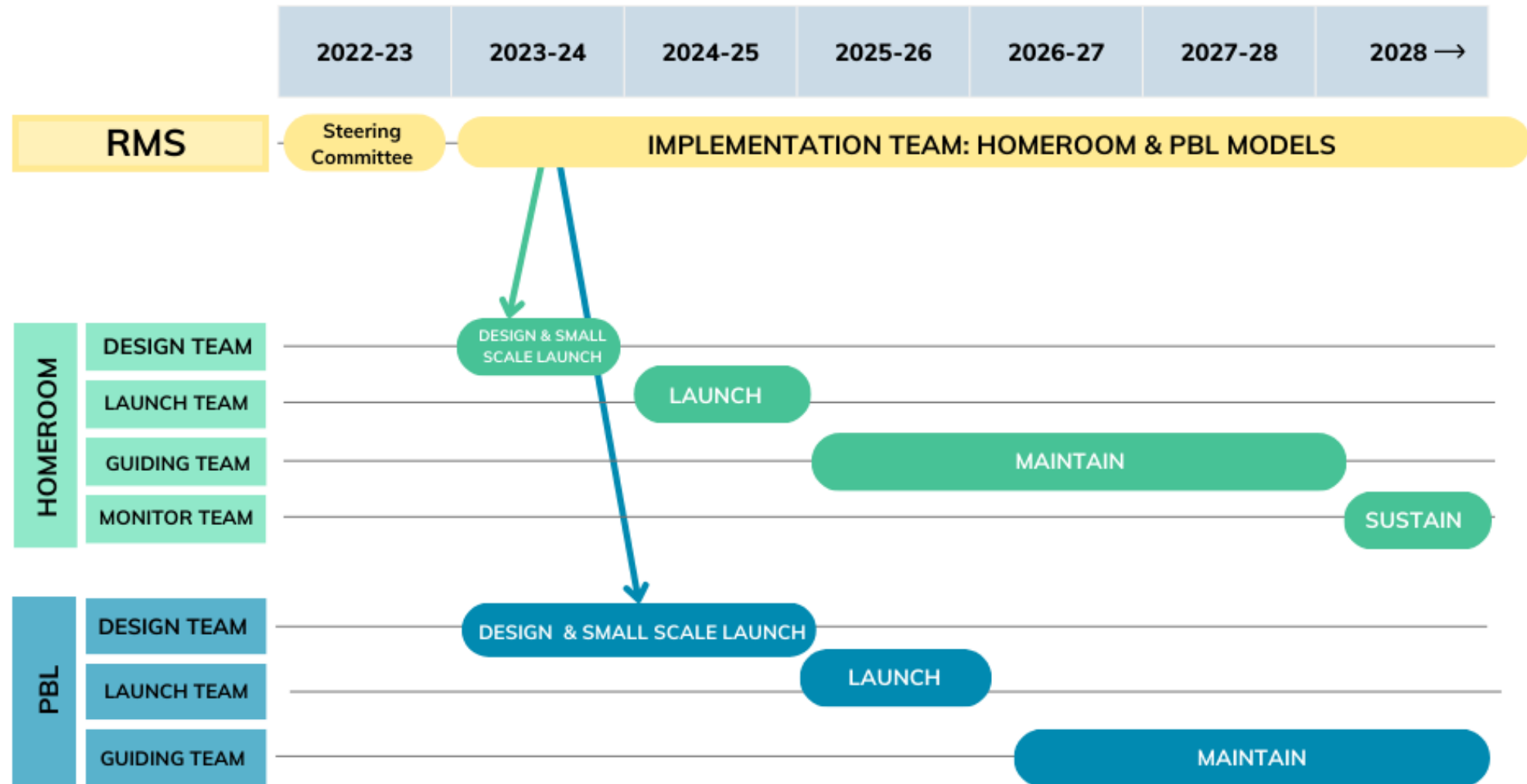


**PROBLEM
BASED
LEARNING**

**ELEVATING GLOBAL
COMPETENCIES**

This is a way of learning where students get to do hands-on activities that are interesting and relevant to them. It can help them learn better and feel more motivated.

Recommended Implementation Timeline



Throughout the projects, we will leverage continuous cycles of improvement, stakeholder input and criteria for evaluation.



Where We're Going: Reimagining Middle Schools Part 2 (2023-24)

Overall project goal:

To collaboratively craft an **implementation plan** to be shared with our Superintendent and Executive Team about **middle school structures and practices** that better serve the **developmental, social-emotional, and academic needs** of our middle school students.

Project deliverables:

The RMS Committee's **implementation plan** will be based on **research & stakeholder engagement** and will phase in the changes **over time** and through a **thoughtful, well-defined, realistic piloting** and **evaluation** process.

2023-24 Design Teams and Consultancy Board

Design Teams

- Responsible for a variety of tasks, including:
 - Drafting **structures** and **systems** to support Homeroom and Problem-Based Learning
 - Determining **professional development** needs for teachers
 - Working with **community partners** to provide additional resources and support
- Engage with community **stakeholders** to gain insights and feedback
- Meet 2x a month

Consultancy Board

- Responsible for providing feedback to help ensure the piloting and evaluation process are:
 - Thoughtful
 - Well-defined
 - Realistic
- May meet in-person as needed; however most business will be conducted via email and online meetings

RMS Equity-Centered Design-Thinking Phases

Define

PBL and Homeroom
Visions in BSD
Middle Schools

Ideate

Develop Draft
Implementation
Plans for PBL and
Homeroom Models.
Include:

- Definition of model
- Relevant research
- Vision

Prototype

Develop Draft
Implementation
Plans for PBL and
Homeroom Models.
Include:

- Component details
- Conditions for success

Develop Draft
Program Evaluation
Plan. Include:

- Measures
- Evidence

Test

- Implementation Plan
- Program Evaluation Plan

Learn / Empathize

Understand what and why of:

RMS Proposal, PBL Model, Homeroom Model, Research, BSD Current Practice, Prototypes

Implementation Plans will include...

Homeroom

- Purpose/Vision (Our Why)
- Desired Outcomes
- How do we know if we are successful?
- Model (Prototype)
 - Components
 - Potential Impacts and possible solution
 - Schedule
 - Resources
- Conditions of Success
- Professional Development Plan
- Communication Plan

Problem-Based Learning

- Purpose/Vision (Our Why)
- Desired Outcomes
- How do we know if we are successful?
- Model (Prototype) (Global Competency)
 - Components
 - Potential Impacts and possible solution
 - Schedule
 - Curriculum & Assessment (**Teaching and Learning Team**)
 - Instructional Practices (Align the domains and Danielson's new framework)
 - Aligning the scope and sequence
 - Equitable assessment and grading
- Conditions of Success
- Professional Development Plan
- Communication Plan

2023-24 RMS Design Teams

RMS Project Lead: Melisa Macias

Homeroom Team

Design Team Lead: Wendy Powell

Tori Knight	Benito Levario, Jr.
Scott Backus	James Peterson
Andy Colleran	Courtney Braxton
Tracey Williams	Beka Anardi
Stacia Neal	Chase Turner
Brendan Schimpf	
Jessi Cassidy	
Susie Q Challancin	
Ayana Carroll	
Eric Sieberson	
Kalena Crafton	

Problem-Based Learning Team

Design Team Lead: Tom Duenwald

Gabe Adams	
Jeff Holzhauer	Alysa Palma
Taylor Tillotson	Genisha Wea
Julie Metz	Carlos Villavieja
Manar Chaaban	Ishaan Mishara
Mathew Wright	Rishita Bhattacharyya
Amy Yaeger	Kiera Perez
Alicia Kallay	Sahaj Bhardway
Mark Wilbert	Evan Palmer
Amber Snapke	
¹⁶ Laura Rinehart	

Representatives include: *Teachers*, Students, Parents, and Administrators from Big Picture, Chinook, Highland, Odle, Tillicum, Tyee

Consultancy Team Members

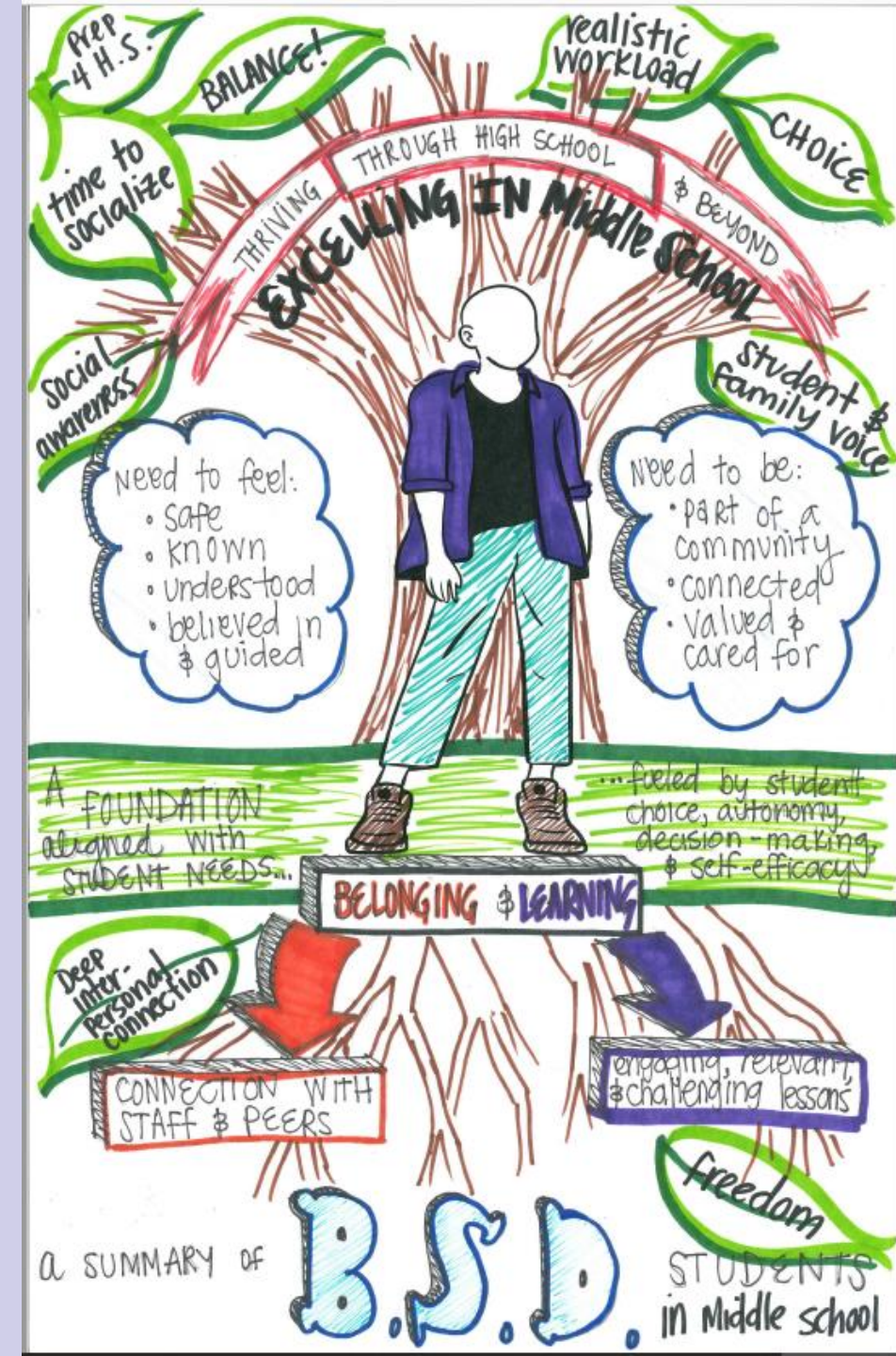
- Garima Agarwal
- Scott Backus
- Sean Baughn
- Rachel Belcastro
- Mariana Borgiani
- Kelsey Campbell
- Noelle Cho
- Dhaarmika Coelho
- Monti Duge
- Sandra Durst-Featherly
- Zeynep Ertugay
- Arianna Giaroli
- Rohini Gongadi
- Michael Johnson
- Kristin Jonas
- Hasini Juluri
- Meteka Kotak
- Michelle Landwehr
- Valeri Makam
- Sankar Mananampattamana
- Radhika Mehra
- Jennifer Muscatel
- Karen Nelson
- Andrea Salazar-Nuñez
- Kristi Schwesinger
- Linda Simovic
- Mira Spurgeon
- Annette Sternberg
- Susan Thomas
- Kristin Tinder
- Eva Tseng
- Genisha Wea
- Brendan Williams
- Muazma Zahid



Homeroom

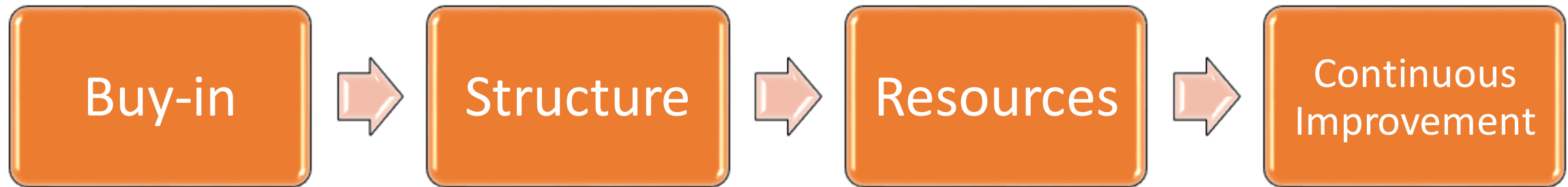
Vision

Our BSD middle school
"communities" will experience an
inclusive culture of support,
connection, and empowerment as
we navigate change, find our
voice, and share in collective joy.

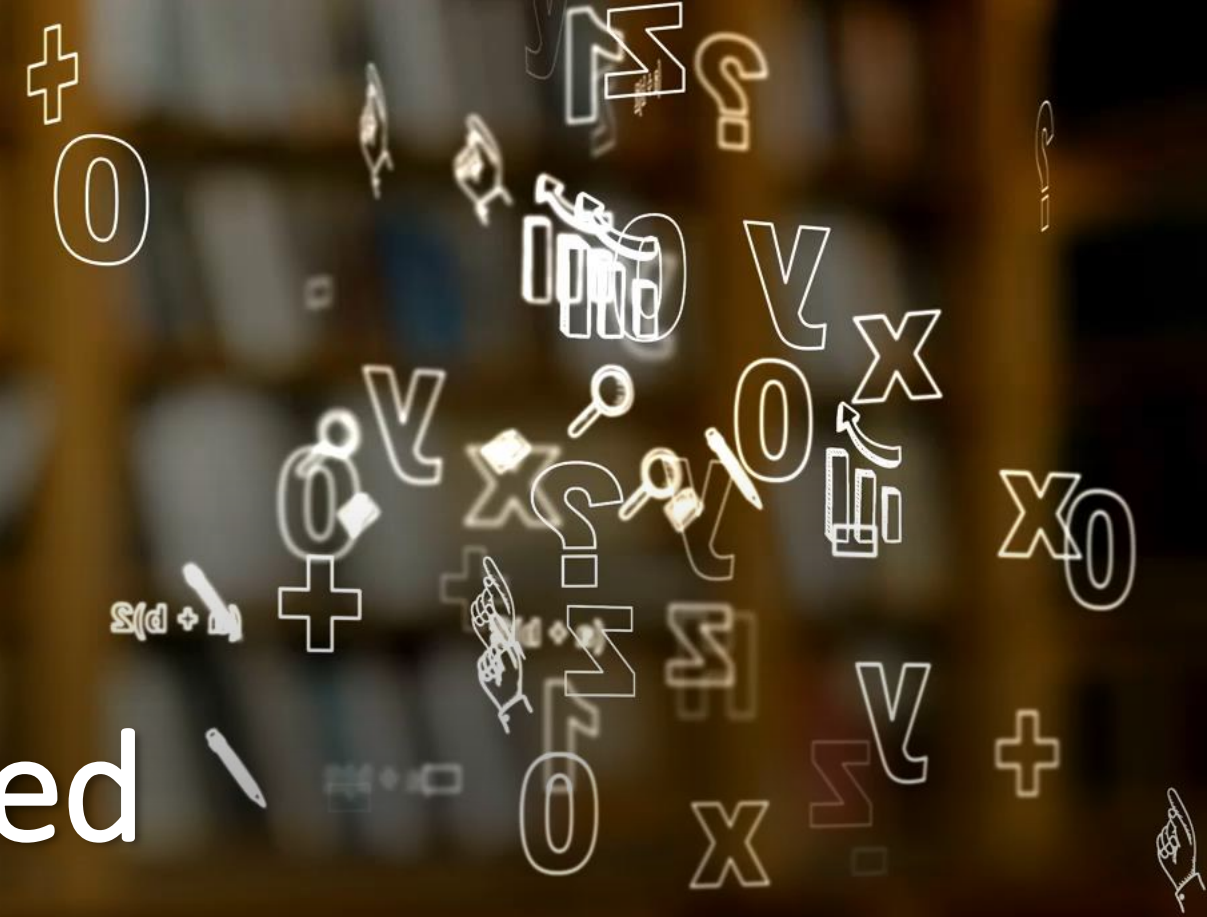


The Homeroom Design Team has brainstormed the following
components to include in the Prototype

(i.e. the Model)



Problem-Based Learning



To create a Vision for PBL in BSD Middle Schools, the PBL Design Team first explored a working model



Student Engagement / Teacher as Guide

- Promote learning environments that empower students to take control of their learning and support teachers to be guides through open-ended inquiry



Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

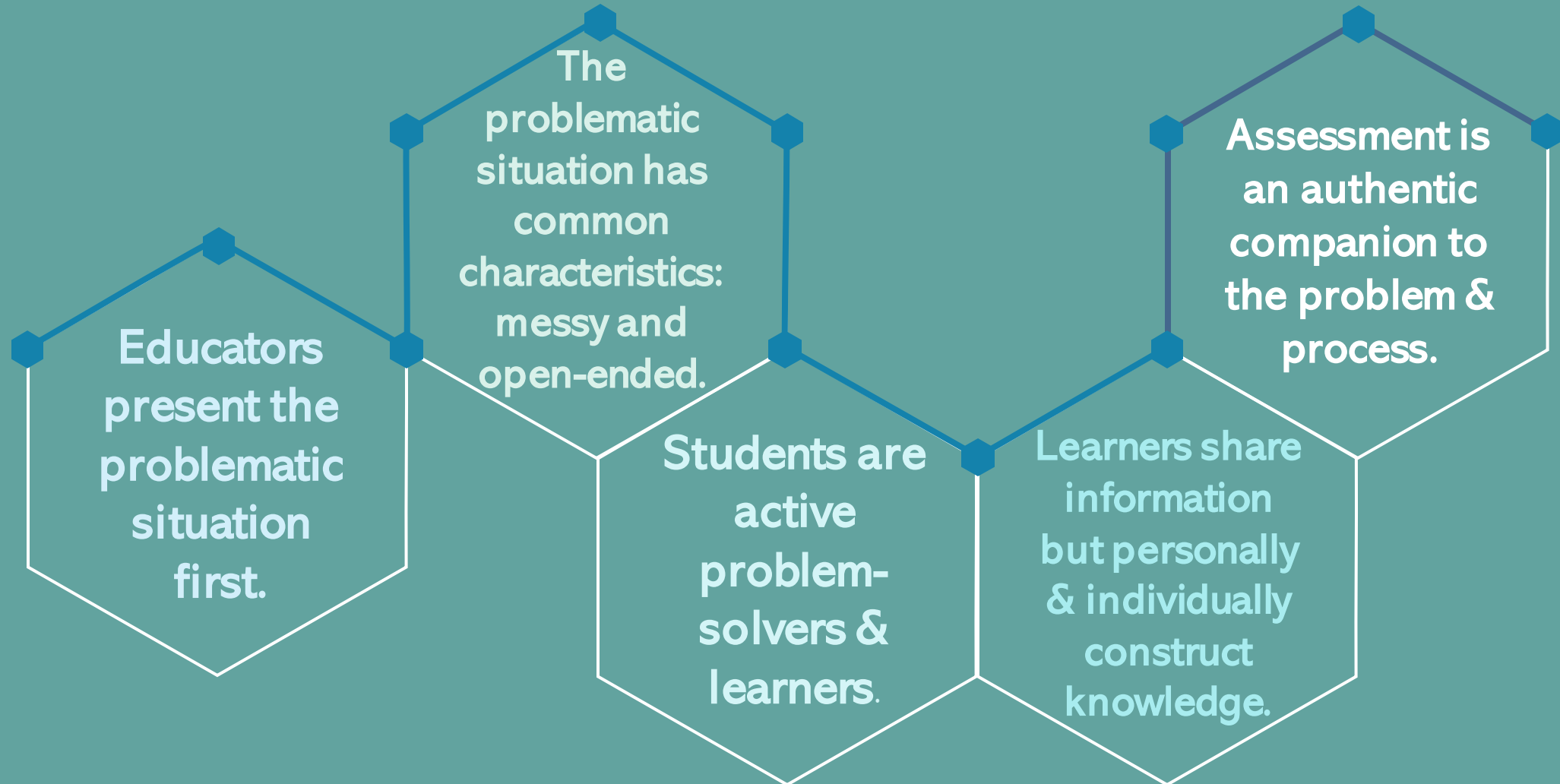
- Create real-world opportunities and audiences for sharing learning, while providing the opportunity for choice and passion to guide the work



Deep Thinking and Productive Struggle

- Move from “*what’s the right answer?*” to students developing evidence-based, original ideas using thinking routines and strategies. Encourage mistake-making and taking risks while maintaining high expectations (the warm demander)

PBL Pathway/Success Criteria – A Working Model



Transition to Break Out Rooms

Homeroom

- Stay here



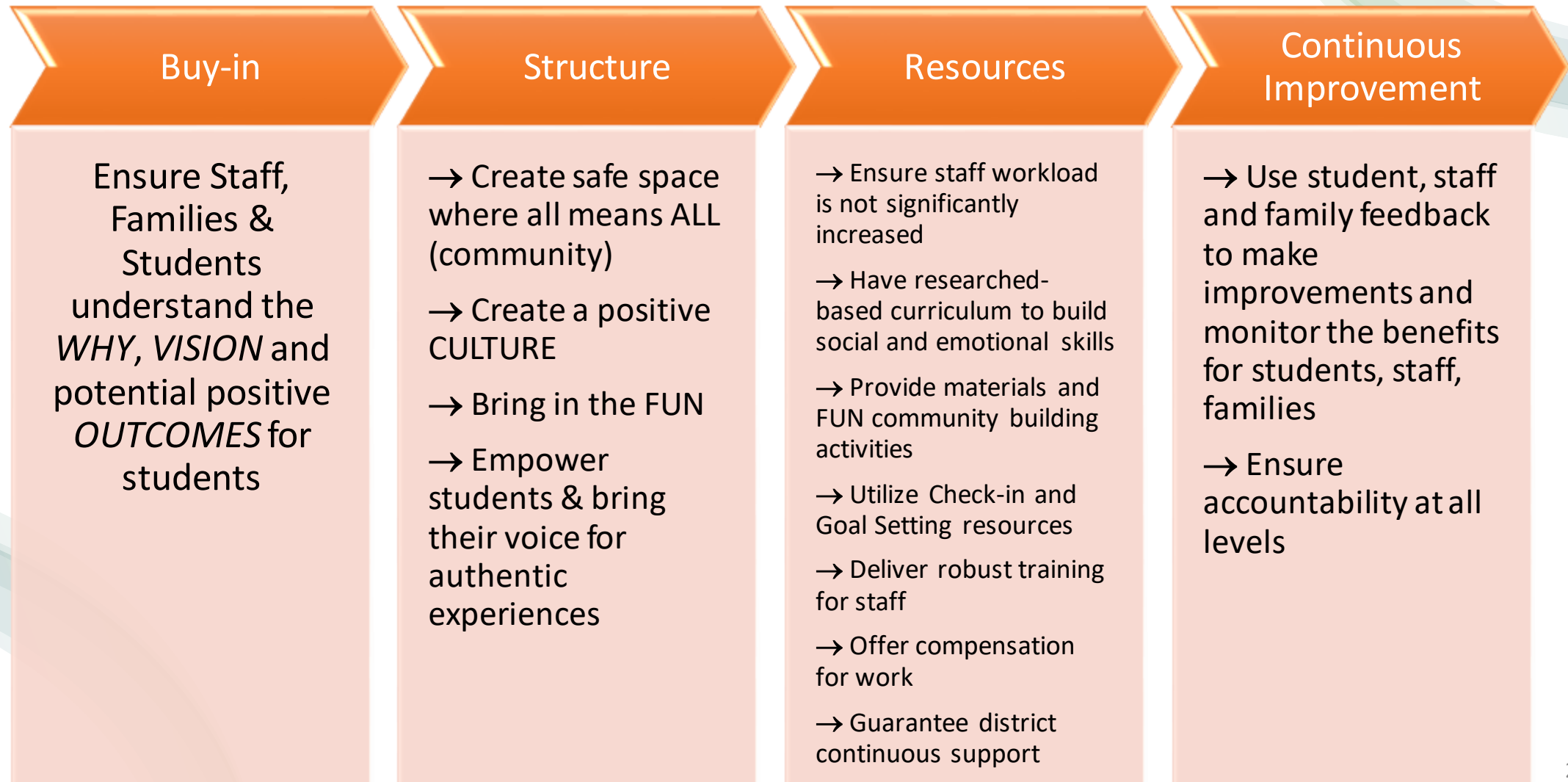
Problem-Based Learning

- Click **link** in chat

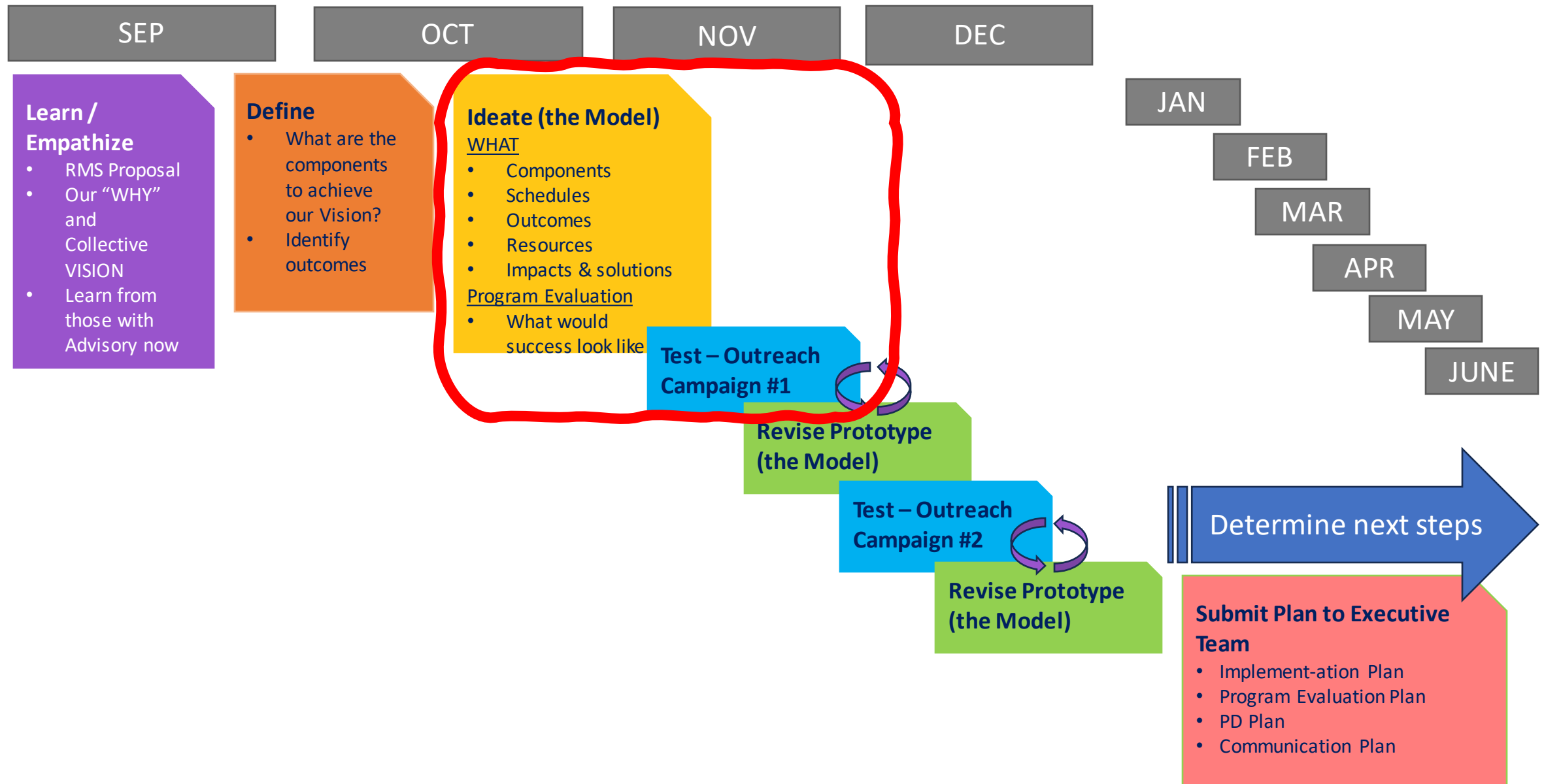
[Click here to join the meeting](#)



The Homeroom Design Team has brainstormed the following **components** to include in the Prototype (i.e. the Model)



Timeline: Homeroom Design & Implementation Plan



Theory of Action

- If...
- And we build in...
- Then we will get...
- That will lead to...

How can you help?

Look for emails asking for feedback on the prototype coming soon!

If you would like to take on a larger role, please let Wendy know!

Hopes and Fears

If this were the worst prototype/model of homeroom you could imagine for our middle school students, how would it impact our students?

If this were the best prototype/model of homeroom you could imagine for our middle school students, what would be the outcome for them?

In order to maximize our hopes and minimize our fears, what input/suggestions do you have for our design team?

For Questions and to Stay Informed

Overall Project:

- Melisa Macias, Director of Teaching & Learning
- rms@bsd405.org
- Visit our website

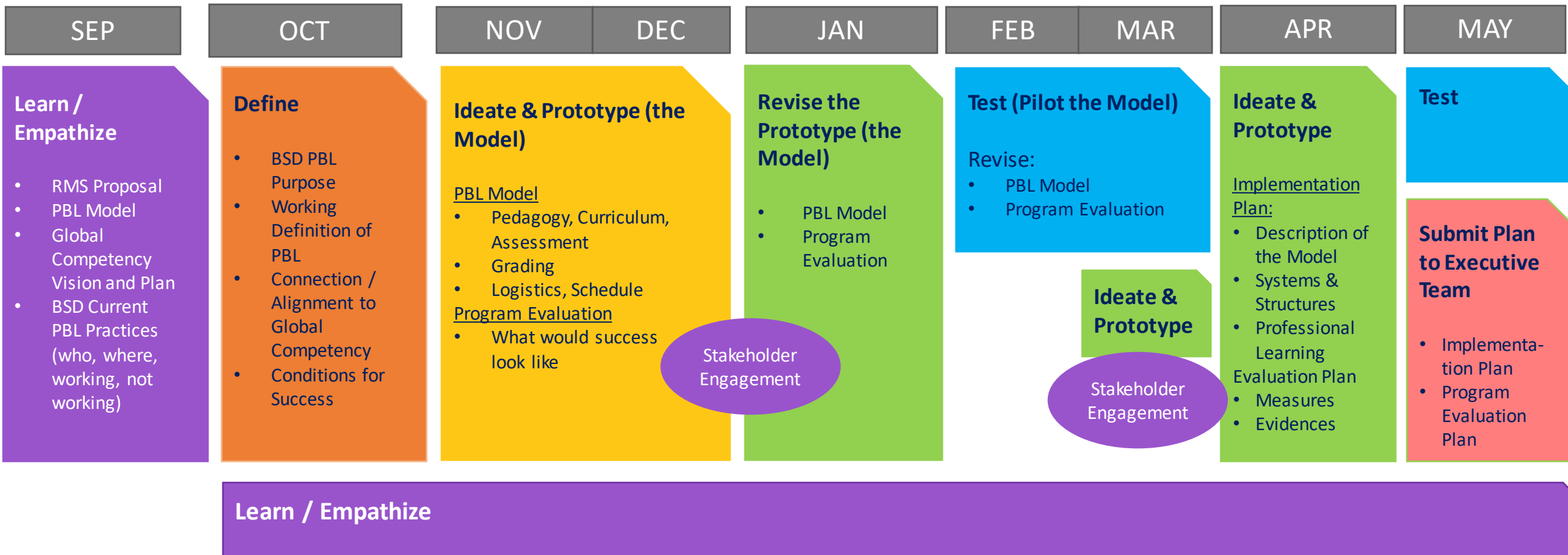
PBL:

- Tom Duenwald
- duenwaldt@bsd405.org

Homeroom:

- Wendy Powell
- powellw@bsd405.org

Timeline: PBL Design & Implementation Plan



Prototype & Test the PBL Model

October 26th Release Day:

- Revisit our Purpose/Vision (Our Why)
- Develop the PBL Model (including the principles)
- Define Success Criteria
- Begin to plan for small scale implementation

Define

- What are the components to achieve our Vision?
- Identify outcomes

Ideate (the Model)

WHAT

- Components
- Schedules
- Outcomes
- Resources
- Impacts & solutions

Program Evaluation

- What would success look like

Test - outreach

Revise:

- "WHAT"
- Program Evaluation



Revise the Prototype (the Model)

PBL Pathway/Success Criteria

Educators present the problematic situation first.

It serves as the organizing center & context for learning.

The problematic situation has common characteristics:

- ill-structured & messy
- often changes with the addition of new information
- not solved easily or with a specific formula
- doesn't result in one right answer

Students are active problem-solvers & learners.

Teachers are cognitive & metacognitive coaches.

Learners share information but personally & individually construct knowledge.

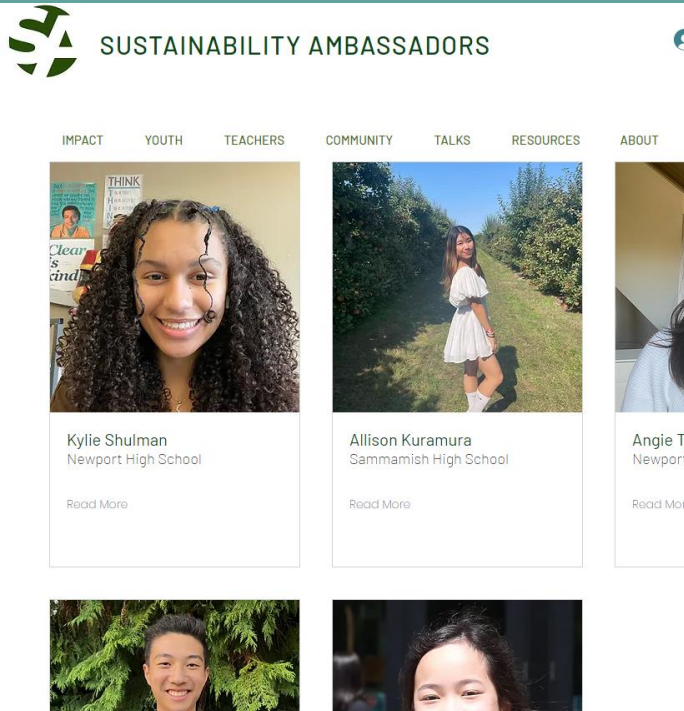
Discussion & challenge expose & test thinking.

Assessment is an authentic companion to the problem & process.

Students meet academic standards in context of solving real-world problems measured by existing community metrics.

- What might this look like in the classroom?
- How might this compare or contrast to our current classrooms?
- What is at stake with each element of the pathway?
- What skills would our students and educators need to engage in each step of the pathway?

Sustainability Ambassadors and our District



BSD Board Adopts Sustainability Policy

At the Thursday, April 20 Regular School Board Meeting, BSD's Board of Directors adopted a new policy regarding **sustainability**. BSD is among the first districts in Washington state to institute such a policy.

As defined in **Policy 6811 Sustainability**, the Bellevue School District seeks to minimize our impact on the environment and increase our individual and collective understanding and agency of how we can work towards an ecologically sustainable school district, community and world. Furthermore, the policy is framed using four pillars of sustainability practices: district resources, environmental safety, collective understanding, and student voice. Several students were on-hand to show their support of the policy during the meeting's public comment portion. They spoke about the **benefits of the policy, student initiatives, making BSD more environmentally friendly, and setting an example for others to adopt positive changes in sustainable practices.**

Hopes and Fears

If this were the worst model of problem-based learning you could imagine for our middle school students, how would they be impacted?

If this were the best model of problem-based learning you could imagine for our middle school students, what would be the outcome?

In order to maximize our hopes and minimize our fears, what input/suggestions do you have for our design team?

For Questions and to Stay Informed

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