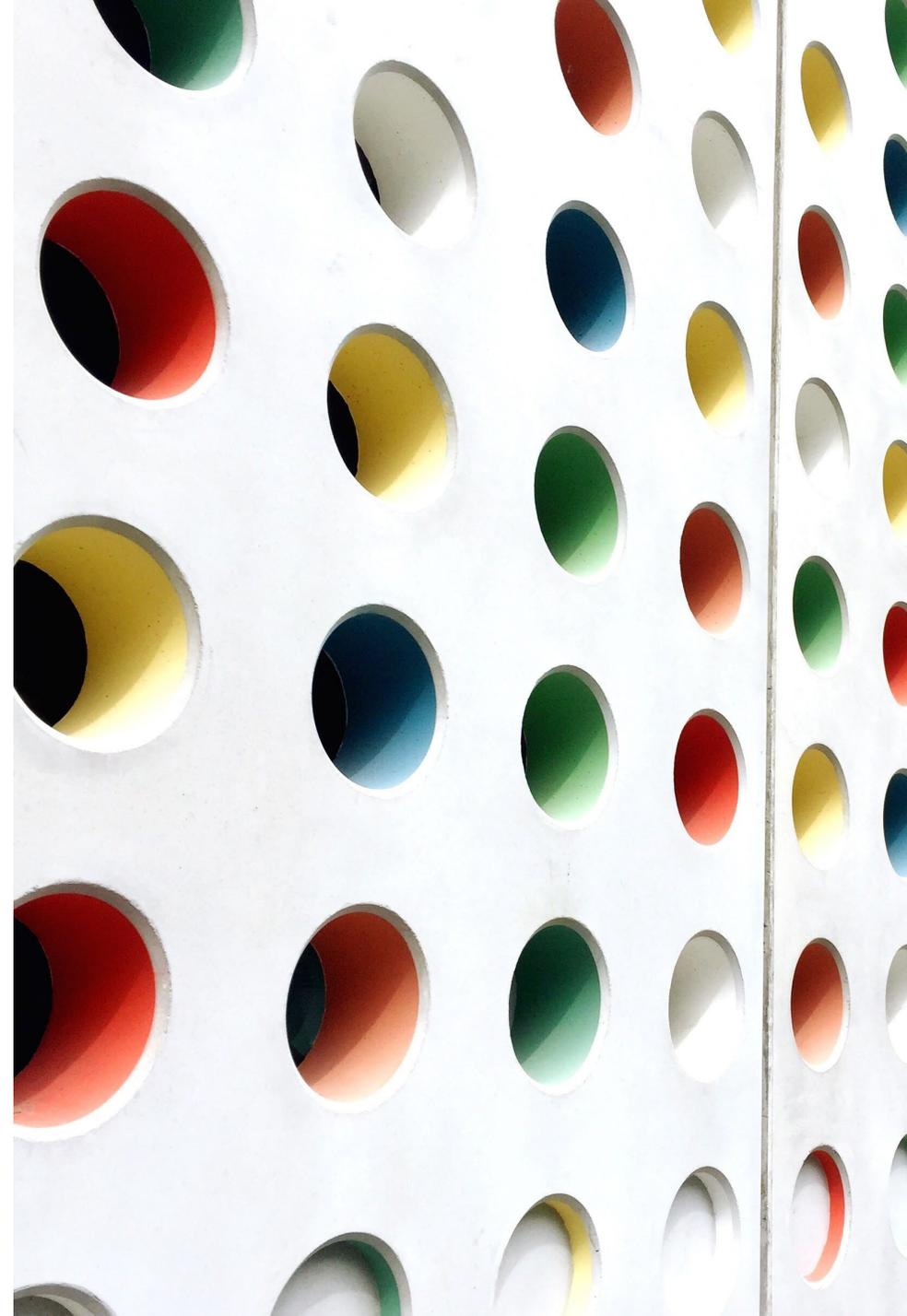


# Reimagining Middle Schools

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BELLEVUE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR  
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #10 (2/2/23)  
ADAMS



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# MIXED GROUPS

<b>Team #1</b>	<b>Team #2</b>	<b>Team #3</b>	<b>Team #4</b>
Project Based Learning	Advisory/ Homeroom	Block Scheduling	Teacher Teams with Cohorts
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<b>Valeri</b>	<b>Courtney</b>	<b>Annisa</b>	<b>Dan</b>
<b>Ishaan</b>	<b>James</b>	<b>Susan</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>Scott</b>	<b>Danielle</b>	<b>Mariela</b>	<b>Wendy</b>
	<b>Jesse</b>	<b>Tori</b>	<b>Susie</b>
		<b>Drew</b>	<b>Gabe</b>
		<b>Giovanni</b>	<b>Mathew</b>

# Purpose

*Why are we here?*

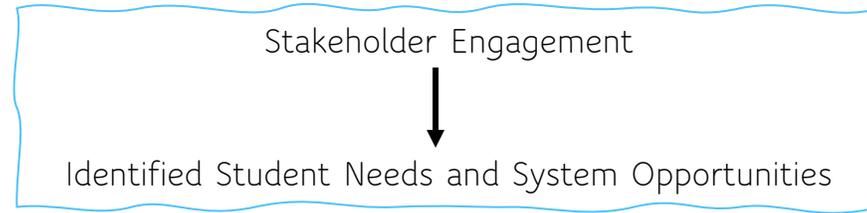
## **Reimagining Middle School Vision**

Responsive, Challenging,  
Empowering, Equitable, Engaging

We will redesign the middle school experience to offer a **developmentally responsive, student-centered** education.

# Two Key Areas Emerged from RMS “Empathize” Phase

*Listening Campaign, Round 1 in October 2022*



## Well-Being:

Students' social-emotional, belonging, and personal needs are foundational to learning.

Middle school students want to belong to and be valued members of their school community. To make this a reality, **students need sufficient, intentional time and opportunities** throughout the day to **socialize, build deep, meaningful relationships** with peers and school staff, as well as **take care of their personal needs** (e.g., bathroom, water, food, movement, relaxation, etc.).

## Academic Learning:

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

Middle school students want **choice** and **autonomy** in their academic learning. They need learning that is **accessible, important, relevant, interactive, engaging, and empowering**. They want to feel **excited, inspired, and challenged** to learn, grow, and be **responsible**. They want to feel like their learning is going somewhere—that it serves a purpose and is preparing them for their futures.

# Purpose

*WHY ARE WE HERE?*



Define

What are we trying to solve?

- What patterns did we see?
- What did they hear most often?
- What difficulties did the middle students have?

## Identified Problems by the RMS Committee Members

Opportunities

1. Not enough **meaningful connection** to/with peers and adults
2. **Sense of belonging**
3. Irrelevant **instruction** and **use of time**
4. There is a disconnect between the skills being taught and the **skills needed to succeed in the future.**
5. Sense of meaningful **engagement** and **student voice**
6. Student lack **interactive learning environments**
7. The school day and classes not typically structured in a way that **empower students** and promotes their ownership of learning
8. Students need **break time!** (Only lunch)
9. There is no **bridge** to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to transition to middle school.

*Consideration: Every action, there a reaction. Every decision may affect many people; **unintended consequences** of decisions.*

# Purpose

*WHY ARE WE HERE?*

# Objectives

## Overall Prototyping Objectives by Feb 7:

- Have a set of draft prototypes ready for feedback (the second listening campaign will be during the month of March).

## Objectives for Today (Feb 2):

- Create “scrappy” prototypes for each of the four key areas.
- Prepare to get feedback on these prototypes, in preparation for the Feb 7 prototyping session.

# Agenda

## Part 1 (Today, Feb 2)

- Meeting overview (3 min)
- Intro to the why/what/how of prototyping (10 min)
- Draft initial scrappy prototypes (90 min)
- Next steps (be ready to gather feedback) (10 min)

*Intersession work to gather feedback on the scrappy prototypes (volunteers)*

## Part 2 (Feb 7)

- Meeting overview (3 min)
- Rotations to view and share feedback on the prototypes (45 min)
- Refine prototypes (45 min)
- Next steps (be ready for listening sessions) (7 min)

# Agreements

- ❖ We're in the early stages of rapid prototyping where *rough is right*, so be creative and playful
- ❖ Be enthusiastic about but not attached to the ideas you come up with
- ❖ Monitor your airtime
- ❖ Be curious

# RMS “Top 4” Solutions



**Project-Based  
Learning (PBL)**



**Teacher Teams with  
Student Cohorts**



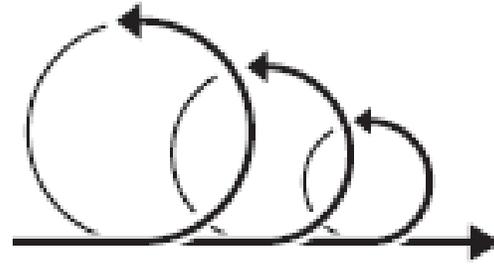
**Block Scheduling**



**Advisory/Homeroom**

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## ITERATE



Repeating ideation and prototyping over and over to refine your idea and move it forward. Your mindset here is *experiment your way forward*.

# Prototyping in Context

- Prototypes are visual representations of your ideas; they are props that help you tell a story.
- You might create a mock-up or storyboard, act out a skit, or create a playful advertisement for your prototype. Do whatever works.
- “A prototype is just your idea of what the future might look like.” –David Kelley
- A prototype is a way of making your ideas tangible and testing them out. This allows you to gather feedback and improve them.

# What is a Prototype?

## Prototypes May Help You:

- Reduce the risk of spending too many resources on an inadequate solution by starting small and simple, then refining your prototypes as you test them.
- Think about how your solution will work in the real world, what it will look like, and how people will actually interact with it.
- Receive actionable feedback by giving people something they can see, touch, and feel rather than just hearing you explain it.
- Make something to test your own understanding of what the community needs and whether the proposed solution will be well received.

## Risk of Not Doing This:

- You may invest in a solution that you think will work in the world, and then find out that you missed the mark after it has been implemented.
- You may miss the opportunity to learn through doing. Planning and explaining will only take you so far.
- You may make a lot of wrong assumptions about how people will behave, how receptive they'll be to your solution, and how it will integrate with their lives.

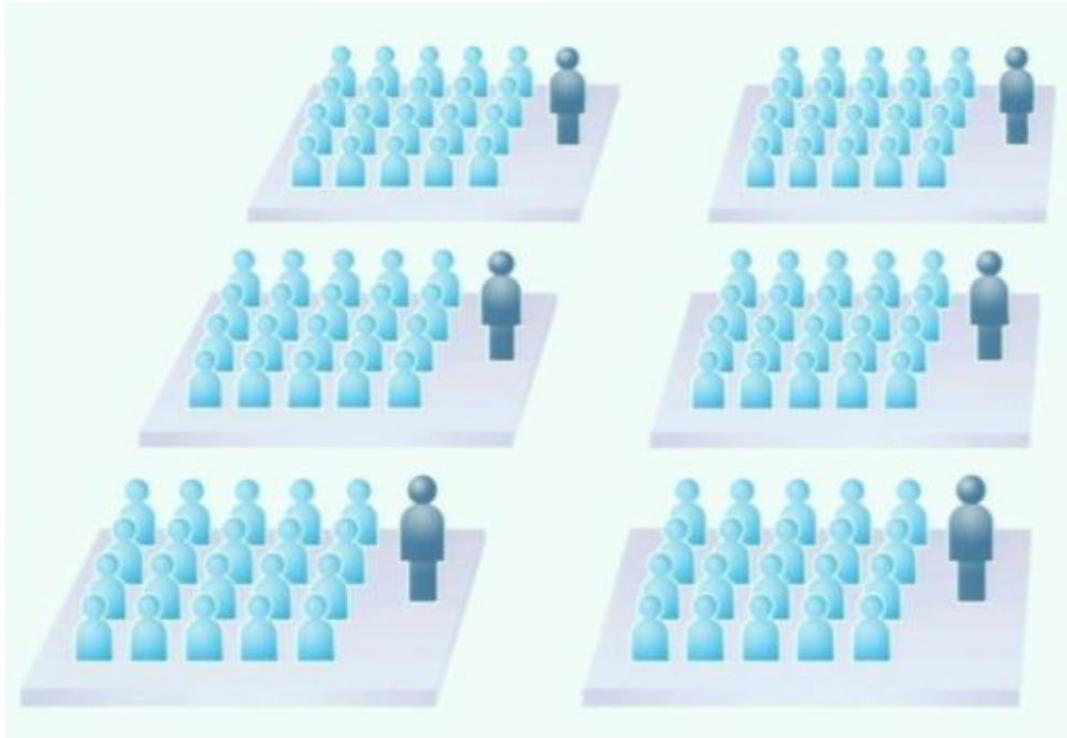
## Do's

- Keep your prototypes simple. Your goal is not to create the first version of your final solution from the get-go. Create the simplest representation that will help you learn and clear a key assumption first. Then, refine your prototype as you test.
- Share your prototypes with other people before heading into formal testing with community members; this gives you a chance to practice and tweak as needed.
- The goal of an initial prototype is not to create a high-fidelity representation of your proposed solution, but something with enough fidelity to allow you to communicate how a specific part of your solution would work.
- Identify the assumptions you want to test first, and think about who you want to engage and what you want to learn before you choose what prototype to build.

## Don'ts

- Do not build a prototype of the entire solution right away. Focus on the key features and assumptions you identified. Which areas do you want to learn more about? Which parts of the experience are most critical to the success of your overall concept? Prioritize building and testing those.
- Do not create high resolution representations of your concepts for early prototypes. As tempting as it may be, a prototype with a finished look will often lead your people to comment on the look and feel of the solution rather than on the overall validity of the concept and its key features.
- Do not get too hung up on the details. Focus on building the aspects of your prototype that are critical to communicating the essence of your key assumptions first.

Traditional School



School of One model



Prototype Examples



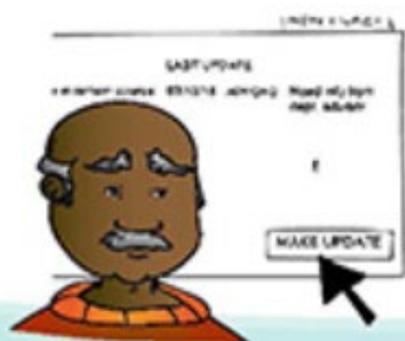
**START**



Ernie logs onto his ticket dashboard and sees the alert. He can read more about the ticket or elect to talk to an advisor.



Ernie wants to talk to his advisor to better understand the effects of his decision.



The academic advisor realizes Ernie needs more info from a department advisor. The academic advisor updates Ernie's ticket to reflect their conversation and it alerts the department advisor.



The department advisor has read the past conversation and is ready with the right info when Ernie comes to meet with her. Ernie has a great chat with this advisor.

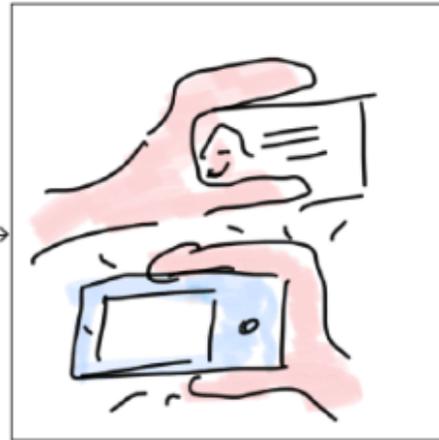


**END**

# Service journey storyboard



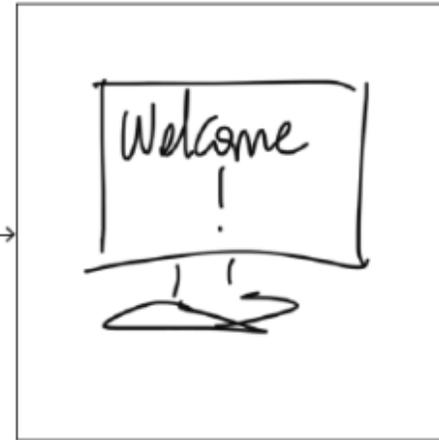
Applicant visits cpsvolunteers.org to submit an online application.  
A school clerk or Volunteer Coordinator received and reviews the volunteer application, and the principal makes a determination about whether the applicant qualifies as a Level I or Level II Volunteer.



The applicant receives a notification via email, and then visits the school to show his/her photo ID to the Volunteer Coordinator.

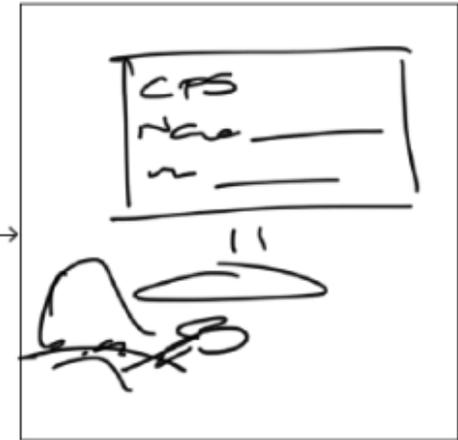


Save the applicant a trip to the school by having them send a photo or scan of their photo ID, or simply do it live through a video call.



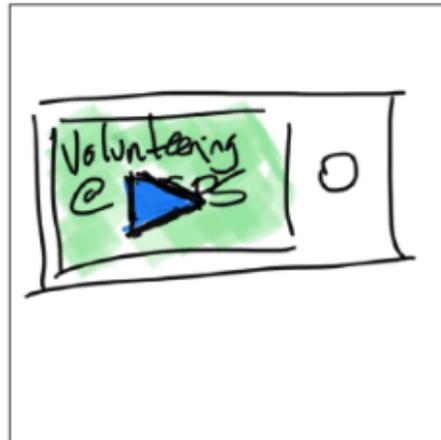
Level I Volunteers receive an email with a pre-populated fingerprint form to take to an Accurate Biometrics location and a form to complete a TB test.

Level II Volunteers receive an approval letter from Volunteer Programs.

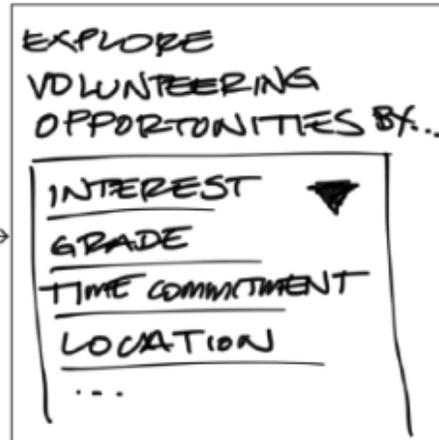


Level I Volunteers upload their Accurate Biometrics and TB test receipts to their CivCore profile. Once approved, Level I volunteers receive an approval letter from Volunteer Programs.

The application process may take 2 - 5 weeks, and volunteers must reapply every year.



New volunteers receive an onboarding video and PDF document with guidelines on school policies, best practices for how to interact with students and staff, do's and don'ts, etc.



Each school has a physical board with the latest volunteering opportunities. Volunteers can also access a digital version of the board, where they can sort opportunities based on different criteria, such as needs, interests, time commitment, etc.



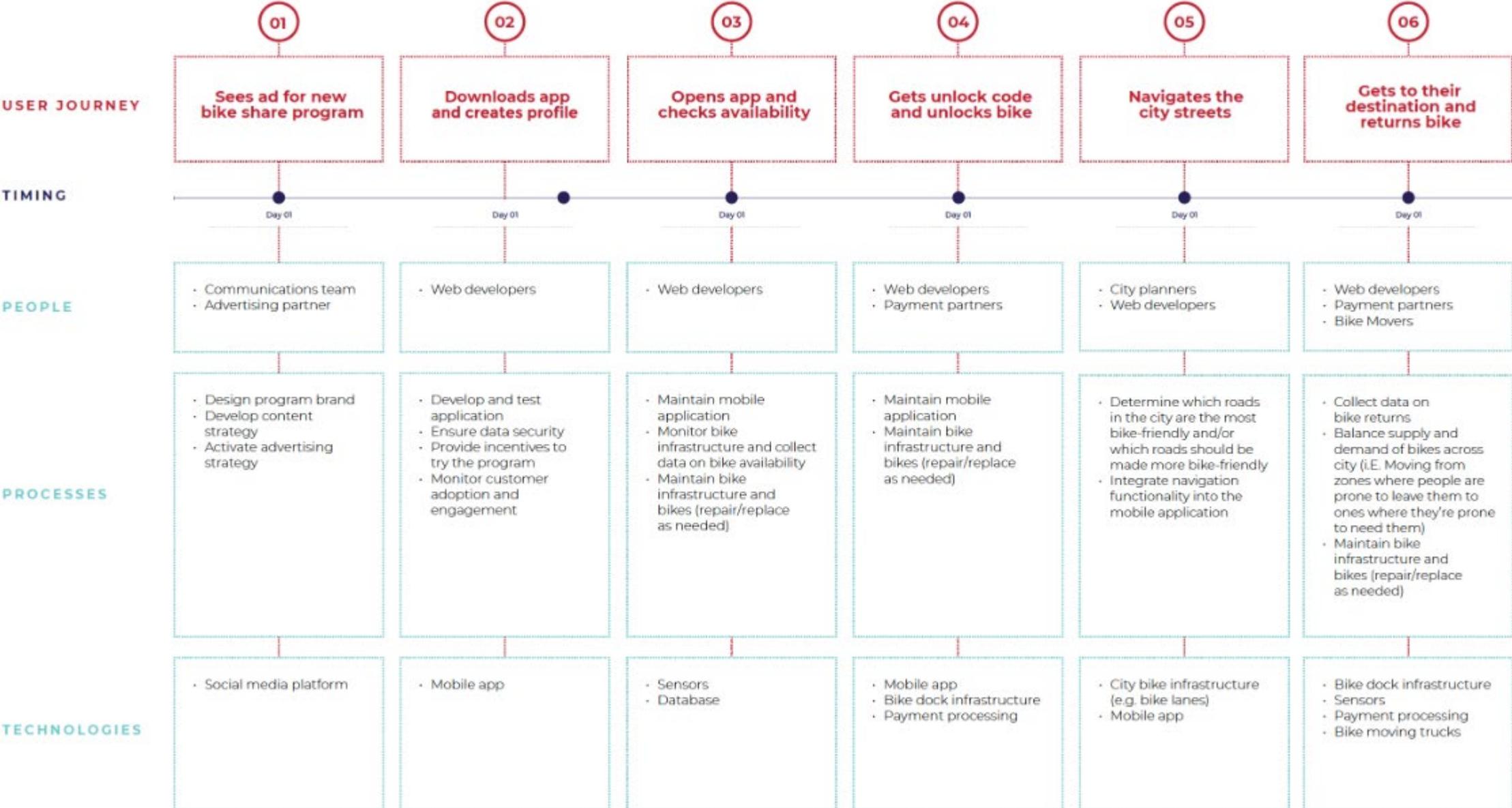
Volunteers use the digital board to track their activities and share posts about their experiences.

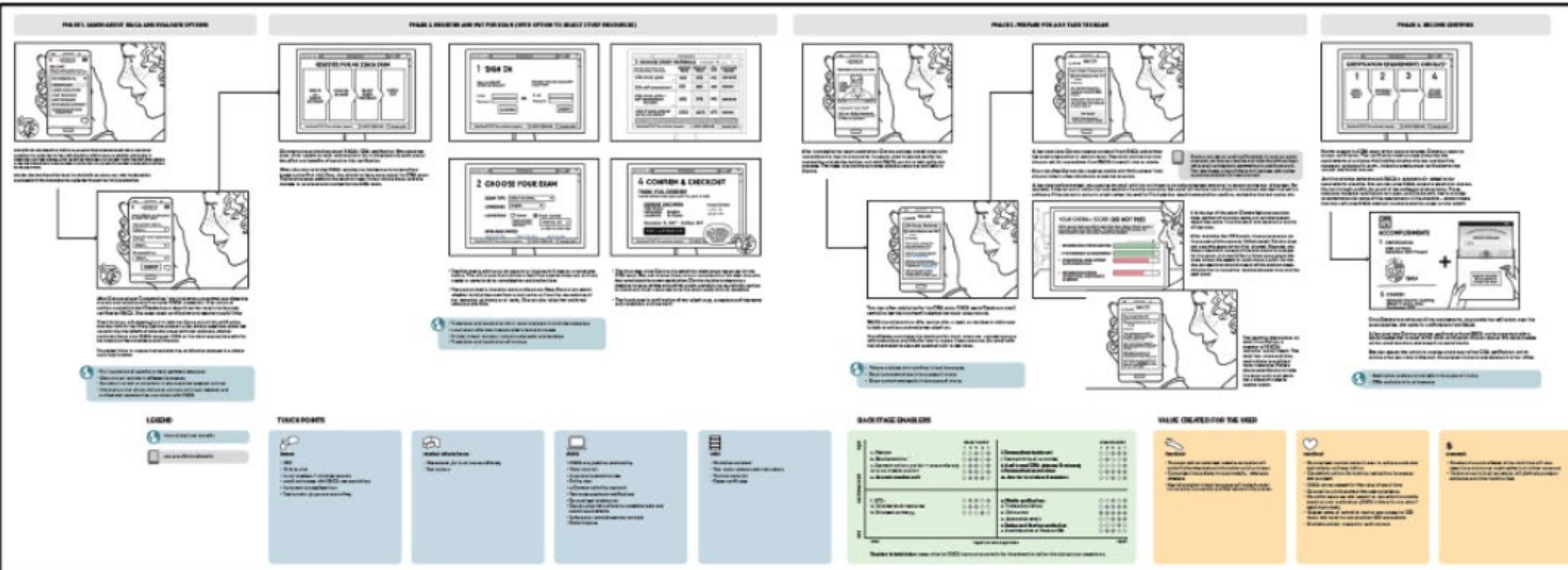


The school principal and fellow volunteers can use posts made on the board to share updates with the wider community and to recruit new volunteers, expanding the volunteer pool and ensuring access to opportunities that match volunteers' interests and circumstances!



# Refined service journey storyboard





Final service journey map example, akin to a blueprint for a house

Work Time:  
90 minutes

**The fun part:** Come up with a scrappy prototype for your team's key area

1. Identify what specific aspects of your area you want to prototype; what key assumptions do you want to test?
2. Brainstorm
3. Converge
4. Refine
5. Build a visual representation of your ideas

**By the end each team should have a prototype that tells the story of the student/staff experience so that you can get feedback on the draft design and test your assumptions.**

It can be a schedule, sketch, visual, "day in a life" narrative, a couple of artifacts with a voice-over script...whatever approach best conveys your ideas.

**Keep in mind:**

- Who's your audience?
- What unmet need are you solving for through your idea?
- What do you want to learn with your prototype?

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**1. DEFER JUDGMENT**

Creative spaces don't judge. They let the ideas flow, so people can build from one another's great ideas.

**2. ENCOURAGE WILD IDEAS**

Embrace the most out-of-the-box notions. There's often not a whole lot of difference between outrageous and brilliant.

**3. BUILD ON THE IDEAS OF OTHERS**

Try to use *“and”* instead of *“but.”* It encourages positivity and inclusivity and leads to tons of ideas.

**4. STAY FOCUSED ON THE TOPIC**

Try to keep the discussion on target. Divergence is good, but you still need to keep your eyes on the prize.

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**5. ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME**

This can be difficult, especially with lots of creative people in a single room, but always think about the challenge topic and how to stay on track.

**6. BE VISUAL**

Use colored markers and sticky notes. Stick your ideas on the wall, so others can visualize them.

**7. GO FOR QUANTITY**

Crank your ideas out quickly. For any 60-minute session, you should try to generate 100 ideas.

# Brainstorming Rules



## Voluntary homework: Getting feedback on the draft prototypes

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- What do you want to learn from your prototype? Write down three questions for stakeholders.
- Find at least one person from your role (ex: student, staff member, parent).
- Talk them through your prototype.
- Ask them your questions.
- Take notes. Be curious. Pay attention to their body language and what they don't say. Don't defend your ideas.
- Be ready to reflect on and share their feedback at our next meeting (Feb 7).



Next week: We'll be reflecting on what we've learned from feedback, gathering more feedback from team members, and iterating

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What did you learn about your idea, your user, and the problem?

Next meeting:

- Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> from 4:30-6:30 PM at WISC (Adams room)
- *Food available beginning at 4:00 PM*

# Project-Based Learning (PBL)



## General Description:

“Project Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which student learn by actively engaging in local and global issues and personally meaningful projects”

P=Problem Identified

- **Goal:** Students work on a project for an extended period of time that answers a complex question focused on **solving local and/or global issues**, and **demonstrate knowledge and skills through a public product or presentation for an authentic audience.**
- **Problems/Opportunities Addressed:** Academic instruction should be more student-centered and focused on “21st Century Learning” in terms of topics studied, method of delivery, and skills developed (current issues, problem-solving, interactive, collaborative, empowering, authentic audience)
  - *Irrelevant instruction and use of time (P.3); There is a disconnect between the skills being taught and the skills needed to succeed in the future (P.4); Sense of meaningful engagement and student voice (P.5); Students lack interactive learning environment (P.6); The school day and classes are not typically structured in a way that empower students and promotes their ownership of learning (P.7)*
- **Structural Elements May Include:** Substantial time for teacher training, ongoing support, planning, collaboration, and revision; teacher teaming; block scheduling that allows for larger chunks of uninterrupted project time
- **Design Questions to Spark Your Imagination:**
  - Will PBL be explicitly interdisciplinary or focused on single content areas?
  - Will PBL be the primary instructional approach or something that is done a few times a year?
  - How might outside professionals and organizations (including BSD family and community members) be authentically included in PBL in BSD middle schools?

# Teacher Teams with Student Cohorts



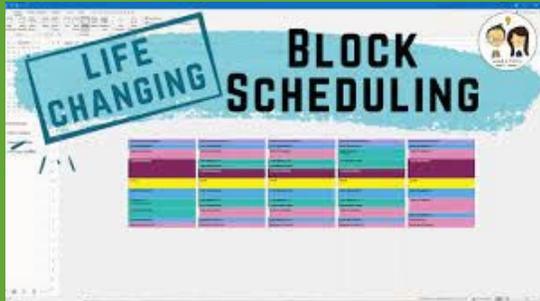
**General Description:** “Adults and students are grouped into smaller communities (e.g., teams, houses, academies) for enhanced teaching and learning” and these smaller communities “are characterized by stable, close, and mutually respectful relationships.”

*P=Problem Identified*

- ❖ **Goal:** To promote a **strong sense of community and instructional coherence** by having a group of students get to know a few teachers well, while also interacting with a cohort of peers, and by having a set of teachers dedicated to their assigned students’ overall middle school experience and success, while also collaborating frequently and effectively on instruction.
- ❖ **Problems/Opportunities Addressed:** Middle school is currently organized as mini high school where students’ individual schedules determine who and how many people they interact with during the school day. Teaming teachers and cohorting students intentionally structures time at school around community, belonging, and relationship development.
  - ❖ *Not enough meaningful connection to/with peers and adults (P.1); Sense of belonging (P.2); There is no bridge to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to transition to middle school (P.9)*
- ❖ **Structural Elements May Include:** Interdisciplinary teaching teams anchored by common planning time and regular examination of student data; student cohorts anchored by a common teaching team; an assigned “mentor teacher” who loops with their student cohort for all 3 MS years
- ❖ **Design Questions to Spark Your Imagination:**
  - ❖ Core teachers teach more than 1 subject within a smaller teaching team (e.g., a cohort of students has Teacher A for both ELA & Social Studies & Teacher B for both math & science)?
  - ❖ Core teachers teach 1 subject within a larger teaching team (e.g., a cohort of students has Teacher A for ELA, Teacher B for Social Studies, Teacher C for math, Teacher D for science)?
  - ❖ What’s the ideal size for one “student cohort”? 50? 75? 100?
  - ❖ Do teachers loop with their student cohort (moving up with them through 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grades)?

Sources: [Middle Matters](#); [Linked Learning](#)

# Block Scheduling



**General Description:** “A block schedule is a scheduling system for the middle- or high-school day, usually by replacing a more traditional schedule of six or seven 40–50 minutes daily periods with longer class periods that meet fewer times each day and week. For instance, a typical block-schedule class might last 90 or 120 minutes and meet every other day instead of daily.”

P=Problem Identified

- ❖ **Goal:** To maximize student learning by **increasing the time spent each day in deep, extended learning** and reducing interruptions (transitions to different classes, taking attendance, etc.) and stress (having to keep up with 7 different classes, teachers, sets of students); to **promote deeper teacher-student relationships**; to allow teachers to **individualize instruction and support** for fewer students
- ❖ **Problems/Opportunities Addressed:** Student and teachers are forced to rush through the seven-period daily schedule, without sufficient time for deep, extended learning, connection with others, or opportunities to take care of personal needs. The pace of the school day can be slowed down to increase academic learning, social connection, and personal and collective well-being, and to decrease pressure and stress. Longer class periods with fewer teachers may also support 6<sup>th</sup> graders as they transition from elementary school to the secondary grades.
- ❖ *Not enough meaningful connection to/with peers and adults (P.1); Sense of belonging (P.2); Irrelevant instruction and use of time (P.3); Sense of meaningful engagement (P.5); Students need break time(P.8) ; There is no bridge to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to transition to middle school (P.9)*
- ❖ **Structural Elements May Include:** Substantial time for teacher training, planning, and collaboration to ensure efficient, effective teaching within the block context; Significant changes to schools’ master schedules
- ❖ **Design Questions to Spark Your Imagination:**
  - ❖ A “4 x 4” block schedule where students take four 90-minute courses every day and finish a course in one semester rather than a full school year?
  - ❖ An “A/B” or “alternating-day” block schedule where students take eight 90-minute courses that meet every other day?
  - ❖ A “trimester” schedule where students take two or three core courses simultaneously, with each class meeting daily, over three 60-day trimesters?
  - ❖ Consider building block schedule that allows for: 1) Recess/breaks (to promote socialization and provide time for personal needs like bathroom, water, food, movement, relaxation)?, and 2) Tutorial/extra help during the school day?

Sources: [The Edvocate](#); [NEA](#)

# Advisory/ Homeroom



## General Description:

Advisory/Homeroom programs “are designed to create a strong support system that students need to develop academically, socially, and emotionally.” Such programs can make a large comprehensive middle school feel smaller and more personal.

*P=Problem Identified*

- ❖ **Goal:** Each middle school has an “advisory” or “homeroom” program to **engage students, build community**, ensure each student and family is **known and supported** by at least one teacher, explicitly teach **SEL, bullying prevention and study skills**, and prepare students for **transitions** (e.g., 6<sup>th</sup> graders entering middle school, 8<sup>th</sup> graders exiting middle school). Such a program supports not only supports students individually but can promote a positive overall school culture.
- ❖ **Problems/Opportunities Addressed:** Middle school is currently organized as mini high school which results in a lack of protected time to explicitly build teacher-student bonds, help students navigate and explore the middle grades, or explicitly teach SEL, bullying prevention, and study skills.
  - ❖ *Not enough meaningful connection to/with peers and adults (P.1); Sense of belonging (P.2); There is no bridge to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to transition to middle school (P.9); Sense of meaningful engagement and student voice (P.5)*
- ❖ **Structural Elements May Include:** An assigned “mentor teacher” who loops with their Advisory/Homeroom student cohort for all 3 MS years; Some time for teacher training, ongoing support, planning, collaboration, revision
- ❖ **Design Questions to Spark Your Imagination:**
  - ❖ How often and for how long will Advisory/Homeroom classes meet?
  - ❖ Will Advisory/Homeroom be a separate class period, added onto a particular class period (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> period), or something else?
  - ❖ How will your design ensure that this period doesn’t get co-opted by administrative tasks (e.g., survey-taking, etc.)?
  - ❖ Might one Advisory/Homeroom have two assigned teachers instead of one?

Sources: [Friends' Central School](#); [EducationWeek](#)