

PARK HILL SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEAD

Innovation Studio

Lead. Empower. Aspire. Dream.

Attending LEAD: Information for
2024-2025



Park Hill School District

Building Successful Futures • Each Student • Every Day

Executive Summary

This guide has been developed for prospective Park Hill School District LEAD Innovation Studio parents and students. You should be able to combine the information in this resource with advice from teachers, counselors, and administrators to make decisions about attending LEAD. Students and parents are encouraged to use this in addition to the High School Career and Education Planning Guide provided during the enrollment period.

College and Career Readiness at LEAD

Students at LEAD engage with four elements of college and career readiness. Educational research suggests that these four elements provide students the foundation they need to be college-ready after high school.

1. **Cognitive skills** are the higher-order thinking skills that students need to solve complex problems in and beyond college. They are taught, practiced, and assessed through project-based learning activities at LEAD. Teachers facilitate these projects and provide feedback to help students continually improve cognitive skills.
2. **Content knowledge** is the set of facts and information that is fundamental to understanding the world around us. Students learn content in different ways and at different speeds. Students will engage with a variety of resources to best learn the content they need to be successful in their course. Content is assessed through online, on-demand assessments.
3. **Habits of Success** describe the ways we interact with our work and community. Success in college and beyond requires that students develop their emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and empathy. Habits of Success are addressed daily in all classes at LEAD, and in communication between the student and his/her mentor.
4. **Real-life experiences** help students connect what they learn in classrooms to potential passions, career paths, and life experiences outside of high school. Providing real-world experiences prepares students for different environments in the future and helps them understand themselves. We provide students with these experiences through our electives, projects, and activities.

How LEAD Works

There are three main components to a student's learning environment at LEAD.

1. **Project-based Learning:** Students engage in deep learning experiences in their classes. Project-based learning challenges students to build and apply cognitive skills.
2. **Self-Directed Learning:** This is a time for students to work toward their own individual goals by following the self-directed learning cycle of setting goals, planning their process, learning new information, showing their learning, and reflecting on the

process. Students engage with online playlists through the Summit Learning Platform, selecting and processing resources to help them learn the objectives of each focus area. Students use this time to request content assessments and demonstrate their content mastery in a testing environment supervised by a faculty member.

3. **Mentoring:** Every student has a regular, one-to-one check-in with his/her mentor. During this check-in, the mentor engages with the student by strengthening their relationship and coaching him/her through the self-directed learning cycle. The student reflects on the previous week, sets goals for the following week, discusses how these short-term goals align with his/her own long-term goals, and makes a specific plan for how he/she will achieve the short-term goal.

Typical Student Challenges at LEAD

Students may find the increased responsibility, freedom, rigor, time management, and creativity at LEAD to be somewhat different from what they are used to encountering as a student. For many, it takes time to adjust and fully understand the responsibilities they have at LEAD. This adjustment often creates a few transition weeks at the beginning of their enrollment where you and they don't feel like they are "doing it right."

This transition period is natural and necessary for your child. LEAD provides the opportunity to learn how college and work-like environments function. We ask parents to be supportive of our efforts during this time and allow your child to work through the transition naturally. The best thing you can do is encourage them to push forward.

Please understand that some music classes will be offered at LEAD and some at the home high school. For music classes at the home high school, students will be transported via bus to and from their music class. This transportation may result in students missing some class time at LEAD to accommodate travel time. Some music classes are operated as split block courses and may require an online split block course be taken to balance the student's schedule.

Support for Student Success

While much of the above is the normal progression into this type of learning environment, there may be times when your son or daughter needs additional support and assistance. Each week, your child is working with their mentor to track and monitor their work at LEAD. At LEAD, our staff pays close attention to some of the behavior markers that indicate a student is "not succeeding." These may include, but are not limited to:

- frequent absences;
- repeatedly not completing tasks within their projects or doing them poorly;
- making excuses as to why they aren't making progress or can't do the work;
- sitting and waiting to be directed or told what to do instead of taking some action;
- showing disinterest in their work;

- not actively communicating with their project teammates and facilitators;

In the event our staff sees one or more of these behaviors, they will point it out individually and promptly work with your son or daughter to get them back on track. If this informal approach does not work, we will deploy further measures to more formally support your student.

Commitment to LEAD

The instructional model at LEAD is very different than that used at Park Hill and Park Hill South High School. Because students have more flexibility with how they work through their coursework, and because student schedules are very different than a traditional high school, it is impossible to create a schedule mid-year at the home high school to match a schedule at LEAD. In addition, the Park Hill School District assigns staff to LEAD based upon student enrollment numbers and the needs of those students. This process keeps staff to student ratios consistent among both high schools and LEAD.

Therefore, it is expected that students requesting the LEAD Innovation Studio program are making a binding year-long commitment. No students will be allowed to transfer back to their home school until the 2025-2026 school year. Additionally, students who do not request LEAD during the enrollment window will not be allowed to transfer from their home school to LEAD during the school year. Should a student leave the district and return in the same school year, they will return to LEAD. After completing the full year at LEAD, students may choose to return to their home school or continue at LEAD the following school year.

Questions?

If you have any additional questions about LEAD, please reach out to our principal, Dr. Chris Early, at earlyc@parkhill.k12.mo.us or 816-359-6569.